Library Events Survey : 2015

Nelson Poynter Memorial Library.

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Library Events Survey

Nelson Poynter Memorial Library
University of South Florida St. Petersburg

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Study Objectives

The Nelson Poynter Memorial Library provides numerous events and activities for students and faculty at USFSP. The events range in nature from scholarly lectures (such as the Student Research Colloquium series), to wellness functions (such as the Therapy Dogs International visits during exam weeks), to social gatherings (such as the welcome party for new USFSP graduate students). Over the past five years the number of library sponsored cultural and social events has increased by 213% with a 167% increase in attendance and participation. Despite similar marketing tactics, not every library event is equally attended. The objectives of this survey were to find out what factors motivated students to attend, what times were most preferable, and how users are learning about library events. Ultimately, the purpose of this survey is to guide library events planning and to improve our marketing strategies and student outreach.

Methodology:

USFSP students were asked to complete an online survey, administered through Survey Monkey at the two standing computers by the library entrance. Data collection occurred during the second week of January 2015. Candy was used as an incentive for participation. A total of 99 student respondents completed the survey. A copy of the survey instrument is included at the end of this report.

Results

USFSP students learn about library events in multiple ways; 38% reported learning about an event through a friend or a print flyer, 30% reported learning about an event through the Facebook group, the USFSP Know It All Guide as opposed to 10% from the Library Facebook page, 26% reported learning about an event in an email, 25% reported learning about an event form seeing it chalked on the sidewalk, and 15% reported hearing about it through a participant. Several users also stated that they found out about an event just by being in the library as the event was happening. Thus, word of mouth and spontaneous learning about an event while concurrently in the library are the most significant means for students to hear about library events.

The most influential factor that determines if a user decides to attend an event is the day and time (77% very influential). Most users are here Monday through Thursday. There was a slightly higher indication of interest for events in the morning (9-11am) (26%), although a small cohort (22%) vehemently preferred the hours from 4-6 for library events. Presumably these students only attend evening classes and are unable to attend during the work day. Extra credit was the next most influential factor users reported (51% very influential). Users also reported that events that were academic in nature (47% highly influential) or supported their academic community (49% somewhat influential) also had a higher influence factor. Free food was another factor of high influence (42% very influential). Pete Sync points was the least influential factor reported (54% not at all influential). The majority of student respondents (52%) reported that they did not plan to attend events in advance.

Social media, particularly Facebook was an important source of dissemination as 74% of the students reported being a member of the USFSP Know It All Guide. In contrast, 78% of the students reported that they had not friended the Nelson Poynter Library Facebook page. 34% reported that they were not aware of the page, and 19% were not interested in becoming friends. 6% of the student respondents reported that they are not on Facebook.

Besides academic related events, the student respondents expressed moderate interest in the library hosting movie nights (63%), social events (i.e. Halloween) (60%), game nights (56%), therapy dogs (55%), and food contests (54%). Student talks (45%) and author book talks (44%) were also highly desirable events.
The Poynter Corner was reported as being the most desirable location for events and activities (69%). Users also like the café area (48%) and the atrium (33%). Some of the themes reported about what users like about the spaces include openness, good atmosphere, accessibility, natural light, view, and can easily see that there is an event going on.

Response to Findings:

- More effort will be put into spontaneous real time marketing, such as synchronous Facebook marketing. This was a finding found during this survey but also in a research assessment of the library’s influence on the USFSP Know It All Guide Facebook Group.
- Currently, a library space subcommittee is assessing library signage with the goal of updating and improving navigation. How to easily direct users to events, particularly to the Poyntner Corner, will be a priority.
- Consider the Atrium and Café areas for more events to increase visibility and encourage the likelihood of spontaneous attendance.
- Continue to experiment with best timing of events, particularly in the morning between 9-11am.
- Experiment more with passive events that occur throughout the entire day; thus students can participate at their own convenience. For example, a craft table for the library’s Build your Own Bookmark event during orientation week can be available to student throughout the entire day, rather than for a specific hour.
- Continue to work with and partner with faculty on encouraging students to come to events and possibly motivate them through offering extra credit.