Inviting people in: Participatory displays in the library

Kristen Cardoso, Amy Russo

Abstract

Located on a small campus serving approximately 750 graduate students pursuing professional master's degrees, our centrally situated library at the Middlebury Institute of International Studies in Monterey, California, remains open longer than any other department. At least one staff member and one student assistant is always available for service. When students enter the library, our front desk, and the people who work there, are the first sights they see. With a central service desk, students can quickly learn where to go when they have questions just by walking in and out of the library. Nonetheless, it can be easy for students to walk past the desk without interacting with us. Approaching our large, L-shaped front desk can be intimidating, especially for the many students who may not be aware that the librarians want to help, and that it is appropriate to speak with us, as well as the student assistants. To help spark conversations and foster relationships between library users and the staff, we have taken advantage of our entryway lobby to create a welcoming environment and invite participation.

Full Text:

PDF HTML

DOI: https://doi.org/10.5860/crln.79.3.122

Copyright Kristen Cardoso, Amy Russo

Article Views (Last 12 Months)
In contrast, in participatory projects, the institution supports multi-directional content experiences. The institution serves as a "platform" that connects different users who act as content creators, distributors, consumers, critics, and collaborators. This means the institution cannot guarantee the consistency of visitor experiences. The library wanted to find a way to invite readers to assign tags to the books they read. By describing books with phrases like "great for kids," "boring," or "funny," readers could contribute knowledge to the institutional catalogue system while also providing recommendations and opinions for future readers. The participatory act of tagging thus would add benefit to the institution and audience alike. The challenge was how to design the tagging activity. This master's project considers public participation in regards to design of sustainable public open spaces, and recommends methods to include it in current landscape design practice. The introduction describes the scope of the project, definition and evolution of landscape design of sustainable open space and sustainability. It presents the claims that landscape architects need an understanding of the ranges of participation in order to deliver flexible, creative and sustainable public projects in a capitalist economy and that a more active participation and more creativity contributes to sustainability. In many libraries, by contrast, staff are not trained to great people walking in the front door or invite patrons to ask questions. Many library staff appear unaware that patrons need to be invited to ask questions. Differences between bookstores and libraries. During the interview, I eventually asked for a list of differences between bookstores and libraries. Sharon Baker’s book display experiments in three public libraries showed that effective displays must be in high traffic areas. Books on display near the front desk checked out 300% to 1000% more frequently than books on the shelf. Books displayed at the rear of the fiction stacks checked out, at best, only 60% more than books on shelves. Displays on window sills and other isolated areas in the library are a waste of time.