

# Pop-up exhibits as an outreach tool: Connecting academic and public audiences with library resources

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MAPS  
AND  
MORE

## Introduction

Subject specialty libraries thrive on **active user communities**, but promoting awareness of resources and services can be slow and time-consuming.

Two new librarians began “Maps and More” as a series of monthly pop-up exhibits in Fall 2014. These show-and-tell sessions are designed to:

- Lure visitors into the library
- **Spark new connections** among students, researchers and librarians
- Help users understand maps as research materials
- **Raise profile** of library services and collections.



## How to plan a pop up exhibit...

### Before

- **Brainstorm:** Choose topics that are timely, relevant to users, and supported by the collection; Identify potential collaborators.
- **Collaborate:** Invite graduate students or others to guest curate exhibit related to their research topic; Discuss process.
- **Curate:** With guest curator(s), survey and select materials; Focus on highlighting the physical collection and current research.
- **Promote:** Advertise events with flyers, emails to library and department lists, through twitter feed, library blog and campus calendar.

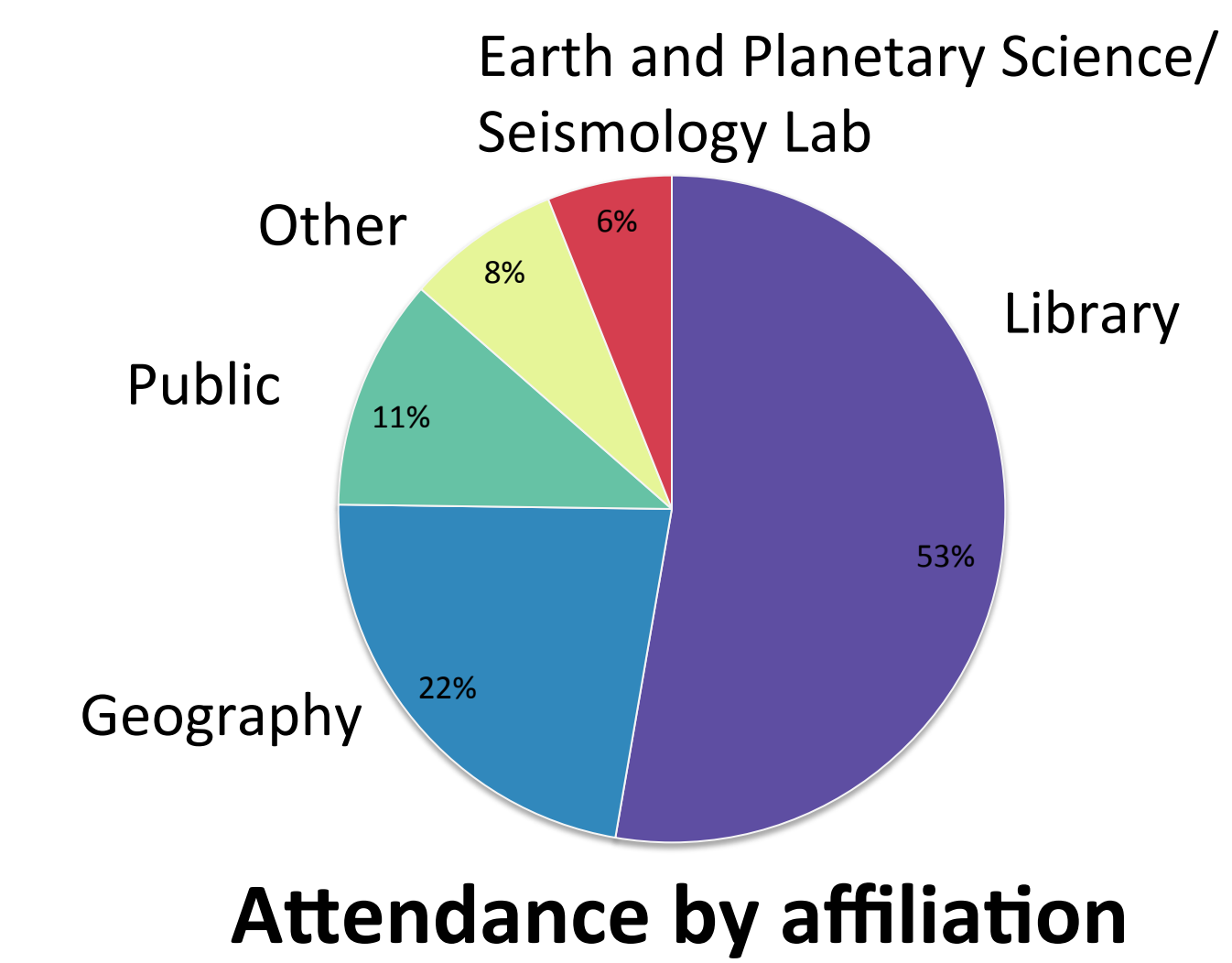
### During

- **Introduce:** People arrive, browse and mingle. Fifteen minutes into the hour-long session, curator(s) introduce the topic, orient visitors to layout of exhibit, and provide context.
- **Interact:** Encourage informal interactions and exchanges among attendees. Seize opportunities to promote collection and library services. Provide roving reference with an iPad.
- **Record:** Capture attendance, department affiliations, etc. with sign-in sheet. Photograph event. Provide comment cards for feedback and suggestions for future topics.

### After

- **Document:** Record the use of maps and items displayed. Create online list of maps and items on display.
- **Extend:** Hold materials for a week or two to anticipate follow up questions. Refer patrons to web guide.
- **Review:** Debrief about attendance and reactions to the week’s theme and format. Discuss experience with guest curator(s).

## Assessment



Oct. 2014 – Nov. 2016

- 22 sessions
- 480 total attendees
- Range of 7 to 39 attendees

The Numbers

Feedback through comment cards and email survey:

- Approximately 90 responses
- Roughly 25-30% had never been to the Earth Sciences and Map Library before attending “Maps and More”

### Comments

“The format of the event—time for individual study of maps, then comments by the curator(s)—works very well.”

“Love the ability to ‘drop in’ to these events. UC Berkeley needs more ‘low time commitment’ events like this!”

“Great materials! These events give a real sense of the scope of the collection.”

“I went with modest expectations, but often found myself truly engaged, and I learned a lot.”

### What we did well:

- Rewarding collaborations with graduate students
- Simple, appealing presentation of maps and materials
- Showed diversity of collection with interesting and topical themes

### What we could improve:

- More consistent communication of events
- Make more connections to other library resources, projects and researchers across campus
- Label maps or include more information

## Future Plans

- **Collaborate** with and invite graduate and undergraduate students to present their research.
- **Vary** day and time, link to departmental and campus events, and avoid midterms and finals.
- **Balance** topics and formats to attract wide range of attendees.
- Continue to be flexible, adapt as we go and **have fun!**

## Setting

The Earth Sciences and Map Library is co-located in McCone Hall with the departments of **Geography** and **Earth and Planetary Sciences** and the **Berkeley Seismological Laboratory** which include over 50 faculty, 100 graduate students, and 225 undergraduates. The library’s services and collections (70,000 volumes and nearly 500,000 maps and air photos) also appeal to departments across campus, as well as the public.



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