

Infographic—Experience of WiT 2023 conference by Sarah Walmsley (LTU)

What I was looking forward to?

I was looking forward to my first WiT conference, to see what it was all about and I had a look at what the sessions/talks were prior to going and some of them sounded really interesting and felt like it would be a good opportunity to attend the conference.

I only got the opportunity to go a week before it was happening, I had other things on, over the weekend before the conference and wasn't sure whether to go or not, but in the end I decided to go. I am really glad I did, from the sessions that were listed and thought, when would I get this opportunity again?

Top recommendations for attending WiT conference for the first time

- Embrace the networking with others, getting to talk to women in various tech roles and their experiences and you never know you may stay in touch with them down the track.
- Listen and take part in the sessions where possible and note down any interesting ideas and things that you could takeaway and potentially suggest at your own institution.
- If you get the opportunity to go with colleagues, go with them as you get to know them on a different level and can bounce ideas off each other during the conference and the potential ideas that you can take back to your institution to suggest and what you have learnt.
- Enjoy it and take in everything that you can.

What were my first impressions?

I went with a colleague and we did some networking and the various session throughout the day were interesting and inspired me in my current job role and what I could achieve.

I felt the event was very well organised, had a variety of sessions, speakers and backgrounds of women in tech, so appealed to women across a variety of roles and backgrounds. Everyone who attended the conference were very friendly and spoke to people from all over the country.

Top 3 key takeaways:

1. To see what the network is all about more and other UCISA networks and see what is going on within them. Since the WiT 2023 conference I have signed up to the mailing lists and I am going to follow this network and some other networks closely
2. It has inspired me and me think about potentially being able to present at a future WiT conference or other UCISA conferences in the future. I came away feeling like I could be someone who could inspire and tell me story/background and how I have got to where I am today.
3. Become more confident in my abilities, I am getting there but the current role I am in, is fairly new and there is still a lot to learn and from the stories and sessions during the day, some resonated with myself and having the belief that I have got this and will get there and be able to achieve what I set out to achieve. Its thinking inside and outside of the box, how colleagues and external networks can help me with this.