Springfield Public Library Research

Fall 2012• School of Journalism and Communication

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SCI

Sustainable Cities Initiative

Acknowledgements

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About SCI

The Sustainable Cities Initiative (SCI) is a cross-disciplinary organization at the University of Oregon that promotes education, service, public outreach, and research on the design and development of sustainable cities. We are redefining higher education for the public good and catalyzing community change toward sustainability. Our work addresses sustainability at multiple scales and emerges from the conviction that creating the sustainable city cannot happen within any single discipline. SCI is grounded in cross-disciplinary engagement as the key strategy for improving community sustainability. Our work connects student energy, faculty experience, and community needs to produce innovative, tangible solutions for the creation of a sustainable society.

About SCYP

The Sustainable City Year Program (SCYP) is a year-long partnership between SCI and one city in Oregon, in which students and faculty in courses from across the university collaborate with the partner city on sustainability and livability projects. SCYP faculty and students work in collaboration with staff from the partner city through a variety of studio projects and service-learning courses to provide students with real-world projects to investigate. Students bring energy, enthusiasm, and innovative approaches to difficult, persistent problems. SCYP's primary value derives from collaborations resulting in on-the-ground impact and expanded conversations for a community ready to transition to a more sustainable and livable future. SCY 2011-12 includes courses in Architecture; Arts and Administration; Business; Economics; Journalism; Landscape Architecture; Law; Oregon Leadership in Sustainability; and Planning, Public Policy, and Management.

About Springfield, Oregon

The City of Springfield has been a leader in sustainable practices for more than 30 years, tackling local issues ranging from waste and stormwater management to urban and suburban redevelopment. It is the first and only jurisdiction in Oregon to create two separate Urban Renewal Districts by voter approval. Constrained by dramatic hillsides and rivers to the north and south, Springfield has worked tirelessly to develop efficiently and respectfully within its natural boundary as well as the current urban growth boundary. Springfield is proud of its relationships and ability to work with property owners and developers on difficult developments, reaching agreements that are to the benefit of both the project and the affected property owners. These relationships with citizens are what continue to allow Springfield to turn policy and planning into reality. Springfield recruited a strong, diverse set of partners to supplement city staff participation in SCYP. Partners include the Springfield Utility Board, Willamalane Park and Recreation District, Metro Wastewater Management Commission, United Way of Lane County, and Springfield School District 19.

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This report represents original student work and recommendations prepared by students in the University of Oregon's Sustainable City Year Program for the City of Springfield. Text and images contained in this report may not be used without permission from the University of Oregon.

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Executive Summary

The Sustainable Cities Initiative (SCI) is a University of Oregon initiative that promotes education, service, public outreach, and research on the design and development of sustainable cities. Each year, a different city is selected to participate in SCI's Sustainable City Year Program (SCYP). This year's city partner is Springfield, Oregon. One of the projects targeted by the city involves the Springfield Public Library, which is looking for ways to encourage growth in community involvement and increase access to current library services for Springfield residents.

Students were asked to conduct research on behalf the library and produce information that includes significant amounts of data from people across the community, including both current library patrons and non-patrons. Using secondary, qualitative, and quantitative research, students developed a variety of ideas to help increase involvement at the library.

Major recommendations include emphasizing the library's online catalog and e-book selection. The children's specialty events are popular, and we recommend expanding the variety and target age range of these events. The community finds these programs highly valuable and increasing these events will help foster participation across all demographics. Our research also indicates that the library is currently underutilizing social media tools. The library would benefit by increasing the interactivity of its online communities.

Students also interviewed key elected officials about their opinions and recommendations on the expansion and/or relocation of the Springfield Library. We found that while most elected officials support the library in its expansion efforts, the general consensus was that this is currently an unrealistic option due to a lack of funding. Some possible alternatives include creating satellite libraries throughout Springfield or expanding the current library district, which would eliminate fees paid by library users who live outside of the current district boundaries.

Introduction

The Sustainable Cities Initiative (SCI) is an interdisciplinary University of Oregon initiative that promotes education, service, public outreach and research on the development of sustainable cities. One way that SCI fulfills this mission is by partnering with a different Oregon city each academic year through its Sustainable City Year Program (SCYP). This year's city partner is Springfield, Oregon. The goal of SCYP is to give students real-world work experience on city projects while making partner cities more economically, socially, and environmentally sustainable. One of this year's SCYP project partners is the Springfield Public Library, which is currently seeking ways to encourage growth in community involvement. The library seeks to understand the needs of the community better, in order to determine the best way to encourage the community to support a new downtown library.

Goals of this project include:

- Increasing access to current library services.
- Building support for the idea of a new downtown library that serves the whole community.
- Expanding the library's presence (facilities and services) throughout the community, not just downtown.
- Delivering information to the City Council, including significant amounts of data from people across the community who are current library patrons as well as those who are not.

Students and faculty collaborated with city staff to explore and expand the scope of inquiry. Research was conducted by University of Oregon students in Professor Patricia Curtin's Strategic Communication Research Methods course. Students conducted primary and secondary research in order to assess the current state of the library and to develop suggestions for improvement.

Situation Analysis

Project Description

For the past several years, the City of Springfield has encouraged the community to recognize and take advantage of the resources the library has to offer. However, both the city and the library have found that this is not happening quickly or easily. The Springfield Public Library seeks to understand the needs of the community better, in order to determine the best way to foster community support for a new downtown library and increase patronage.

The Springfield Public Library would like to increase the number of residents who use the library's services, and is looking at metrics that include the number of patrons who check out books, participate in library-funded programs, and use the library's facilities and services. The library would like to see increased support from the surrounding community, and ultimately hopes to acquire adequate funds to construct a new building that would better serve its patrons.

In order to understand how to meet the library's goals of increasing community support, students first researched reasons that patrons use the library or do not want to use the library. Is the library accessible? Does it provide services and programs that people want to use and participate in? Does it provide services and programs that are not available elsewhere in the community? Are people aware of the services and programs that the library provides? What other variables play a part? Also, it is important to assess who is using the library, and why they do or do not like it. What are the demographics of those who use the library and participate in library-funded programs? How satisfied are these library patrons? What draws them to this library in particular? What changes do these current patrons think could be made to improve the library? Do local schools interact with the library and do children enjoy their time there? Overall, the library asked students to assess the current usage of the library and the positive and negative aspects of the current system.

The proposals set forth in this report will focus specifically on the goal of increasing use of bicycles as transportation. Many of the previously discussed items in this background overview will be addressed. These student proposals do not recommend specific standards, design criteria, or combine in any way to present a comprehensive bikeway system. They do, however, recommend many treatment alternatives, bike routes and boulevards, socio-cultural considerations, and bicycle culture enrichment ideas to promote the efficacy, safety, and appeal of the city's bicycle network.

Location

The Springfield Library currently occupies a space in Springfield's City Hall. The library is too small to meet the needs of the current population of Springfield. The size and structure do not allow for as many books and facilities as the

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library would like to have. Relocation to a larger building would provide more space to improve the library.

The library is in downtown Springfield, on the western edge of the city. The location makes it difficult to serve the majority of the community, because a significant part of the Springfield community lives in the eastern area of the city. While the library is close to Springfield Middle School and a couple of elementary schools, it is distant from the majority of the city's schools and residences.

Springfield's downtown, while it has improved during the last decade, has a history of housing bars and other less-than-desirable businesses (there is still a strip club less than a block and a half from the library, but many bars and clubs have moved out of downtown recently), which may affect the overall family friendliness of the library and may also deter families from using the facility. One possible solution that is being discussed, which addresses some but not all of these concerns, is placing the library in a separate building, to make room for more patrons and to serve as a destination within an improved Springfield downtown.

Resources

According the Springfield Public Library website, the library struggles to maintain its important city landmark status in the state of Oregon. Under the pressure of a changing media era, the Springfield Public Library has a hard time fulfilling the needs of the community it serves while continuing to deliver its traditional core informational and recreational services.

The Springfield Library currently offers all resources that are available at most libraries; these include traditional books, e-books, audio books, classes for adults and children, and public Internet access. It provides many services that appeal to children and teens, such as e-readers and public wireless network access, and also offers continuing education programs for adults.

One example of the library offering opportunities for patrons to understand the library's value is the Springfield Public Library Cost Calculator (http://wheremindsgrow.org/calc.html). The Cost Calculator allows users to calculate how much money they can save each month by using the library's resources.

Events

The library hosts many activities involving patrons of all ages. Adults can attend poetry readings with the Oregon Poetry Association, hear speakers, and participate in events. The Springfield Public Library has recognized the importance of its youth and family demographic, and has special programs and events for both kids and teens. Adolescents can participate in short story writing contests, join Teen Read Week, and apply for the Teen Advisory Board.

The library also hosts weekly events such as Preschool Storytime and Lap-sit Storytime for young children and their families.

Although the Springfield Public Library hosts many free events for the community, attendance and membership are low. Springfield Public Library, like the Eugene Public Library and other libraries around the state and nation, is struggling for attendance and membership (Nelson 2008).

Demographics

In addition to these issues, the city of Springfield, Oregon is experiencing tremendous population growth. In fact, the Springfield population has grown 12.4 percent in the last 10 years. The Springfield Library's goal is to expand its facility and become more accessible to the growing community.

Springfield is located in Lane County in the Southern Willamette Valley. According to the 2010 United States Census, Springfield spans 14.4 square miles with a population of 59,403. About 7 percent of the population is aged five and under, and 24.3 percent is 18 and under. Springfield is 86 percent Caucasian, 12 percent Hispanic, and 5 percent of the residents identify themselves as two or more races (US Census, 2010).

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Literature Review

Libraries around the country aim to serve all members of the community and "have a vital role to play in ensuring equitable access to a range of resources" (Edwards and Williams 2010). For families, libraries can serve as a safe place for youth to congregate. With the demands of parents' work schedules conflicting with children's school schedules, often the library is used as a place for children to go after school until their parents are able to pick them up (Edwards and Williams 2010).

In their article entitled "The Role of Libraries in Helping Adolescents and Their Families Juggle the Demands of Work and Life," Jane Edwards and Pip Williams discuss several issues concerning families and library usage. One of the article's most relevant points for our purposes was the concept of libraries as "third places:"

> *Third places are those domains that are separate from home or workplace (or school, in the case of teenagers). They are valuable places in that they facilitate interaction and help foster a sense of place and belonging…. Third places are arguably more important for teenagers than the adult population, since there are so few places, other than school or home, that are safely or freely available to them (Edwards and Williams 2010).*

Libraries offer an opportunity for young children and teenagers to adopt an area as their space; a place in which they can interact with peers and have access to resources they may not have at home. They can also be safe, positive environments for youth to gather. "In the absence of welcoming libraries, many teenagers would go home to empty houses or they would utilize places that are, in many instances, unwelcoming or unsafe. Alternatively, they may interact with their communities in negative ways" (Edwards and Williams 2010).

Due to the state of the economy, many schools have cut the hours and days in which they hold classes, leaving parents to find alternative places for children to go on days such as "Furlough Fridays." The Springfield Public Library has held one-off activities to address this situation and could consider further implementing weekly activities to more regularly address this concern in the community.

According to the American Library Association, many libraries are building creative and playful spaces to draw in younger children. Although this can present challenges due to limited library space and staffing, the Springfield Public Library devotes quite a bit of its limited space to child-friendly programming.

Staffing

One of the most important aspects of building a strong library is staffing, particularly the way staff interacts with younger visitors. "Library staff can make

or break the library experience for users. The most brilliant youth space and resources will not compensate for surly, unfriendly, or unhelpful staff" (Bourke 2010).

Teenage patrons can receive negative impressions from both staff and other library visitors. "One common complaint is that young people are in the library taking up space and being noisy but not borrowing anything... librarians and their councils may be strongly wedded to circulation statistics but they also need to look at other usage statistics—door counts, seating, study space and web hits—as legitimate measures of use" (Bourke 2010).

New Technology/E-books

> *The real challenge for public libraries is being fluid enough to move quickly to remain relevant in terms of having a mix of services that are truly valuable for our customers. It isn't just about taking what's in print and converting it but understanding how the public wants to get the information. If libraries are going to survive in that role, they are going to have to alter the way in which they put content in the public's hands (Sarno 2010).*

New technology has led to increased use of electronic books ("e-books") accessed on reading devices such as the Amazon Kindle, Barnes and Noble Nook, and the Sony Reader (Foasberg 2011). Some libraries offer e-books that can be checked out electronically instead of checking out a hard copy. "As e-books have taken off with readers, libraries have been building their e-book collections to meet demand, successfully persuading many publishers to sell their titles to libraries in e-book format" (Bosman 2011). Many library users find this feature to be very useful because it is a simple and efficient way to check out a book without having to make a special trip. "With this flurry of activity have come predictions that e-readers will replace print eventually, perhaps even within the next few years" (Foasberg 2011).

Although print books have long been the most prevalent option for library patrons, e-books are becoming more user-friendly and are possibly gaining an advantage over print books due to their simple navigation. E-books are not only becoming easier to find and use, but are now available online for individuals who have Internet access but do not have access to local public libraries.

Libraries around the nation are incorporating electronic sources into their collections (the average public library in the United States carries 1,500 e-books, and 72 percent of libraries carry e-books); however, some libraries are skeptical due to copyright and privacy laws (Nelson 2008).

With many devices available in the electronic book market, readers want easier access to e-books; creating and promoting the use of e-books and e-book libraries is crucial to keeping libraries around the nation successful (Nelson

2008). Currently, e-books represent a tiny fraction of all book sales, but are growing. In 2008, e-book sales accounted for approximately 0.5 percent of all U.S. book sales; a year later, they accounted for 1.3 percent. Forrester Research predicts that e-book sales for the year 2011 will reach $1 billion, which represents a small but growing percentage of overall publishing industry sales of $35 billion.

E-books exist alongside printed books and serve a variety of needs for library patrons. Electronic reference books can be more user-friendly and simpler to navigate and search than their printed counterparts, making them favored among students (Nelson 2008). One highly desired feature of electronic reading devices is the ability to enlarge or reduce the font size, giving visually impaired readers the ability to create their own large-print edition of a book (Nelson 2008). E-books can also solve some problems for libraries. Although they don't wear out, don't need to be replaced, and can't easily be misplaced by careless users like printed books, e-book files are sometimes subject to corruption or other technical problems. Instead of requiring physical storage space in libraries, e-books require electronic disk space, freeing up physical library space for alternative displays and resources. E-books also allow libraries to serve and offer books to customers who may not be able to physically travel to the library (Nelson 2008).

Not only have e-books created a convenient way for readers to access books, electronic use is an efficient way for librarians to monitor collection use. Libraries around the nation are incorporating electronic resources into the library's typical paper copy collections. Libraries that have had success with incorporating e-books into their library collections often provide access to e-books on the library's website. Another successful technique that libraries use is to put the newest titles of the collection on the front page of the e-book website, allowing readers to easily find the newest and most popular books.

E-libraries have not only become popular with the younger generation because of the convenience of finding books for pleasure reading but also because e-libraries are becoming more useful in the academic world (Nelson 2008).

The Springfield Public Library has a growing e-library and has devoted an entire section of its website to e-books, audio podcasts, and computer resources. Library members can download books not only to their computers, but also onto their Kindles, BlackBerries, iPhones, and iPads. Access to electronic media is becoming even more necessary in the fight to get people into public libraries (Nelson 2008).

The Oregon Digital Library Consortium is the e-book library for all Oregon State Libraries. Access to this virtual collection is found on the library website's main page, where readers can use their local library card identification numbers to check out e-books. The website provides access to books online along with the ability to download books onto a member's computer or e-reader device. After

a few weeks, the rented book will delete itself from the member's computer or device (Nelson 2008).

Success Stories: New York

In his article, Popular E-Content at The New York Public Library: Successes and Challenges, Christopher Platt (2011) discusses the New York Public Library system's "success with e-books and other forms of popular e-content and our efforts to stay one step ahead of the consumer shift from print reading to e-reading."

The New York Public Library began offering downloadable items such as e-books, audio books, music and video in 2004 and their "collections have grown in size and scope to become the most heavily used of any public library in the United States." Offering this content for download on their website, the New York Public Library has "63,000 items… representing over 38,000 titles and taken as a virtual branch" alongside their 90 physical libraries. The use of this virtual branch is #2 in circulation, behind only one of their physical locations.

According to Platt, since first offering these services in 2004, NYPL's circulation has continued to grow steadily. "As of the end of May this year we are 39% higher than this point last year and have already exceeded 400,000 circulations… while the patrons are growing, the amount of use is outpacing it, logically showing that these are dedicated e-patrons, returning to the library again and again for content." The article highlights the success of this program and how the library has responded to technological advances, offering users new ways to access information. (Platt)

Recommendations Based on Literature Review

The information found from the secondary research shows that e-books are steadily being integrated into public libraries. E-books are becoming a growing investment for public libraries everywhere. Springfield Public Library may benefit from assessing the success of their e-book program. We recommend further promoting this resource to patrons and the general public and encouraging patrons, and potential patrons, to utilize the service. The library should also ensure that all staff members understand these services, as well how to support, use, and access them.

Elected Officials

This section of the research focuses on support needed to improve the library, with a primary interest in the opinions of Springfield elected officials. The opinions of the elected officials are important because they make decisions on behalf of the public. These decisions determine budgetary distributions and taxes, which are the principal resources for library funding. Our research focuses on the backgrounds and goals of local elected officials.

The Springfield Mayor is Christine Lundberg; the City Council members are Sean VanGordon, Hillary Wylie, Sheri Moore, Dave Ralston, Marilee Woodrow, and Joe Pishioneri.

Elected Officials Background

Mayor Christine Lundberg

The mayor of Springfield, Oregon is former City Council member Christine Lundberg. Lundberg grew up in Springfield and says she has always had a passion for the community. She joined the Navy after high school, volunteered for city schools, and worked on different community projects. She attended the University of Oregon (as well as Lane and San Diego Community Colleges) and was elected to the Springfield City Council in Spring 1999, representing Ward 1.

The focus of her first State of the City Address was on ways to improve the City of Springfield. According to Lundberg's address, Springfield has been greatly affected by the recession and is having problems with the promotion of urban growth, including development of the downtown area. The addition of new businesses, including restaurants and shopping facilities, as well as a monthly "Art Walk," has helped downtown Springfield become a more popular destination for residents.

A large part of Lundberg's election campaign was promoting the success of downtown Springfield, where the library is located. Lundberg works openly with the public and holds scheduled sessions in her office. She's open for people to come in and discuss with her issues relating to the city (Koopman 2011).

Sean VanGordon

Sean VanGordon represents Ward 1 and has served on the Springfield Planning Commission and the Springfield Historic Commission. On LinkedIn, a business networking website, he writes, "My desire to serve as Springfield's Representative comes from my frustration with our state's inability to solve long term problems.... Long term planning and investment creates solutions that survive the ups and downs of the General Fund" (VanGordon 2011).

Hillary Wylie

Hillary Wylie represents Ward 2 and has lived in the Eugene and Springfield area since 1968. She was on the Springfield Budget Committee for five years and the Lane Transit District Board for eight years before she was elected to City Council. She currently serves on the Gateway EmX Extension Art Committee (City of Springfield 2010).

Sheri Moore

Sheri Moore represents Ward 3. Born and raised in Oregon, she is originally from Oregon City and has lived in Springfield since the 1970s. Moore earned her master's degree in education from the University of Oregon and taught at Marcola Elementary School for 23 years before retiring in 2006. She has been a member of the Springfield Planning Committee for three years. She is a Master Gardener with Lane County Extension, an elected member of the Precinct Committee, and she volunteers at the Eugene Christian Fellowship (City of Springfield 2010).

Dave Ralston

Dave Ralston represents Ward 4 on the council. He currently serves as chair of the Homeless Prevention Task Force, secretary to the Full and Executive Board of Directors for the Boys and Girls Clubs of Emerald Valley, and vice president of Emerald Valley Little League Baseball. He recently became a member of the Springfield Rotary (City of Springfield 2010). Ralston ran unsuccessfully for mayor in 2010. He recently took community criticism for accusing Centro Latino Americano, a bilingual, multicultural agency dedicated to the empowerment of the Latino community of Lane County, of providing services only to illegal immigrants and applauding the Lane County Human Services Commission decision not to give money to the agency (Palmer 2011a).

Marilee Woodrow

Marilee Woodrow represents Ward 5 on the council and serves on the Library Advisory Board (City of Springfield 2010). Woodrow says she is especially dedicated to the Springfield Library project because she believes strongly in serving the community's greatest needs (Palmer 2011b). She has also volunteered for 10 years with SMART (Start Making a Reader Today), a program in which adults from the community volunteer their time at local elementary schools to help children improve their reading skills (Palmer 2011b). The children in SMART range in age from preschool to third grade and spend an hour or two at a time with their reading partners. In a recent interview with the Register-Guard, Woodrow said "I love being with kids and I love reading, so it's a natural for me. You develop a positive relationship with a child. They know you're there because you want to be" (Palmer 2011b).

Joe Pishioneri

Joe Pishioneri represents Ward 6 (City of Springfield 2010). In addition to his position on the Springfield City Council, Pishioneri also serves as a Lane County Deputy Sheriff. He spends some of his time participating in school activities with his two children, who are students in the Springfield school system (Pishioneri 2010).

Methodology

Students attended a City Council meeting on November 7, 2011 in order to observe the process of the meeting and ask questions regarding the library. We contacted City Council members and asked their opinions on the library project. Interview questions were emailed to each council member. Everyone replied except for Council Member Dave Ralston and Council Member Joe Pishioneri. An in-person interview with Mayor Christine Lundberg was conducted on Friday, November 4.

Findings

City Council Meeting

We attended the City Council meeting on November 7, 2011. There were only a handful of people in the audience, including students. When the time came for questions, the council members opened the floor and asked if anyone wanted to talk or comment on an issue. A woman who works for Planned Parenthood spoke briefly to praise the council's handling of controversy related to Planned Parenthood's new facility in the Glenwood area of Springfield.

Overall, there were similar patterns of responses for this research from the different elected officials, including admiration for the current library as well as agreement that the library does not reach the entire community due to its location. With the exception of Council Member Sean VanGordon, who believes that with the future of technology and lack of funding, library expansion is unnecessary, there was an overall interest in some sort of expansion for the facility and its users. Council Member Marilee Woodrow noted that there is no room for growth in the library's present location within City Hall.

As to how to address the issues of expansion and how the library can serve the majority of the population, there were mixed responses. Council Member Sheri Moore suggested the creation of satellite libraries in multiple locations across Springfield. Woodrow believes that satellite libraries would be too complex to create. Mayor Lundberg proposed an expansion of the library district boundaries to eliminate city fees for student library-users outside the current library district. On the whole, despite a desire for expansion, there was a consensus that the Springfield's current financial situation makes any expansion unrealistic for the near future.

Mayor Lundberg Interview

In an interview with Mayor Lundberg about her opinions regarding the library, she explained her feelings this way: all of her children have used the library to check out as much as they can, for research, to help with school, and for fun. "Plus, the library does all of these great programs outside of the normal library programs," Lundberg said. Lundberg also said she knows many people in Springfield use the library for all of its resources, making it a valuable community asset.

The question of expansion of the library had a complex answer. Lundberg said another district needs to be formed for the library, rather than expanding it. Children in the Springfield school district outside the current library district boundaries have to pay the library "city fees" to use it. Lundberg believes a good idea would be to expand the library district and form a bond to improve the library.

When asked how Springfield residents use the library and if they use it to its full potential, Lundberg focused on local schools and universities. Springfield has two high schools, plus the Academy of Arts & Academics (A3), a charter school located in downtown Springfield. A3 students use the Springfield Library as their library. There is a lot of usage because of this group, and students can also use the University of Oregon or Lane Community College libraries to access what the Springfield Public Library doesn't have in its collections. One way to improve the sustainability of this three-agency relationship would be to make transportation easier between the three libraries and link them together more.

Council Members

In his reply to the students' survey, City Councilor VanGordon stated he believes the library is important in the downtown area for economic support. He thinks the library could be expanded, but has some concerns: "...any expansion discussion has to be put into the context of the changing needs of the library. For example, will the library of the next twenty years still have physical books? How [do] technology and e-readers play into the next generation of the library?" Technology isn't VanGordon's only concern; he is worried that expanding the library right now might not be a good choice financially and that the cost might be too great. "If we use a capital bond to fund an expansion, I would be concerned about asking voters to fund what we need vs. what we want." Altogether, he said he trusts the Library Board fully and hopes to see some activities aimed at teenagers and the "Generation Y" population, in addition to the current children's activities.

Council Member Sheri Moore responded to questions by email, and stated that she is a huge supporter of the Springfield Library. Moore is especially proud of the library's commitment to the Latino population in the community (the Springfield Library recently won the 2011 Mora Award for promoting library

and information services to Latino/a and Spanish-speaking members of the community).

Moore believes expansion of the library is necessary, explaining that "it would benefit the city's need for expanded facilities if the library was moved out of City Hall." Moore, like VanGordon, believes downtown is the best place for the library, because it draws families and community members to an area the city is trying to revitalize. She is concerned, however, that downtown may not be an accessible location for all residents of Springfield.

The solution from her perspective would be "to see satellite libraries placed in East Springfield and possibly Glenwood as well as downtown" to better serve all residents of Springfield. "After all," she notes, "serving the citizens of Springfield is our goal."

When we asked Council Member Marilee Woodrow for her thoughts concerning the Springfield Library, she responded with her first memory of using a public library 50 years ago. Woodrow explained that she has lived in almost a dozen different communities. Her first step in integrating into a new place has been becoming acquainted with the library and obtaining a library card. She began her relationship with the Springfield Library 14 years ago, and she still views it as a core resource in the community. She strongly supports public libraries, especially the Springfield Library. In addition, she believes the Springfield Library provides a vital service to the community and has the ability to serve the entire cross-section of its residents in a multitude of ways.

Woodrow argues that the Springfield Library benefits the community in a multitude of ways, and was especially complimentary of library programs across all age spectrums ranging from pre-school to adult programs: "Springfield [Library] offers services that not only meet basic needs, but also meet wishes." As for basic needs, she highlighted that the library offers bilingual services, a complete range of books, and knowledgeable staff to direct patrons toward other services. Woodrow believes the ways the community benefits from the library are vast.

The survey asked Woodrow if she thought the library needed to be expanded. She noted that the Springfield population is growing, and if the library is to continue to support a growing number of patrons, the library will need to grow too. The issue Woodrow sees is that there is no room for growth in its present location in City Hall, and offers two options to resolve the problem: "The first is to create satellite library sites through the east-west length of the city. The second is to create a new physical library site with an expanded building size and opportunities to serve the community with more than it can presently offer."

Woodrow thinks the implementation of satellite sites would be a complex and convoluted process. The process of finding, locating, and securing sites to meet the library's needs would be painstaking. Woodrow thinks a new building would be much more feasible.

As for a site for a new library, Woodrow presents two options: downtown, or a more central location in the city. Keeping the library downtown would bring people to the vicinity and add a progressive and utilitarian destination. If the new library were more centrally located, however, it would provide better access for the greater Springfield population, as well as people in the Thurston area.

We asked Woodrow if she thought the residents of Springfield were using the library to its full potential. "I believe the residents of Springfield are more and more impressed and pleased with the services to be found in the library," she answered. She thinks the library makes its services readily available and that people take advantage of them. The only drawback Woodrow could identify was the open hours of the library, which are limited due to budget cuts.

Woodrow would like to see two things happen to improve library services and programs. The first improvement would be an annual fundraiser or grant program that allows the library to distribute free library cards to all of Springfield's rural residents. Patrons within city limits receive free use of the library and book checkouts, but those outside do not.

The second improvement Woodrow would like to implement would be to find a way to fund a staff expansion. A public outreach team could dedicate their time teaching students about their local library. She foresees the outreach team traveling between schools and programs to give exciting presentations on the services of the Springfield Library. Woodrow has served on the Springfield Library Advisory Board, first as a board member, then as its president, and now as the City Council liaison. She has volunteered in many ways for the current programs and fundraisers, and believes that the library's many special programs and projects help library outreach to the community. Woodrow explained the chain reaction she has recognized in gaining local support for the library:

> *Once they participate in something of initial interest to them, they see how many more opportunities are available with the library. The more use they make of the library services and programs, the more they realize the vital resource it is to the community as a whole and to its individual community members of all ages. The more they recognize it as a fundamental and essential resource in our community, the more willing they are to find ways and resources to help keep it open, staffed, and functioning.*

We asked Woodrow how Springfield taxpayers pay to fund the operation of the library. She informed us that currently, library services are paid for out of the General Fund of the city budget.

Council Member Hillary Wylie replied to our questions but mainly focused on expansion of the library. Wylie believes the library staff is doing a great job involving the patrons in the community. She wants to see more space or even a new downtown building. Wylie says she would support any efforts to expand the library, but like VanGordon, believes money could be an issue at this time: "I think money is too tight to build right now, but I would like to see them have additional support and perhaps expansion."

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Recommendations

The City of Springfield's seven City Council members, including the mayor, make decisions about a variety of Springfield issues. Our interview-based research revealed that the Springfield Library's location is viewed as problematic, and that there is an overall (but not unanimous) interest in expansion. The problem is that the library shares its space with City Hall, making expansion impossible. To solve this problem, one City Council member suggested the creation of satellite libraries in multiple locations across Springfield to serve more members of the community. Another council member felt the creation of satellite libraries would be too complex and suggested an expansion of the library district to alleviate city fees for student library-users outside the current library district. On the whole, despite a desire for expansion, there was a consensus that Springfield's current financial situation makes any expansion unrealistic for the near future.

Participant Observation

To clearly understand the reasons behind the perceived underuse of the Springfield Public Library, our team carried out a participant observation study. Through this research we were able to understand some of the underlying reasons for patrons' use of city libraries. By working alongside those who were in the library, we were able to view and examine all that was taking place to understand where the Springfield Public Library was succeeding and where it needed help.

Two groups of students conducted participant observations. The first group held observations at both the Springfield Public Library and the Eugene Public Library to compare results. The second group focused on observing the Springfield Library specifically.

Methodology (Group 1)

Group 1 observed both the Springfield and Eugene libraries from 2-4 p.m. during one weekday, Wednesday November 9, 2012, and one weekend day, Saturday November 12, 2012. Observers focused on main entries of the libraries in order to monitor what sections patrons headed to upon entering the library.

During the many participant observation sessions, observers took an active role in watching, observing, and recording what the library visitors were doing and using. Observers tracked approximate patron age and gender, whether visitors came alone or with a group, and which library resources patrons used first. Average time patrons spent in the library was also noted. Participant observation allowed an understanding of not only what the library has to offer, but also how the library fits into visitors' everyday lives. Through a participant observation study, observers were able to see how the public is actually using the library, and if the library is able to provide beneficial resources.

Findings (Group 1)

Springfield Public Library

During the first visit to the Springfield Public Library the overall attendance was low, ranging between 50-65 visitors. Among the visitors on Wednesday, although there were several females, most were male. Three-quarters of the population observed were in the age range of 50 and older. A couple young children were observed, but zero to few college-aged students were seen. Almost all of the visitors who attended the first day attended alone.

When visitors first entered the library, most went straight to the library computers. Many of the patrons were accessing social media websites and e-mail. These patrons would spend anywhere from 15 minutes to one hour on a computer at a time.

The visitors who did not need to seek access to library computers spent their time browsing through book genres. Of the visitors who did this, most appeared to be non-Caucasian middle-aged adults. Children were laughing and playing while their parents scanned book titles.

The observed use of e-books compared to actual books was minimal. Other common resources that were used by visitors included newspapers, magazines, and a small section of music. Over the two hours observed, six visitors used the library reference desk. Five of the visitors who used the reference desk asked for specific book genres or where a specific book was located. The sixth person was looking for a particular book that the Springfield Public Library did not have and wanted to order it from another library.

The second visit to the Springfield Public Library, on Saturday, showed a difference in demographic results. The overall attendance of visitors over the two-hour time period almost tripled compared to the attendance from the first visit. Of the total number of visitors, nearly all were women. This is a large difference compared to the majority from the first visit being men. The prominent age group in the second visit were young adults and children, ranging in age from approximately 3 to 23 years.

Other than the noticeable differences in age ranges and genders, the other noted observations had similar results to the first observation at the Springfield Public Library. The majority of visitors accessed the computers right away, mostly searching social media networks; however, with the higher number of young children at the second visit, more time was spent playing academic computer games. A few adolescent visitors browsed through book sections. Again, few visitors spent time actually looking at e-books, newspapers, or magazines. A handful of visitors used the library for alternative resources, such as making copies.

Twelve visitors used the reference desk during this observation. Eight of the visitors asked questions pertaining to specific sections of the library, books or authors. One woman complained of issues with her Bible e-book (a large part of the New Testament was missing). Two women who approached the desk were looking for a book that the Springfield Public Library did not carry and wanted to order the book from another public library. The last visitor was a young college-aged woman wanting to reserve a study room for two hours.

Eugene Public Library

Eugene Public Library had a large number of attendees on Wednesday, the first day of observations. The overall attendance, approximately 120 visitors, were mostly female. The most common age range of visitors was approximately 40 and older; however, after school hours, starting at around 3:15 p.m., a large number of students approximately ages 16 and under visited the library. Unlike the adults who browsed through the library on their own, the school-aged children browsed in groups of two to five students. Three quarters of the adults

at the library visited book sections, while few, about one quarter of the observed adults, accessed computers. Adults who used computers searched social media networks, checked e-mail, and used search engines to find information. School-aged children were split between one of three activities in the library. In a group, the children would go to a section of books, go to computers and play on social media networks, or go to empty tables rummaging through school binders, papers and books.

Many visitors went to the reference desk for help. There were several people in the library and at the reference desk at all times of the observation. Because of the large number of visitors, it was nearly impossible to hear what the visitors were asking.

Day two's observations at the Eugene Public Library were vastly different from day one observations. Again, the majority of visitors were females in the age range of approximately 40 and older. Because the second day of observation was a Saturday, there was only about half the number of school-aged children visiting. The students who visited the library came with their parents, did not travel in groups, and would go straight to a book section. Very few went to computers. Although more adults went to computers on the second day of observation than on the first, a majority of them looked around at books. A group of adults who were seated at a table in the library did not move throughout the entire observation period. About half of the number of adults browsed through the e-book section of the library. Many visitors stopped at the reference desk. The questions asked were related to specific book locations and book holds.

Through participant observation, observers discovered that the habits of library patrons at the two city libraries were very different. Overall, there were more young adults and children at the Eugene Public Library compared to the Springfield Public Library. In general, there tended to be more female than male patrons, and patrons were generally 40 years of age and older. The majority of patrons who visited Springfield Public Library were there to use the computers, whereas at Eugene Public Library, adults were more interested in looking for books. The reference desk at the Eugene Public Library was also used much more than the reference desk at the Springfield Public Library.

Methodology (Group 2)

Members of the team were assigned different days of the week to observe the environment for 60 to 90 minutes at different times of day. This allowed the team to gain knowledge about what days and times the library had the highest volume of visitors. While we observed the library and all of its occupants as a whole, for observational purposes we split the library into separate sections.

The sections were the reading room, young adult section, computer stations, and other main library areas. The reading room was the largest designated area of the library and is meant for children ranging from infants to 10- or 12-year-olds. The young adult section was designated for 10- through 16-year-olds. By

assessing each area individually, we were able to point out noticeable trends in the ways different age groups used the libraries. We also saw commonalities in the ways families who visited as a group spent their time at library.

In each location, we documented how library patrons were using the library services. We assessed age range, activities, and length of usage. Our observations showed us a sample of who was using what services and when they were doing so.

Findings (Group 2)

Children's Section

The children's section of the library is designed for children from infancy to about 10 or 12 years old. Most children who appeared to be 10 or younger went straight to this section upon entering the library. These children would most often walk over to this section accompanied by an adult or two, but occasionally they would go there alone to be met by their parent or guardian later on. The children's section includes books, computers with games and Internet access, a storytime area, a puppet theater, puzzles and board games, and other activities for children to work on alone or with an adult. During each observation period the area never had an empty seat.

On Tuesday nights there is a "Pajama Storytime" at 7:00 p.m. Many parents and other supervising adults brought children in for this program, with a total of about 20 or 25 children listening to storytime. All the children were dressed in their pajamas and seemed to enjoy this aspect of the storytime. Most parents stayed with their children during this activity. Storytime ended at about 7:25 p.m., and while a couple of groups left immediately, most remained in the children's section or explored elsewhere in the library for some time afterwards. A common trend of families who left the children's section but remained in the library was to go straight to the audiovisual section to look at music and movies.

Young Adults/Teens

The young adult section of the library is designed for 12- to 16-year-olds, with some books for 10- and 11-year-old readers as well. In contrast to the children's section, which is very large, the young adult section is small – consisting of just a corner of the library. The majority of the young people observed in this section used the computers during the observation period. There are eight computers, and almost all of them were in use each time we visited the library. The computers were used to surf the Internet, do homework, play games, and look up books.

Many high school students do their homework in this section during the afternoon on weekdays. On the weekend, the computers are predominantly used for games, videos, and recreational purposes. Only a few people in this section looked for books. One young girl filled her basket to the brim with books,

and both she and her grandmother were pleased to find she could check all of them out at once because the library has a 50-book checkout policy. Some young adults come to the library simply to relax, listening to their iPods or just "hanging out." Many young adults come to the library without parents or a chaperone. The number of young people that come alone or with friends is about equal. One thing is certain: for young people, the computers are the main attraction.

Adults

Adults engaged with all of the activities available. Many adults took children to slightly separated areas to read quietly with them or just to spend time together, talking and playing a game. Others would use a computer to accomplish tasks online while their child played a game on the computer next to them. This seemed to be a popular use of the area. We also observed many parents with children who appeared to be in the 2- to 3-year-old range working on puzzle games and match-the-shape type games.

Older adults read newspapers, magazines, and books in the back section of the library. Many people who appear to be college students sit in the back of the library at the tables or in the armchairs, studying alone or with friends; these sections were well used during the observations. The library is always busy with activity, but the number of people inside dramatically fluctuates based on the time and the day.

Computer Stations

The one-hour computer section has twelve computers for use by appointment, in addition to computers available on a "first come, first served" basis, which also have a one-hour limit. The computers were all in use on most observation days at any given time. While young adults were primarily using them to go on social media sites, many did homework as well. Adults used the computers to check their email, look at stocks, or visit YouTube and other sites. The reference librarian sometimes helped computer users with questions while they navigated the Internet.

Overall Observations

The Springfield Public Library provides a family-friendly environment available (although not necessarily appealing) to all ages. It seems that the most common use of the library is by families with young children. There are two ways in which these families use the library. The first is to enjoy quality time together. This is demonstrated by the families that spend time in the children's section and attend children's events together. The

other way is for parents and guardians who wish to use library services, but have no one to watch their children. These people bring their children to the

library and leave them to enjoy the children's section while they take care of their business.

Recreational events and programs draw in the most people. When the library is portrayed as a place for fun and family bonding rather than a place for work, patrons seem to enjoy their time there more. Even those who are using the computers and Internet for recreational purposes such as video games and social media are not interacting with the library and other library patrons; they are simply using the library for its services.

Recommendations

Multiple computer users at the Eugene Public Library were seen on various social media platforms during the participant observation period. If Springfield Public Library launches a more robust social media plan, they will have a better chance at reaching those audiences and connecting with their patrons on a platform they use and enjoy.

The participant observation also showed that patrons at both libraries used the reference desk frequently. The high traffic to the reference desk is an opportunity for Springfield to spread awareness about the other tools the library has to offer. For example, if everyone at the reference desk were thoroughly trained in e-books, they could suggest alternative electronic versions of books in order to keep usage in the library up. If these resources are promoted and encouraged, visitors will be more likely to utilize them.

The children's section is well used and enjoyed by the library patrons. Organized activities are successful; an increased number of these special events could draw in even more people. We recommend trying to target different age brackets, expanding the amount and variety of the specialty events the library offers. They attract crowds and benefit the community in a direct, meaningful, memorable way.

In contrast to the children's section, the young adult section is very small and only has a few computers and very little table space. There were young adults in this section during each observation. These patrons were either sitting with friends, studying, or using the computers. Expansion of this area would create a more user-friendly atmosphere for young adults, making them more likely to come back and use the libraries resources.

Library Intercept Interviews

Methodology

Initially, we focused on the adult population of Springfield and their library needs. Later, our group shifted our focus to the college-age population and how they use, or do not use, libraries, and what resources libraries offer. We conducted interviews around the University of Oregon's Knight Library and in the nearby Starbucks coffee shop. While the research is focused on college students, the library may benefit from the findings, especially those regarding opinions and knowledge of e-books.

Findings

We conducted intercept interviews with 50 anonymous library patrons in front of and around the Knight Library, and in front of the nearby Starbucks. Of these 50 respondents, 43 percent were male and 57 percent were female. Though we interviewed more women, we found that the men we interviewed self-reported that they visited the library more frequently than the women. Our research indicates that:

- Only 10 percent of intercept respondents have visited the Springfield Library.
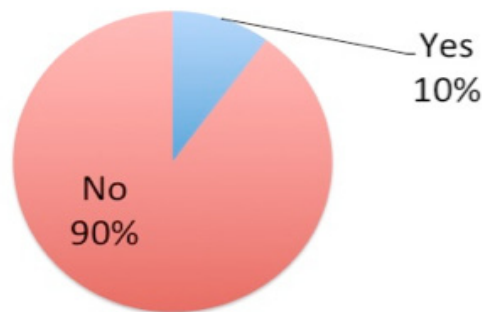

Figure 1: Have you visited the Springfield Library?
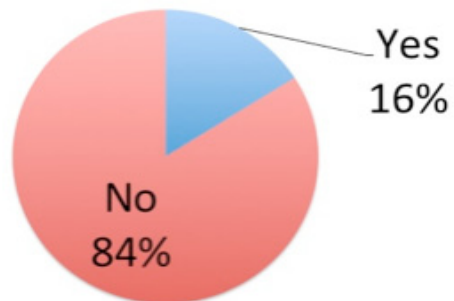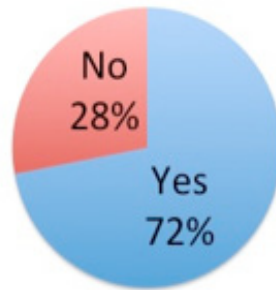
- Whereas 16 percent have visited the Eugene Library.
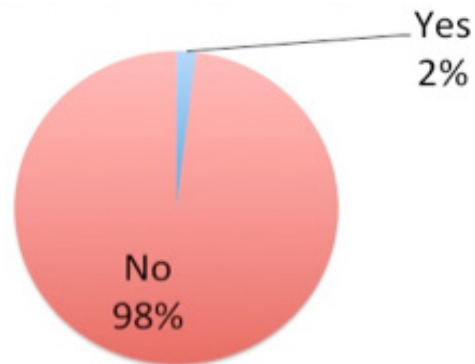

Figure 2: Have you visited the Eugene Library?

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- 72 percent of intercept respondents have used electronic resources, such as looking up a magazine or journal article via the library server.
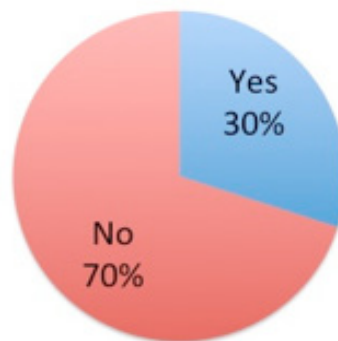

Figure 3: Have you ever looked up a magazine or journal article using the library server?

- 2 percent of the respondents have ever borrowed an e-book.

Figure 4: Have you ever borrowed an e-book?

- 30 percent of this population are aware that they can borrow e-books.

Figure 5: Are you aware that you can borrow e-books?

We found that the majority of our respondents understand the purpose and function of library systems. Respondents said that they use the library for "a quiet area to study and work with other students." Almost all of the respondents use the library as a place to study that is free of distractions. However, many also suggested that libraries don't fit all of their needs. They understand what libraries are for but note the resources can be inaccurate: "The library catalog sucks and their books are old. Sometimes the internet doesn't work because there are too many people on the server." Suggestions for improvement included increased space and tables, more power outlets, and newer resources.

Recommendations

The most interesting finding from our intercept interviews is the lack of use of e-books, and the fact that 70% of respondents weren't even aware that they could borrow e-books. This shows that libraries may benefit from promoting their e-book resources to build popularity and increase usage.

Content Analysis

Content analysis is a research method used in quantitative research. Basically, content analysis is the action of breaking down message content into predetermined components or categories to form a general evaluation.

One student group conducted a content analysis on media coverage of the Springfield Library. Another group conducted a social media audit of the Library's Facebook and Twitter pages.

Media Coverage

A content analysis of media coverage from more than 75 online news articles and more than 25 online television news sources were coded into type of media: online newspapers, online magazines, and online broadcast news videos. Articles were then coded depending on length of the article, tone, and content. From the content analysis it was found that in the 100 articles, the three top categories mentioned in media coverage were location, cost, and events.

Methodology

Using the Oregon Newspaper Association, Lexis-Nexis, and Google News, more than 20 different online news publications in Oregon were searched for articles pertaining to Oregon Public Libraries. Among these sources were the online news publication from the 10 most populous cities in Oregon: Portland, Eugene, Salem, Gresham, Hillsboro, Beaverton, Bend, Medford, Springfield, and Corvallis. The 100 articles found were coded into specific categories. The articles were first coded by type of media: newspaper, magazine, television, or video. The articles were then coded by their length: 0-100 words, 101-200 words, 201-300, words and 300+ words. Then the articles were coded according to their tone, divided between positive, neutral, and negative. Finally, the group categorized each article into six different content areas: cost, location, construction, outside support, events, and digital resources.

Each team member found 25 articles using different online news sites. After finding more than 100 articles all together, members exchanged their 25 articles and recoded to see if the coding was consistent between each member. This ensures intercoder reliability, which is the reliability of content analysis coding when the coding is done by two or more people. The group's intercoder reliability was 81.5 percent.

Findings

Medium

The different types of media found consisted of online news articles, journals, and video clips from previous news stories on public libraries in Oregon. The newspaper findings came from online news sources from the ten largest cities

in Oregon. The news station findings came from the local KVAL and KATU News Stations. Forty-nine percent of articles and stories found in the online sources derived from daily newspapers and 51 percent derived from weekly newspapers. The weekly newspapers were from smaller Oregon cities, while the daily newspapers came from larger Oregon cities.

Media coverage placement was hard to locate because online articles are not always the same as printed newspaper articles. The coverage of public library stories from online video clips were the same as those that were shown on television when first aired. None of the articles was "hard news." None of the articles found appeared on the front page when the format of the newspaper was noted.

Length

As part of the content analysis, the length of 100 articles regarding Oregon public libraries was recorded on a scale of four choices: 0-100 words, 101-200 words, 201-300 words, and 300+ words. Figure 6 shows the length of the articles did not fluctuate very much.

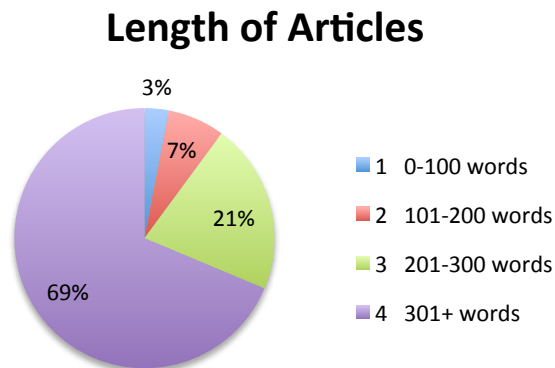On average, there were 300 or more words per article. Sixty-nine

Length of Articles

Figure 6: Length of Articles Chart.

percent of all articles had 300 or more words. Only three percent of articles had less than 100 words, seven percent had between 101 and 200 words, and 21 percent had between 201 and 300 words.

Often, the articles were announcing an event or were releasing a quote to the public. Even when construction or location was mentioned, the article also mentioned an event or provided a quote.

The majority of quotes in the articles usually came from a member of library staff or a library director, and were about 100 words. The quotes were about the main subject of the article, and they were generally in a positive tone. Some articles were pushing for change and better accommodation for city residents, and those articles were often on the longer end of the length scale. However, articles that focused around an event or library announcement were usually 101-200 words.

As shown in Figure 7, out of 100 articles, 231 topics were mentioned, showing that each article generally mentioned more than one topic. The multiple topics mentioned per article are a contributing factor to the length of the articles being more than 300 words.

Topics Discussed

Figure 7: Topics Discussed Chart.

Tone

After a content analysis and coding of more than one hundred articles, the group found that the majority of the articles were neutral or positive in tone. Forty-four percent of articles were positive while 38 percent were neutral. With a high number of positive feelings presented in the media, it seems that helping public libraries is an interest for the community. Tone was very hard to categorize because of its inherent subjectivity. When comparing tone to the six content areas, there were positive, neutral, and negative tones for each category.

Content Area	Positive Tone	Neutral Tone	Negative Tone
Cost	21	14	13
Location	23	27	8
Construction	10	6	6
Outside Support	20	12	10
Events	15	24	4
Digital Resources	10	8	2

Figure 8: Content Analysis Tone Chart.

Location

Location served as the number one area of coverage in articles using the content analysis research method. Fifty-seven percent of articles coded noted location as a main coverage topic. Location is a vital part of a city's public library and will often serve as a pro or con that determines whether residents of the city will visit the library or not. After analyzing the content, both positive and negative

comments were made regarding Oregon Public Libraries. Articles criticized cities for allowing teenage smokers to "hang out" outside of the family-oriented building and complained saying it gives libraries a "bad image." Other articles praised Oregon Public Libraries for being at great locations for children and adolescents to attend after school.

Cost

Cost served as the second most covered area of Oregon public libraries in online news. Forty-nine percent of articles coded noted cost as a main coverage topic. A public library's budget often goes to different library resources to serve the public. With library fees rising and budget cuts affecting more libraries each day, cost is becoming a more prominent issue for Oregon's public libraries.

Community Events

Community events served as the third most covered topic in our online news search about Oregon public libraries. Forty-four percent of articles coded noted community events as a main coverage topic. Creating family-oriented events is one of the most important aspects of a public library. Events that were most dominant in coverage included children's reading events and adult book signings.

Recommendations

The content analysis revealed that most media coverage about Oregon public libraries covers the location of libraries and library events, cost of remodels or budget cuts, and events being held. These research results can help determine if the Springfield Public Library is in fact being underused and how to improve the library's resources and membership. We recommended working to obtain media coverage of the library's special events, which should help build community support and increase visitors.

Social Media Audit

A student group examined the Springfield Public Library's Facebook and Twitter pages to evaluate the library's online interaction with library patrons. The group hoped to discover whether anyone had gone to these pages with complaints, compliments, or questions, or whether the posts were mainly generated by the library. The library's Facebook and Twitter accounts are linked, thus sharing the same posts, so the analysis tracked different information for each page.

Methodology

Facebook

For the Facebook page, the group analyzed all of the posts published by the library over the past year by rating how much attention the posts were getting. The group coded the posts based on their length, number of "likes," number of comments, topic, general age range the posts were presumably aimed at, and whether or not a date and time was posted for events. This information resulted in a chart relating percentages for each type of post.

Twitter

For the Twitter account, the group analyzed all the posts, which did not go back much earlier than a year ago. The website TweetStats.com was used to analyze such information as post lengths, dates, and times, which posts had been viewed and replied to the most, and how many other users tweeted at the library.

Findings

Facebook

A total of 149 Facebook posts were analyzed on 7 different variables, each with their own categorical criteria.

70 posts (46.98%) had a length of 1-10 words. 71.81% of posts were ambiguous and not targeted at a specific age range. The analysis also assessed whether posts mentioned the dates or times of events. 53.69% of posts noted a specific date while 44.30% noted a time. This may be explained by the fact that about 47% of the posts were regarding specialty library events. Mentioning date and time may not be necessary for posts on other topics.

The most notable aspect of the content analysis was the lack of response when assessing the comments and "likes" categories. As the charts below show, 83% of posts received no comments and 51% received no "likes."

When there was interaction on the posts it was limited, with only 5% of posts receiving three or more comments and 9% receiving three or more likes. Due

to limited response we were unable to do a further analysis on feedback. When posts received comments or likes it was most likely to be a post categorized in the library's "fun fact" category.

A recurring post theme was discovered in the "guess the book" segment. The library posted a picture and asked for viewers to guess the corresponding book title and author. The responses to these posts were always positive.
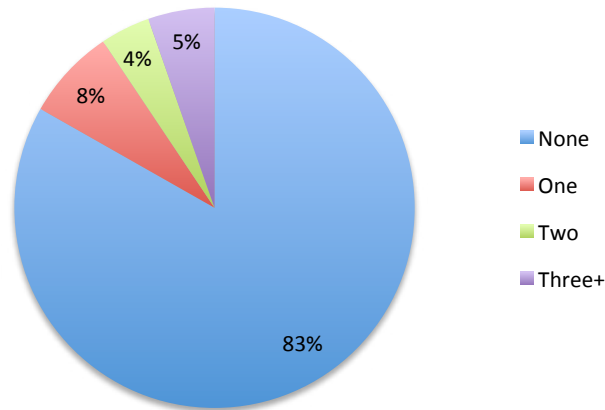
Facebook Comments on Posts

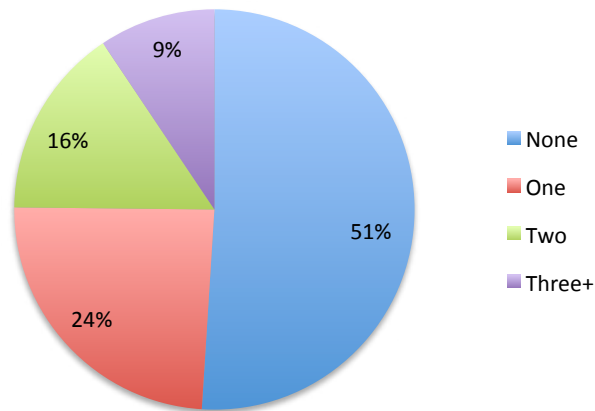*Figure 9: Social Media Audit Comments Chart.*

Facebook Post "Likes"

Figure 10: Social Media Audit Likes Chart.

Although the fun facts/interactive topic posts seemed to receive the most responses, they accounted for only 17% of the posts. In Figure 11, the most common posting topic was specialty library events (47%). When added to the 15% of posts in the recurring library events we find that a total of 62% of posts were about events happening in the library. Non-library specific advertising also accounted for 15% of the responses while 6% were regarding operational notes such as library times and closures.
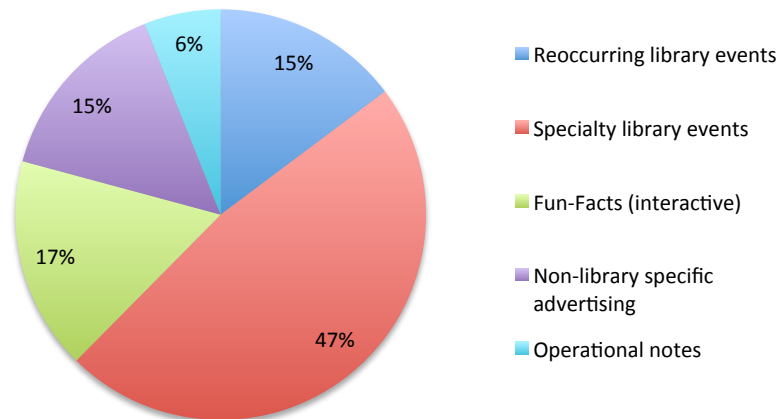
Facebook Post Topics

Figure 11: Content Analysis Topic Chart.

Twitter

The Springfield Public Library has its own Twitter account. The library's Twitter handle is @wheremindsgrow. This Twitter account is linked to the library's Facebook account, so the first 140 characters of each Facebook post (plus a link to read the rest) of each Facebook post is tweeted as well. The account has 85 followers and follows 9 accounts. @wheremindsgrow is listed by other users in nine lists. The account averages 11 tweets per month. Of a total of 343 tweets, 68 were tweeted on a Monday, 71 on a Tuesday, 65 on a Wednesday, 74 on a Thursday, 27 on a Friday, 37 on a Saturday, and 1 on a Sunday. The majority of tweets (80 tweets) were posted at or around 8:00 a.m., Pacific Time. The second most common time for the library to post tweets is at or around 9:00 a.m. (60 tweets). Other common times include 7:00 a.m. (38 tweets), 10:00 a.m. (38 tweets), and 2:00 p.m. (32 tweets). No tweets were posted between 7:00 p.m. and 7:00 a.m. Zero percent of @wheremindsgrow's tweets were replies to other users' tweets. The account has retweeted another user's tweet once, accounting for .29 percent of total tweets. Words commonly mentioned in tweets include: come (105 mentions), library (105 mentions), Saturday (64 mentions), today (54 mentions), books (47 mentions), and teens (30 mentions).

Recommendations

The group's first observation while conducting the quantitative research was that the Facebook and Twitter accounts are linked so that information is posted to both simultaneously. Although this is an efficient way to broadcast information, equal attention must be paid to each social media platform. Twitter only allows 140 characters per post, so many of the posts that are appropriate for Facebook are too long for Twitter. Twitter is intended to have succinct and exciting messages, and the library is not accomplishing that by linking Facebook and Twitter.

These posts are cut off with a link that must be clicked to see the entire message, which many people browsing Twitter skip over. Individually writing Facebook and Twitter posts, even though they share the same message, would show that care and effort are being put into the Twitter posts. Tailoring messages to the Twitter platform may lead to increased activity on the site.

The Facebook page was very static. The library posted a lot of information with very few replies or posts from other users. The posts that received the most attention were interactive. For example, a picture of only a portion of a book cover with a caption asking followers to guess the title of the book received three comments guessing the answer. This was a much higher number of comments than any other type of post. More posts asking for input will bring more attention to the page.

There is an even greater lack of interactivity on the Twitter page. The library's Twitter account only follows nine other accounts. If the library were to follow those who follow it, its followers' posts would be shown in the account's timeline. This would allow the library account to reply to tweets, promoting interaction and drawing attention to the account. As more users mention the library's Twitter handle in conversation with the account, more people will follow it, leading to a larger audience to whom the library can promote events and share other important information.

There were no advertisements for the Twitter or Facebook pages inside the library. Many businesses that participate in social media promote these pages as a reminder to patrons that they can interact with the business and other patrons from home. An increase in social media promotions—both around the library and at other places in Springfield—would increase awareness and could build a larger online fan base for the library.

We believe that the most important thing the Springfield Public Library could improve upon in its social media strategy is interactivity. There is little interaction on the library's social networking pages, which could be explained by the lack of community awareness of these pages and the types of posts that are published.

As far as attracting more families to the Springfield Public Library, it would be beneficial to focus on young adults, who currently represent the smallest portion of library patrons. In order to do this, the library could increase its interactivity both through social media and inside the library itself.

Conclusion

The Springfield Library is hoping to improve its service to the community by increasing access to current library resources. Students in this research course assessed the library's situation and conducted research to help the library understand what Springfield residents and elected officials would like from the library. The following are the major themes and recommendations from the students' research.

There is an overall consensus that the library in its current state and location is not serving the community in the most beneficial way. The City of Springfield is experiencing a growth in population, but the library has no room for expansion in its present downtown location. The current location makes it hard for many Springfield residents to have easy access to the site because most live in the eastern parts of the city, far from the Library, which is located on the west end of town. Most elected officials support relocating the library, but a lack of funding makes this an unrealistic possibility in the near future. Alternatives to relocation, including building satellite library locations throughout the city or expanding the library district boundaries to eliminate city fees for student users outside of the current district, were suggested by public officials.

The library offers an assortment of valuable resources for the community; some are extremely popular with users and others are underutilized. E-books have become a popular trend in libraries across the nation. While Springfield Library has a growing online catalog, our research indicates most patrons have never used this service or are unaware that the service exists. We recommend advertising this service to increase popularity and ensuring that staff members are fully educated and able to assist customers in using this new technology. Resources such as the computer stations are extremely popular and are important to library users, so we believe that increasing the number of computers would also be beneficial.

The most successful part of the library seems to be the children's section, which thrives on events and activities. Conducting more activities for other library audiences, especially young adults, may bring the same kind of success that the library has had with children. The library's special events are extremely popular and help foster community support. It is important to advertise these events and in general to increase news coverage of the library.

Analysis of the library's social media sites indicated several opportunities for improvement. Recommendations included creating a more interactive online community. Maintaining interactive sites can be tough when knowledge and resources are limited, so one possibility might be recruiting social media interns to run these sites. The library would also benefit from advertising its social media sites, especially the Twitter handle @wheremindsgrow, in the library and around the Springfield area, so residents are aware that they can connect with the library online.

When used appropriately, social media is powerful tool that can help the library connect with patrons in a way that they understand and enjoy. The library has the opportunity to utilize online platforms as forums for two-way communication between the Springfield Library and the community it aims to serve. This encourages growth in community involvement and will help the library become an even more valued resource to the community.

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