

Host your own EXPO

Most libraries contain treasures that many users know nothing about but, as KATE ALLEN reports, hosting your own expo can help to reveal these fabulous but neglected resources and get your users excited about them.

Running an integrated marketing campaign is not something academic libraries do often or usually do well. At Monash University, Melbourne, we ventured into this exciting opportunity to promote to our university community the library's vast and sometimes under-utilised electronic resources. A group of liaison and resource management librarians came together to shape and action this vision. Our library communications team built a campaign website to host engaging content and hook our



Activity at the Hargrave-Andrew Library expo



Discussions at the Peninsula expo

target audience of academics and researchers to register for the DiscoverIt Expos planned at each of our libraries. The liaison librarians and communications team organised targeted invites to academics and researchers. We focused on these groups specifically to dispel the notion that they don't use the library (even though they access our e-resources daily) and to try to challenge their lack of knowledge about the amazing resources we offer.

Subject librarians determined which resources would be the focus of each expo, and we invited vendors to present specific products alongside library professionals. The resource management librarians liaised with vendors about what their involvement would look like, including the provision of prizes and promotional content. Most vendors were enthusiastic about attending and donating goodies.

The DiscoverIt Expos had a similar vibe to that of a conference exhibition. We covered the expo spaces – the centre of each library – with publishers' banners and promotional content, hired a coffee cart and provided catering. Each three-hour expo had a vibrant buzz in which conversations were going on everywhere between academics, librarians, vendors and students. I exhibited on streaming video resources and spoke to so many academics that I was chatted out and quite exhausted by the end. I had many fruitful conversations, as did all staff and vendors involved, and we received many comments on the usefulness of the resources, a new awareness of certain products that participants didn't know the library offered, how informative and enlightening the event was, and praise for running it. I lost count of the comments on how much simpler our streaming video resources looked compared to YouTube and how the participants would definitely use the resources for teaching in the future. Attendees also asked questions about the other resources the library offers and where they could find them.

These one-off, coffee-fuelled events aimed to create a disruption in our academics' frantic schedules. We wanted to capture their attention for a moment, refresh their thinking about the value of the library collection and what it can add to their daily working lives. These events involved short stints of intense work for the organisers, but everyone involved was aware of the pay-off, as indicated by the positive feedback, connections and conversations we fostered. We plan to build on what we learned and host more expos in the future and keep finding creative ways to connect with our community. Go to (bit.ly/22hLe1k6). 🌟

KATE ALLEN, AALIA (CP)
Librarian, Electronic Resources
Monash University Library, Victoria
kate.allen@monash.edu