Assessing the Digital Media Commons: Evaluating New Library Spaces and Services at UNC Greensboro

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About UNCG

• Public University
• University of North Carolina system
• ~17,000 students
  ~14,000 undergraduate
  ~3,000 graduate
• 1,000 faculty
About the University Libraries

• Jackson Library
• Schiffman Music Library
• 1.2 million book volumes
• 37,000+ e-subscriptions
• 500 databases
• Approximately 100 faculty and staff
First step: needs assessment!

• Survey of UNCG students in Spring 2010:
  – 835 responses (22% response rate) from sample
  – 120 had developed a video presentation for a class
  – 60% did so because it was required
  – 28.2% decided a video the best way to fulfill an assignment
  – 77.6% did not receive any assistance on campus
  – 54% would have appreciated help with multimedia production
Media assistance in 2010

• Cameras, voice recorders, tripods, projectors in Libraries
• Media Studies lab for Media Studies students only

BUT.......

• No office at UNCG provided assistance in developing media (videos, blogs, podcasts, PPT, etc.) for non-Media Studies majors.
Why establish a Media Commons?

• Supports University learning goals for critical thinking, communication and information literacy

• Supports Libraries’ goals of providing learning spaces, supporting student research and partnering with faculty
Campus partnerships

- Digital ACTS (Action, Consultation & Training Studio)
  - Undergraduate Studies
  - Multiliteracy Centers
- Media Studies Department
Digital Media Commons opened fall 2012
DMC services

- Identifying and evaluating media sources
- Technical assistance with media projects
- Consultation on communicating media
- Technology, space and software
- Faculty development and training
Assessment study outcomes
February – May 2013

• Staff will gain understanding of what current practices are effective/ineffective
• Services will better support user needs regarding hours of operation, materials, and services
Assessment methods

**Formal**
- Surveys
- Desk Statistics
- Focus Group
- Usage Study

**Informal**
- Whiteboard photos
- Weekly poll
Surveys

- Developed among staff
- 100 distributed, 70% returned
- 10 questions
  - Demographic information
  - When did they visit DMC?
  - Why did they choose DMC?
  - How helpful was the staff?
  - What is the awareness of DMC on campus?
  - Open comments
Desk statistics

• Used LibAnalytics

• Entered information after each patron interaction (in person, phone, instant message or email)

• Recorded type of question (general info, reference, technology). Recorded date and time info

• Recorded date/time via Time Stamp
Focus group

- Low participation rate
- Offered incentive from film production professor
- Discussed DMC policies, hours, services, customer service
- Recorded and transcribed audio
Usage study

• App created by UNCG Libraries technology services team
• Statistics taken 4x daily on iPad over one week in March, April
• Number of patrons, noise level, activities, materials used, food and drink consumption were all tracked
Whiteboard photos

• Recorded types of studying happening in DMC
• Indicated what subjects were most often studied
• Used with permission of students
• Took photos at closing time
Weekly poll

• New questions about DMC and study habits each Monday
• Captured by photo each Sunday evening
Limitations of assessments

• Most assessments completed by one staff member
• Assessment took place over just one semester
• Too many assessments without any one being completely thorough
• Assessment only factored in current DMC users
Survey results

• Average patron aged 19-21
• 12% were biology students
• 56% discovered DMC through word of mouth
• Most visited days: Mon-Wed
• Saturdays least popular
Desk statistics results

- April saw highest usage numbers
- Typically had 10-15 official consultations per month, fewer in Dec, more in April
Focus group results

• Participants noted that services and technology were great but “9 times out of 10, I’m just coming for a relaxing place to work.”

• Participants agreed best thing about DMC was comfort level

• Requested 24/5 services, like other parts of the library
Usage study results

• Patrons most often sit in section closest to service desk
• 1/3 of all patrons had personal laptops with them
• 1/3 of all patrons had food or drinks with them
Whiteboard results

• Math, science and foreign language students most frequently utilized the boards
Poll results

- Students report visiting most frequently from noon – 4 pm weekdays
- Presentations were the most common type of multimedia project used for classes
- Requests made for 24/5 services, more computers
Recommendations for Future Assessment

• Continue desk statistics with clarified language
• Year long usage study needed to properly track trends
• Assessment team headed up by GA, recruit student staff members to take larger role
• Focus groups with incentive to cast wider net for both DMC users and non-users
• Impact of DMC on student learning
Questions?