Rollin' Out
Using a Pop-up Library Cart to Bring Collections to Users

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Today, we will be introducing you to our pop-up library cart, talking about the different stages of this project, from planning to implementation of the project in different environments, the opportunities and challenges we've come across along the way, and the assessment we're conducting to decide on the future of the cart.

But what is the Pop-up Library Cart? For us, it's a mobile library that has allowed us to bring collection materials to patrons outside of the library. While this concept has been seen before in public libraries, it is fairly rare in academic libraries. However, we felt it would be an effective way to not only promote our collections, but ourselves as well to students and faculty within our respective subject areas.

Before getting this project off the ground, we carefully planned things out to ensure we would have support from our institution and give ourselves the best possible chance at success. Part of this process involved making decisions about equipment needs, not only the cart but also things like a book desensitizer and scanner to allow us to check out materials to patrons from anywhere we set up the cart. This was important for us because we wanted the cart to feel like a natural extension of the library, but one that was perhaps more accessible. We also considered things like the promotion of the cart, including design of, marketing materials, and a social media

plan. Then we met with other stakeholders in the library, such as the Access Services department, to confirm support for our project and develop necessary procedures in terms of taking the books outside of the library. Once we had everything in place, we submitted a proposal for an internal grant at our library and were able to secure funding for a pilot program. With that in place, we hammered out some final details related to scheduling the cart and strategies for selecting materials to take out on the cart, and then we were ready to actually take the cart out into the world!

Connecting with Courses

- Browseable experiences
- Academic Residential Communities (ARC)
- Individual connections
- Building a connection to the library that benefits students' academic careers

The idea for the cart first came about because Product Design faculty wanted "Browseable experiences" for their students. This makes a lot of sense, especially maybe for art/design students, but really for anyone where they may benefit from serendipitous discovery, or at least curated library experiences that are less overwhelming than a whole library. However, given restrictions with our ILS and space, we were not able to set this up in the library.

Once we got the cart award, I was able to connect with a faculty member who is in charge of a new academic residential community (ARC) on campus. These are where a group of first-year students with common interests live together in a dorm and take about half of their classes together for their first year of college. This faculty member teaches a year-long course related to art and design to these first-year students. She was so excited about the cart idea that I was invited to all of the ARC planning meetings leading up to its implementation. Which was a great opportunity to talk about other ways to connect with the library.

What we worked out is that I bring the cart to the class at the residence hall every week and am set up by the time the class lets out. I set up right by the door and wave the students down as they leave. At the first class I went into the classroom to

explain that I would be there every week, and gave them each a card catalog card to fill out with their prospective major and what interests them in art and design. In addition, I generally try to have a theme to the books I bring, so for example "art and activism" "nature and ecology in art and design" "artists of color" "color". I'm trying to both bring what they are interested in, but also make sure there is content that they would not look to on their own.

Originally interaction was slow, but as I was able to start recognizing the students, I could call out as they were passing by, "Hey, I brought a new book on graphic design" to a student I knew had that interest. I now have a core group of students (between 10-15) who stop by almost every week to see what I've brought.

So we are half way through the year-long program. I've found it works best if I have some idea about what the class is talking about so that I can tailor themes and bring better content.

What I like about this idea is that I'm connecting with students early on in their academic careers. These students may ultimately decide not to major in an art-related field, but even then, they've had a positive library-related experience from the beginning of their time at UO, which hopefully bridges future relationships with their relevant subject specialists. Furthermore, they have started to see me as a human, talking to me about their critiques in their classes, what they are doing for breaks, and flagging be down outside of this situation to ask questions.

Implementing in Established Spaces

- Taking advantage of established spaces, centers, etc. That already have built-in users.
- School of Journalism and Communication Writing Central
- Success depends on nature of space

I took a different approach. I still wanted to connect with students in my specific subject areas, but not In my previous position at the University of Wisconsin, I had managed the small journalism library there, which was co-located in the same building as the school. Since I was used to being embedded in some sense within the school I was working with, I had an interest in doing something similar at the University of Oregon with the School of Journalism and Communication. I decided the best approach would be to take advantage of an already established space in the school, the Writing Central, which is their internal peer tutoring center for the specialized writing the students do. I had already been holding drop-in hours there to assist students who needed research help as well, so it seemed like a natural fit to bring the cart with me. However, this implementation of the cart was not as successful as I'd hoped.

I still see potential for the cart to be successfully used with the School of Journalism and Communication. Despite the lack of interest from students

This sort of outreach has many opportunities associated with it.

You already heard about deeper connections with students. This programming also makes libraries and librarians more accessible to them by being where they already are, and works as an introduction to libraries.

We are currently starting a design competition which will allow students to submit ideas for making our ugly cart beautiful, allowing them to apply what they are learning

This has also been an opportunity to connect with faculty. Getting the library in their face. In my case this has resulted in being invited to artist events and also being able to have good conversations about how the library supports their students and needs.

We can now do all sorts of things with this cart that the library hasn't done before. We are considering doing zine-making in the students union, we've brought it to student orientation with our button maker, and are starting to identify events on campus that we can bring books and librarians to.

I think this also helps with the issue where students come to the library looking for books or articles that support what they want to say. Especially with the classroom connections, we get to show them things outside of their norm and expand their ideas.

Challenges

- Costs
- Mobility and portability
- Storage
- Weather
- Visual Impact
- Time-consuming
- Buy-in
- Trial and error

There are also many challenges that can come up. The biggest is, of course, cost, both in terms the equipment needed and the promotional materials. We were lucky in that we were able to repurpose an old laptop cart that the library already owned. However, this came with its own issues. The cart is heavy and unwieldy, making it a chore to push it around. Because of its size, it's also been difficult to find it a permanent home; it currently alternates between our office spaces. Being in the Pacific Northwest, weather is of course a concern for us. We had to make sure

Assessment/Evaluation

Date / Time / Location		Notes
10/18/17 4pm-5:45pm Kalapuya Ilihi (Art and Design ARC)	Casual visitors (come to look at cart, minimal interaction with librarian): 0 Mid-range visitors (they ask some general library questions/get some library information): 0 In-depth visitors (Research consultations): 0 Circulation: 0 Referrals: 0	The location of the cart is kind of hidden. During this session I had a conversation with the professor talking about what sort of things I should bring. That might help.
10/25/17 3:40pm-5:45 Kalapuya Ilihi (Art and Design ARC)	Casual visitors (come to look at cart, minimal interaction with librarian): 14 Mid-range visitors (they ask some general library questions/get some library information): 6 In-depth visitors (Research consultations): 1 Circulation: 2 items Referrals: 0	Changed location to right outside the classroom. Great! At least 3 people not from the ARC class stopped and talked to me.

- Statistic tracking
- Our results
- What is success?

We haven't yet figured out how to integrate information about cart transactions with the consultation statistics submitted to ARL. In order to facilitate that conversation, we started with a modified version of the form we use at UO to track reference transactions, but realized that for the information to being meaningful to us we needed a little bit more information and to differentiate between more types of transactions. For example, there were people who stopped by the cart but didn't talk to the librarian at all, people who stopped by and talked briefly to the librarian, and people with which we had more detailed interactions. We also wanted to track circulation information, which because of the way our ILS is being used can be a little tricky, so we've added that to our sheet.

So far results are mixed. With the course-related activity I saw a steady increase of participants from the beginning to the end of the term. In the Writing Central, participation was not as consistent, leading Carolina to work out a different outreach method with the cart. We also still have more ideas to explore. Next term we are bringing the cart to our first campus-wide event (Art + Feminism Wikipedia Edit-a-thon) and working to identify other campus-wide events at which to do collections-based outreach.

Part of year two of the program will also be a discussion of what success looks like, and hopefully include other librarians as the program expands to have more of us using the cart. Looking at our numbers and different types of implementation, we will determine what works best on our campus. We will also have to look at whether the time it takes to do this sort of programming is worth the effort. Is there a way we could impact more students that takes less time? How does our connection change if I only go to the class once a month or every other week instead of weekly? It's also partly philosophical: If I'm having a strong connection with 10 students, is that better than a medium impact on 30, or a low impact on 100? The answers are likely to have to tie together our personal beliefs as librarians with larger library-wide goals and constraints.

What we have seen so far is that this type of outreach has the potential to deeply impact students and grow connections between students and librarians, but that potential varies greatly depending on the type of implementation.

Thanks

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