Final script

Slide 1.   Title slide: usual layout

- Thank you for that introduction.
- And, in case I forget to say it later, thank you to CILIPS for funding this research.
- The project has the somewhat clumsy title *Tackling misinformation and disinformation for Scottish school librarians*. This does **not** mean I thought that Scottish school librarians were suffering from mis- and disinfo problems themselves.
- Instead, I was interested in the 'how, why and what could/should be' of Scottish school librarians' work to help pupils become better able to handle mis/disinformation.
- Hint: I'll be using some QR codes that you may wish to follow, so you might want to have your phones or tablets ready.

Slide 2.   Contents

- I'll talk about the background to the project, the research (headline) questions, what I planned to do and what actually happened, a bit about the participants and the limits on my findings, the findings themselves. Then we should have about 10 minutes to hear what you think!

Slide 3.   Menti-preparation

- I would like to do the discussions via Menti, so it's all on-screen but anonymous. To get ready for that, you can go to menti.com, then enter the numerical code.
- Or follow the QR code. No hurry to do that – I'll talk for a little while yet

Slide 4.   Backgound: why this project?

- It originally stemmed from a presentation by Dr Huw Davies to Scottish Media and Information Literacy Community of Practice.
- You can follow this QR code or bitly link to read his presentation.
- In brief, Huw spoke about the mis- and disinformation being spurted out by various bad actors. The things Huw reported incensed me – see the example on the screen which made my mixed-ancestry blood boil – so I was keen to see if academic research could help tackle these issues.
- Fortunately, the CILIPS research fund came along, asking for research that links to CILIPS' current mis/disinformation work, and focuses on the impact of librarians and professional identity/de-professionalisation..

Slide 5.   Why Bruce?

- But what right do I, a non-librarian, have to research libraries?
- I've been involved with research into libraries and librarians and information literacy since 2014 – you can follow the QR code to my publications
- And I know you are a great bunch, so here's my mantra
- Enough sucking up – on with the show!

Slide 6.   Research questions

- CILPS funding enabled me to undertake a quite short project, with these research questions
- So that's about what is happening now, what more could be done, what support would help, potential for teamwork with teacher colleagues, and then actual moves to make things better!

Slide 7.   Methods, milestones and timing

- For the LitRev, I wanted the official version of what should be happening: policy documents, curricula, legislation, guidance from SG, LAs, other relevant folk
- The survey would gather both quantitative and qualitative data; and recruit focus group/interview participants.
- I wanted to net people from both state and independent schools, and from secondary and primary schools. You can maybe guess how the latter worked out.
- FGs and Interviews would gather rich data, then analysis would find initial answers to the research questions
- Interviews with leaders would provide context and triangulation, focussing on what can be practically implemented
- I'm delivering one of the outputs now. There will also be a post on the CILIPS blog, and in the not-too-distant future a full report. I hope there will also be an academic paper.
- Advocacy – watch this space!

Slide 8.   Reality bites

- Literature review: there seems to be almost nothing out there! I've received only one bit of guidance from a local authority. There is nothing yet about mis- and disinformation from Education Scotland, or in the current Education Bill. There is nothing specifically on mis and dis-info in the otherwise cool *Vibrant Libraries, Thriving Schools*.
- Recruiting participants: I meant to start this around mid-February, but I was invited to the Scottish Council of Independent Schools' librarians conference, so I created a recruitment-only survey. This may have caused some confusion when I took it down and put up the main survey, so thank you indeed to SCIS for a great event but apologies to all if I caused hassle!
- The survey worked quite well, as we'll soon see.
- The focus groups and interviews worked too, although I didn't get as many participants as I would have liked. But I might still be transcribing if I'd got the numbers I really wanted.
  - However, I found it helped to add extra research questions, in part in reaction to a horror-story I was told about one LA – I wanted to look into how widespread such things were. In brief, FG/I participants' answers ranged from 'no/minimal' to 'massively!' This could be a subject for more research.
  - By the way, my PhD student Sarah Pavey (or her Director of Studies, Dr David Haynes, who should be in the audience) has much more detail on deprofessionalisation of school librarians in England.
- Analysis and leader interviews also worked. – leaders basically agreed with what participants told me
- You can tell me later how well I've delivered outputs

Slide 9.   Participant demographics 1

- It's standard practice to say a bit about who got involved in the project. Survey participants were recruited via librarian channels.
- The FG/I participants were recruited via the survey. FGs/Is were mostly online via Teams, but a couple were in-person, using questions based on the research questions
- This could be seen as confirming the near total absence of primary school librarians I'd been warned about. Are there any in the room?
- Is there a survivalist/feistiness self-selection bias?
- A concern for me is the overall small number of participants.

Slide 10. Participant demographics 2

- These data include responses from independent school librarians, so are about where participants work, and do not mean they work for LAs
- 13 LAs covered by the survey; 11 covered by the focus groups and interviews.
- So is the research robust enough? I can't be sure that the findings represent all of Scotland - or does this mean there is a dearth of school librarians in the non-coloured areas?
- I am reliably informed there are no school librarians in at least two LAs

Slide 11. Participant demographics 3

- Survey participants had average of 13 years of service; FG/I participants had average of 14 years
- So I am confident that what they told me is robust – and the leaders also basically agreed with the draft findings I distilled from the FGs/Is

Slide 12. Participant demographics 4

- Most school librarians seem to be lone workers. This can have implications, as we'll see later.
- Can someone enlighten me how there can be zero staff in some libraries, please?
- A slight majority work term-time only.
- So the findings I'm about to describe are a gestalt of what I've been told: not everything applies to every participant or area, but give the flavour of what's happening

Slide 13. How widespread?

- My first background/additional research question was about how widespread m/d issues are for students.
- Participants told me that in general students do face such issues. Misogyny and fake news are stand-out examples.
- They may not even realise that M/D are happening
- Older students may be more aware/able, while middle students might simply be going through their rebellious phases. But several participants couldn't say due to lack of time with students.
- LibInt01
- LibFG10
- LibFG10
- There seems to be media corroboration of the final quote – see the *Grauniad* article from April – you can follow the QR code to get to the original

Slide 14. When did it become newsworthy?

- So this was my second additional/background research question
- In both types of school, librarians IL skills are generally not being used well, and can be too overworked to have sufficient contact-time with students
- The quotes show how a participant (LibFG17) is ignored by her teaching colleagues, but how another (LibInt01) has managed to use work on referencing to advise on mis- and disinfo.

Slide 15. How well are school librarians used?

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Slide 16. Barriers

- My third additional/background research question was 'what in general are the barriers' to school librarians' work on information/media/digital literacy?'
- The barriers are about not being tasked to do literacy stuff, concentrating on reading for pleasure, and being brought in too late when bad habits have already been formed.
- Several participants suggested that if there are insufficient school librarians, move them all to primary schools so they can instil good habits from the get-go. Obviously this isn't a practical solution.
- LibFG14
- LibInt02
- LibFG10
- By the way, I am not against reading for pleasure at all – but I would have thought that students are at school to learn

Slide 17. RQ1

- The overall answer seems to be 'not as much as would be expected or wanted', in part because the curriculum, teachers and school highheidyuns don't require librarians to take on this topic. There is a mixed picture, as shown by LibInt05 (from the horror-story LA) and LibInt08.
- According to the survey, students and staff may ask for help with M/D. This may be by teaching classes or by doing 1-to-1s with students However, advising or assisting teachers is rare. Parents almost never ask librarians to do stuff on m/d
- FG/I participants often mentioned ad-hoc interventions: they may overhear something, or be advising on some course-work, and then it's 'hang on, can we delve into this…?'

Slide 18. RQ2a

- The participants who answered relevant questions generally would like to get directly involved with teaching around mis- and disinformation issues.
- Some have materials ready for this.
- Others would like materials supplied so they can contribute to teaching and learning around mis- and disinformation issues.
- Others recommended several sources and 'algorithms' that would be helpful
- NB these slides will be shared, so no need to try to make notes

Slide 19. RQ2b

- Not all participants agreed these barriers affected them, but majorities did
- Lack of time (contested by some participants – you can make time if you are wired in OK, are aren't torn between two schools) – see quote from LibInt08
- lack of training or training opportunities, in part due to the costs of training (I understand that librarian qualifications may not cover school librarianship) – see quote from LibInt08
- Lack of budget
- Lack of interest from teachers and school leadership, in part because teachers are overstretched, and lack of requirement from curriculum etc (quotes from LibFG03 and LibInt02)
- BUT 'NB they all get it in S3 and S4: critical thinking' (LibFG11)
- There were calls to extend what is currently happening (LibInt04)

Slide 20. RQ3

- In general, librarians have their professional training, which includes development of IL skills, and some CPD. Here is some data on participants' qualifications: initial and CPD, and data on training about mis-/disinfo. **NB BRUCE DON'T READ OUT %AGES**
- For the FG/I participants, I simply asked participants to tell me about their qualifications. I assume that those who had Masters degrees also had first degrees
- 8 FG/I participants had undertaken CPD (3 working towards professional registration/chartership, 4 already have it, 1 did not specify)
- But overall picture may not look good. A proportion of participants had no librarianship qualifications, or did not appear to have the opportunity to work towards one. What does this say about career-paths?
- Also I hear that librarianship training hasn't included schools – feedback on this would be very welcome.
- In some other countries, school librarians have to have teaching qualifications: talk with Sarah Pavey or David Haynes if you want detail.

Slide 21. RQ3 continued

- Mostly from the FG and Is, participants suggested these types of training: The take-home message for me is the collaborative trope.
- But I bear in mind the time-barriers to training mentioned earlier.

Slide 22. RQ4

- **Bruce: do not read out the percentages**
- Some collaboration is already in place, but it appears to be patchy at best.
- NB I am not bad-mouthing teachers here: it's mostly that they have so much to deliver.
- However, implicit here are calls for teachers, school leadership and the curriculum to recognise what school librarians can offer. Suggestions included:

Slide 23. RQ5

- Suggested routes and channels for advocacy (so we can move towards the sunlit uplands) include these
- Trade unions didn't seem to be a favoured channel, possibly because school librarians are in a minority to start with, and may be split across two unions – in which they may also be a minority.
- My Napier colleagues asked 'what about parents?' But if parents aren't asking librarians to do literacy/m/d stuff, I'm not convinced this is a viable route
- A majority of the participants stated they are definitely interested in working with me to advocate for better things in this context.
- I'll be in the coffee bar after the conference ends – join me there, or see my contact details on the next slide.

Slide 24. Menti

- That's enough talking from me for a bit – what are your experiences?
- It would be lovely to hear from any areas so far not represented.

Slide 25. Closing slide

- Here's my image credits.
- Thank you massively for your time today everyone.
- If anyone wants to contact me, especially about advocacy, here's my email address and Teams contact.