The Future of Print Report:
Untold Histories

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Photo of book display in Noble Library featuring students Gricelda Terrazas and Victoria Perez-Carranza and emoji sticker assessment board.

About the Future of Print

ASU Library was awarded a $381K grant from The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation to experiment with different ways in which libraries present print materials to the public. We know that information is more digitally accessible than ever before. As students turn to what is quick and convenient for them, ASU Library is exploring how to present our print materials in ways that remain engaging and relevant to the twenty-first century user. Through a series of book displays, The Future of Print team hopes to gain a sense for how students perceive print collections, how they use the library, and what it takes to engage them in physical books. For more information on our projects, visit https://lib.asu.edu/futureprint

Research Question

Are ASU communities more likely to engage with book collections and events that are created and led by students?

Philosophy

Our past projects have highlighted literary genres, academic disciplines, and thought-provoking themes; however, nearly all books were selected by library staff. We wanted to explore a process for creating a collection that is inclusive and reflects the ASU community in order to celebrate diversity and encourage representation. We sought to involve students directly in the curation process to choose books that exhibited the lived experiences of those communities that were personally meaningful to them. We also wanted to make sure that we worked with students in a fair way by including them in the decision-making process and compensating them for their time.

Full Selection Methodology

In addition to the Future of Print grant project, The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation supports the ASU Library through the Developing Community-Driven Archives grant project. We had the opportunity to collaborate with the project team and five student workers to curate a list of 82 titles; all work was done on paid time for the student workers. The books selected by the group told the stories of people who have shared their personal testimonies, covering different backgrounds and cultures, to allow students to think critically about their own representation and identity. The students took the lead in the selection process, choosing books of personal interest that resonated with their identity or communities. They also created a library guide inviting patrons to suggest books for the collection. Nine of the books were suggested using this guide. Of the list of titles, ASU already owned 55 and 27 needed to be purchased. Two of these titles did not arrive in time to put with the collection.

The Developing Community-Driven Archives project team consisted of Alana Varner, Project Archivist for Distinctive Collections; Amanda Portillo, Archives Specialist; and Nancy Godoy, Associate Archivist of the Chicano/a Research Collection. Allinston Saulsberry, Assistant Archivist for Distinctive Collections was also a key contributor. The student workers in Distinctive Collections were Gricelda Terrazas, Victoria Perez-Carranza, Claudio "CJ" Garcia, and Preetpal Gil. Each of these team members regularly program educational events and exhibits aimed at giving voice and

representation to historically marginalized populations making them perfectly suited for this collaboration.

The students hosted a workshop, with the support of Allinston and Alana, on April 3rd from 2-6pm in the Memorial Union at the Tempe campus. Attendees were given a brief overview of oral histories and then invited to record their own, with the aid of a list of prompts. This event raised conversations about how students can preserve and tell their own stories. A total of ten oral histories were recorded for later use in the digital repository.

Assessment Mechanisms

Emoji Assessment Board

We invited students to rate the display by sticking an emoji sticker on a board that represents how they feel about the collection. We chose this form of assessment, because we thought it would be both fun and easy for students to participate. We interpreted the stickers based on a likert scale to gauge levels of interest:

☹ 1 - Individual has a low level of engagement. They may dislike not being able to read the spine of the book. They may also dislike poetry.

😐 2 - Individual is indifferent to the display. They might not like the display or care that it is there. This emoji could mean that

🤔 3 - Individual is engaged to the point of thinking about contents of display. We interpret this as the display being either confusing or thought-provoking. It could cause students to think about the purpose of libraries and book collections.

🙂 4 - Individual is engaged and likes the display.

😍 5 - Individual is very engaged with display and likely to check out future library collections.

Emoji Board - Sticker Count by Week

Totals emoji engagements

195
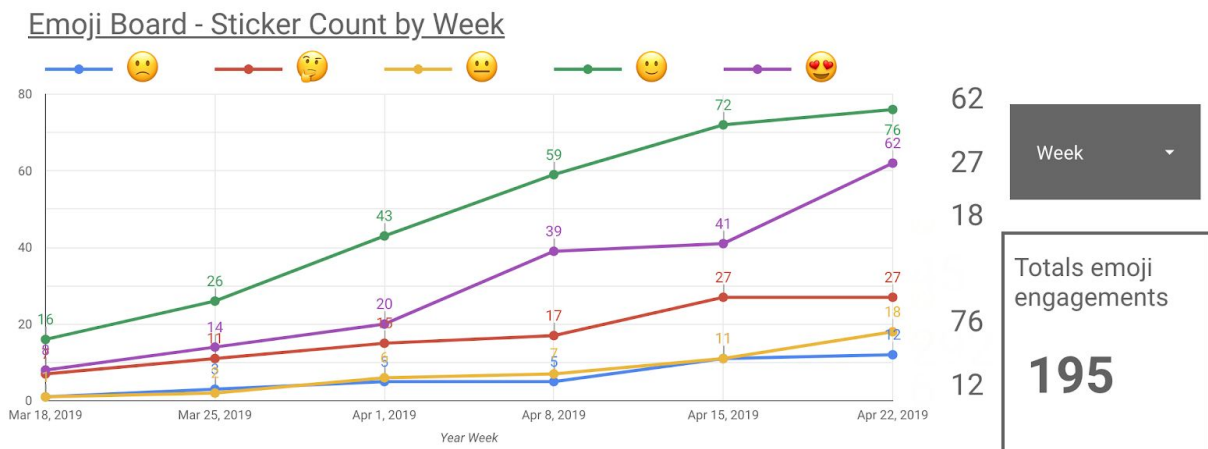
Checkout Data Highlights

# Items Loaned	Percent Increase of Loans compared to previous months	Percent Increase of Unique Loans compared to previous months	Collection Users
31	**240%**	**700%**	**58%** Undergraduate Students **42%** Grad, Faculty/Staff

Emoji engagement plotted line chart with annotations below.

CJ, one of the student workers for Developing Community-Driven Archives sent us weekly photos of the emoji assessment board so that we could study the change over time. Tammy Dang, responsible for the data analysis of our projects, created a data visualization to represent the varying levels of student engagement. There were a total of 195 emojis placed on the board, 138 of which were heart-eyes or happy faces.

Circulation

We were able to track how many books were checked out using ALMA Analytics. Out of 82 books, 31 books were checked out from the collection. Loaned items are marked on the book list. Two items were checked out twice:

- *Let's Talk About Love* by Claire Kann

- *Persepolis* by Marjane Satrapi

Tammy also calculated that, over the course of a month, this equated to a 3.41% increase in checkouts per day. This is a 241% increase of checkouts from books in this collection.

Reflection

- A link to the library guide was provided on a set of bookmarks featured at the display. One week after the event was set up in Noble Library, a patron suggested nine titles using the Untold Histories library guide.

- We planned a photo shoot to take photographs of the students with the books they had selected. These photos were later used for the bookmarks and signage. The students expressed later that they had fun participating in this way to create marketing materials and it gave them something tangible to share with their family and friends.

- The students wrote the bookmark descriptions and shared that they were nervous about what to say about this project. Ultimately, this project allowed them to take a lot of ownership and grow in their confidence at creating meaningful learning opportunities to share with their peers.

- The students also shared the project with their classes, friends, and student organizations. Directly involving students in this project allowed natural lines of outreach to the student body. Alana was also essential to marketing the project using her personal contacts across campus.

- The books in this collection were browsed and loaned in higher numbers than our past projects. Additionally, since the end of this project, these books have continued to loan and be used for displays organized by other library staff. One example is the LGBTQ+ display that was in Noble Library in June.

- One of the students interviewed during the workshop was later hired as a student worker for Distinctive Collections. This shows the importance of connecting with students to share ideas and opportunities.

- Overall, individuals who participated expressed an "emotional feel-good" feeling about their involvement in Untold Histories. It was important to collaborate on an important topic that encouraged inclusion, engagement, and sharing personal stories.

Challenges

- While we requested and staged books prior to the launch date, books were checked out to my personal account and stored at my desk. Dan Rogers,

Collections Operations Manager, was able to assist in moving the books to Noble Library. Daphne Gill, the Learning Services Manager at Noble Library, helped me to switch the location codes from being checked out to my account to 'Noble Exhibit.' This was a challenge, because I didn't want to mess with loan data or be personally responsible for items. Since this exhibit, we have created an 'Open Stacks' work order department to store books going on exhibit.

- Originally, a professor in the School of Transborder Studies had planned to design a workshop teaching students to read and write their own testimonies or testimonios. Due to time constraints and communication, the project team decided to host a workshop where students could record their own oral histories. It was later shared that it would be best to meet with faculty in-person, rather than discuss projects over email in the future.

- Allinston shared that for future projects, she would coordinate with Communications earlier to produce signage as well as communicate with the library branch manager about setting up a display in their space ahead of time. This will ensure that everyone involved is aware of timelines and project needs.

Discussion

This was one of our most rewarding projects because we were able to work directly with students to create a learning experience that was personal to everyone involved. While the students had not previously done something of this scale, by the end, they were proud of the collection. They were sharing with their families and friends.

We learned valuable outreach strategies. One of the students was affiliated with a student organization (MECHA, Movimiento Estudiantil chicano de Aztlan) and the Rainbow Coalition. They were able to reach out to the student officers, post on social media, and have the event advertised in their announcements. The topic of our project was also directly connected to the missions of these student groups which allowed us to see the impact of planning events for the students rather than expecting them to plan every event.

Finally, Untold Stories reinforced the value of having student-driven projects. We will continue to pursue strategies to create learning opportunities directly correlated to student interests that are led by the students themselves.

Press

[ASU Events](#)

[Facebook](#)

Partnerships

[Community-Driven Archives Mellon grant](#)

Appendix

Resources Mentioned:

- [Emoji Weekly Counts](#)

- [Notes to Staff](#)

- [Oral Histories Prompts](#)