

# Report on Libraries Outreach Activity: Technology Expo

Amanda Hornby, Emilie Vrbancic, Linda Whang | Undergraduate Student Success Team, Odegaard Library

## Tech Expo | September 30th, 2016 | 10:00 am - 2:00 pm | Odegaard Library

The Tech Expo, organized by UW IT Learning Technologies, allows UW students to discover the free technology, discounts and services available to them. Students visit booths from UW units and also Microsoft, Tableau, Apple, and more. Students also meet Odegaard Library staff and learn about the resources, services, and student perks available at Odegaard. The event highlights Odegaard Library technology resources along with study rooms, service points, and the OWRC. A passport activity and drawing encourages students to visit as many booths as they can in order to win prizes.

## Goals and Outcomes

1. Provide awareness of the technology related services and resources in Odegaard Library for undergraduate students.
2. Foster a welcoming and engaging student-centered learning environment.
3. Provide a basic orientation to the Odegaard Library building, including service points and technology related spaces.

## Partners

UW IT Learning Technologies, Seattle Public Library

## Resources

**Funding:** Funds spent on Odegaard branded USB wall chargers. Funding from the UW Parents Collections and Programs Endowed Fund.

**Planning Committee:** Emilie Vrbancic was the Odegaard Library point person for this event. She liaised between the Library and UW-IT Learning Technologies and organized Library staff volunteers.

**Event staff:** 9 Odegaard Library staff, 2 Access Services students, 2 Odegaard Research & Learning Services Graduate Assistants, 2 Suzzallo and Allen Research & Learning Services Graduate Assistants, & 4 OWRC Writing Tutors

## Assessment Overview

Odegaard Library expanded its role in the Technology Expo for Dawg Daze 2016. In previous years, Odegaard held its own orientation activity during Dawg Daze, but the addition of new outreach events lead to the need to team up with UW-IT Learning Technologies (LT) in order to provide students with a basic orientation to library services, resources, and spaces. The goal of Odegaard's involvement in the Tech Expo was to increase awareness of library specific technology spaces and services and also offer a basic orientation to service points including the information desk and OWRC. Asking students to visit at least three "spaces" was a new feature for the passport activity. It was necessary to obtain headcounts to gauge if this addition would be popular and sustainable enough to offer in future years. Spaces included the Info Desk, Study Rooms, Computer Vet Help, the Sound Studio and the OWRC. In order to assess this event, we chose to use the following methods: headcounts, staff reflection, observations and photo documentation, and capturing whiteboard comments.

During the event, over 850 passports were passed out and Odegaard Library was buzzing with activity. Over 300 visits were calculated at each of the library spaces (Study Rooms, Info Desk, and OWRC) and the Odegaard table had a steady stream of students throughout the four hour event. We invited Seattle Public Library (SPL) to staff a table and in addition to raising awareness of e-resources and technology available at SPL, they signed up 101 students for library cards. Observations, staff reflections, and photo documentation show that staff had the chance to have productive interactions with hundreds of students and our goal of providing a basic orientation to the service points was met.



Photo credit: Shannon Adkins

Staff reflected that this was a great venue to talk to a broad range of students, especially since there were new and returning students who attended the event. Staff were able to highlight the importance of e-resources along with online services such as 24/7 Chat. At the Odegaard Library table, the Odegaard branded USB wall chargers were well sought after. A student exclaimed “These are *adorable*” when he picked up a charger. Observations and photo documentation also revealed that the OWRC was a very popular space visited by students. The table was staffed by two GAs and two writing tutors during the event and it was reported that there was very high engagement with students.



Photo credit: Emilie Vrbancic

Whiteboards were used to seek feedback from students participating in the Tech Expo. The following questions were asked: *Tell us what you think about the Tech Expo. What’s the most useful thing you learned at the Tech Expo?* Student responses were generally positive with comments such as “awesome”, “learned cool secrets”, and “never seen anything like it!”. They also noted they liked the loanable technology options on campus, learning about Dawg Prints, and knowing about unlimited google drive storage. While these answers show positive feedback to the event as a whole, the whiteboards were very sparsely populated. Observations

from one GA, however, stated, “While the whiteboards were slow to attract students, I observed many students stopping and reading the boards either as they entered the Tech Expo or as they exited. I also overheard a student say “I didn’t know that! I’ll have to tell him!” while reading the whiteboard.” Observations also noted that the placement of the whiteboards may not have been ideal, especially since the library was still operating as normal and other students were going about their usual business.

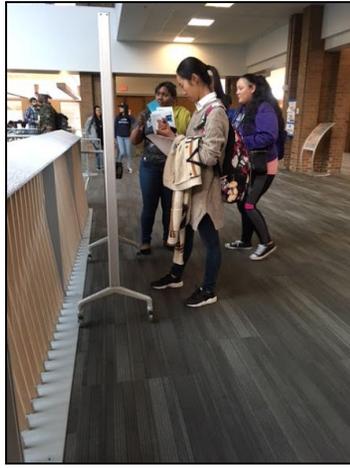


Photo credit: Melissa Slocum

Our assessment did raise some concerns about how the event impacted staff and student activities during the event. The event, while impactful, requires a high level of staff effort to maintain the event tables and also normal service in the building. For example, Library staff working the Information and Entry Desks reported many directional questions related to the passport activity in addition to a high number of beginning of the quarter questions. Staff reflections revealed that the navigation issues were mainly due to the omission of floor information on the passport cards. Adding floor information along with encouraging more staff to be involved to provide additional support during the event may be solutions to counter the high staff effort for this event.

## Conclusions

Based on the assessment data, we can confidently conclude that our goals were met for this event. Odegaard Library staff interacted with hundreds of students, spread awareness of technology-related services and resources, and students were oriented to the Library building. Student feedback and comments also demonstrate a positive learning experience. This success would not be possible without the partnership with UW IT Learning Technologies. Because of their efforts, the Libraries had the fantastic opportunity to interact with a broad range of new and returning students at a high impact event.

## Recommendations & Resources Requested

We recommend that Odegaard Library continues to be involved in the Technology Expo event. In order to support this event, we ask that the following recommendations and requests be taken into consideration:

- Continue partnering with UW IT Learning Technologies, especially for the planning and assessment process.
- Continued funding for Odegaard Library or UW Libraries branded technology giveaways.
- Encourage and incentivize Library staff participation in the event.

- Create better signage for Tech Expo related spaces and services and also include floor information for spaces on the passport.