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Showcasing Institutional Research: Curating Library Exhibits to Support Scholarly Communication

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INTRODUCTION To support faculty in communicating their research outcomes to the academic community and the wider public, the Royal Roads University (RRU) Library established Showcase, a physical venue in the library designed to promote institutional research. While professional literature mainly focuses on the use of library exhibits for outreach and community engagement, more literature is needed on applying museum interpretation practices to the development of library exhibits, and the use of library exhibits for knowledge mobilization of research outcomes and promotion of institutional scholarship to the wider community.

DESCRIPTION OF SERVICE This article discusses the Royal Roads University Library's practices to develop the 'Showcase' brand by curating research-based exhibits as a scholarly communication initiative to support institutional research dissemination. It provides a brief description of the Showcase venue and infrastructure. It then describes the processes, challenges, and lessons learned in developing three research exhibits, that is, 1) cultivating faculty partnerships; 2) reformatting academic research to multimedia formats; and 3) integrating technology to showcase scholarship. **NEXT STEPS** It concludes by outlining the next steps for developing this initiative and the practice of curating academic research exhibits.

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INTRODUCTION

Knowledge mobilization, the reciprocal communication of research findings between researchers, policy-makers, and the public within and beyond academia to increase research uptake and use to inform policy (Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council, 2019), is an ongoing challenge and an important objective for researchers that scholarly communication librarians support within their professional scope. In order to maximize the impact of research to benefit society, it is essential for research outputs to be openly available and communicated in a way that is accessible, engaging, and comprehensible. Libraries and librarians, therefore, with the traditional role they play in connecting research to their constituents, are optimally situated to find new and innovative ways to not only support their faculty in engaging audiences with their research but also broadening the reach of their work.

Showcase, a venue for knowledge mobilization, was established in the library building by the University Librarian (fourth author) at Royal Roads University Library in March 2017. Showcase aims to disseminate and promote institutional research and educational activities within and beyond the university community. Having created the space via a deselection of under-used materials and subsequent removal of stacks, the University Librarian hired the first author as its first full-time Scholarly Communication Librarian in August 2017 to spearhead this initiative. The first author supports the research needs of approximately 80 core faculty. Research at Royal Roads is applied and interdisciplinary, and thus is disseminated in a variety of formats, both in traditional publications (e.g. peer-reviewed journal articles and conference presentations) and through digital scholarship (e.g. artworks, photo essays, documentaries, and film projects).

This article discusses RRU Library's experiences with curating exhibits as a scholarly communication initiative to support institutional research dissemination and knowledge mobilization. As background, it examines a selection of articles that focus in particular on exhibits in academic libraries followed by literature from the museum sector centered on interpretation and engagement. It then explores the processes, challenges, and lessons learned in developing three research exhibits over a period of two years. It also describes the Library's next steps in further developing this initiative to continue to enhance knowledge mobilization. As curatorial practices are well established in the museum sector but are limited in application within the library sector, the goal of this article is to provide insight and guidance to support academic library professionals in promoting scholarly work through ongoing research exhibits.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Library Exhibits

Literature on academic library exhibits generally focuses on practices and recommendations to attract new users and to promote and raise awareness of library resources, such as new books and collections (Fouracre, 2015). For example, the Association for Research Libraries (ARL) conducted a survey on engagement with special collections in 2010 to investigate how such institutions use displays or exhibits to connect with patrons. The ARL found that most research libraries use exhibits to conduct outreach by instructing patrons in how to use special collections materials (Swanick, Rankin & Reinhart, 2015). Public libraries on the other hand, including the Ottawa Public Library in Ontario, are connecting with their communities through such initiatives as the human library. This outreach model enables participants to “borrow” a scientist for an hour to learn more about their area of expertise and to engage in discussion.

This highlights the need for more literature exploring different ways exhibits can facilitate knowledge mobilization of faculty research. Nevertheless, the practices and recommendations in the literature on the “how-to” of creating exhibits can be adapted for these purposes, such as 1) organizing exhibits around a theme, 2) selecting visually-stimulating material that tell stories, and 3) documenting policies and procedures ad-hoc to develop institutional-based practices around the development of exhibits (Dutka, Hayes, & Parnell, 2002; Fouracre, 2015; Swanick, Ranking, & Reinhart, 2015; Braun, 2017).

Building Partnerships

The literature also discusses how the process of curating library exhibits can help establish new or strengthen existing institutional and cross-institutional partnerships. Hildebrandt, Knight-Davis, Pionke, & Cougill, 2019 articulated 5 recommendations for building partnerships through exhibits: 1) be open to establishing partnerships in unexpected places; 2) collaboration and teamwork are essential; 3) share policies and documentation with other libraries to develop recommended practices; 4) promote the exhibit; and 5) try new things. In addition to these recommendations, Dutka et al. (2002) discussed how exhibit space within the library is a powerful tool for collaboration across campus units, as teaching, learning, and/or research activities can be shared in the space, such as student art exhibits.

Curatorial Training

Although library exhibits are a popular outreach strategy, many library professionals are not always prepared to assume the role of curator. Many have not received for-

mal training in curating exhibits or learned these skills while on the job, an issue discussed in Fouracre's (2015) study on library staff experience with curatorial best practices. This finding was also echoed by Dutka et al. (2002) who suggested that exhibit design and curatorial activities are a "surprise" part of the librarian's role. Braun's (2017) article on lessons learned from creating exhibits in academic libraries discussed how "... the experience of curating and installing exhibits—was crucial to the development of the exhibit committee's knowledge and confidence" (p. 15). These articles suggest that there is a need for academic library professionals to address this challenge by harnessing literature and resources from the museum field that are adaptable for libraries.

Museum Interpretation and Engagement

Museums have been educating and engaging the public for many years and have developed a rich body of literature that covers a myriad of subjects. For the purpose of this discussion, we will include select articles that we believe are applicable to the library field. Tilden (1957), the grandfather of interpretation, suggests that information in and of itself is not interpretation. Rather interpretation is a "*revelation* based upon information" (p. 9) and that its main concern is "not instruction, but provocation" (p. 9). Alexander later expanded on this by stating that interpretation is educational by nature as it intends to reveal meanings by eliciting curiosity, inquiry, and understanding (1977). Wells, Butler, and Koke (2013) describe it as a deliberate thinking, decision-making, and writing process intended to facilitate "meaningful and effective experiences for visitors, learning institutions, and communities" (p. 36). Devine (2017) defines interpretation and education as the way in which museums "communicate their message(s) to the public" (p. 28). And finally, McGhie (2019) argues that museums need to move beyond simply transferring information and should position themselves as accelerators of progress by drawing connections to social contexts through interpretation.

Museums experienced a paradigmatic shift in the late 20th century where collections and the voice of the curator were no longer the singular priority of such institutions (Hooper-Greenhill, 1992). Declining visitor numbers and public demand for knowledge helped transform curatorial methodologies, making them more collaborative and mindful of visitor engagement (1992). Simon (2010) suggests that for museums to connect to the public and to assert their cultural relevance, they must invite visitors to "actively engage as cultural participants, not passive consumers" (p. ii). Participatory museums, therefore, curate a range of content to address the diverse needs of visitors while establishing such spaces as environments that foster dialogue, meaning-making, and co-creation (2010). Pekarik and Mogel (2010) developed a museum engagement framework as part of a visitor study conducted at the Smithsonian's National Museum of the American Indian. Their results shaped the Idea-

People-Object: Attract, Engage, and Flip (IPO-AEF) framework that suggests exhibits be designed strategically “to appeal to one of the three preferences: Idea, Object, or People” (p. 473), as each preference taps into the prior experiences and learning styles of visitors, and then flipped to another. For example, content can be disseminated through text for visitors who prefer engaging by reading information (ideas), through objects for visitors who prefer visuals (objects), or through stories of lived experiences for people who connect with the human or social factor (people). The goal, however, is to entice the visitor to flip from ‘object’ to ‘people’ or ‘ideas’ or vice-versa, thereby expanding their engagement. Delivering content through text, objects, or stories allows for greater impact as it provides multiple points of entry for engagement. Finally, Serrell (2015) suggests that exhibit-makers and label writers must understand the basic drivers of humans such as “visitors’ emotions, their yearning for continuity, love of a good story, ability to see and seek patterns, and natural spirituality” to enhance engagement (p. 54). This literature ultimately suggests that strategic interpretation is essential for meaningful engagement with information and that visitors bring exhibits to life.

DESCRIPTION OF SERVICE

The Royal Roads University Library Showcase is a physical venue (place) for displaying and highlighting the university’s innovative and applied real-world research. Showcase supports the university’s strategic research themes by providing opportunities to increase awareness of research and educational activities at the university, and by promoting research dissemination and learning within and beyond the Royal Roads community. Showcase serves to inspire students, staff, faculty, and the community and to strengthen their relationships with the university and invites the observer to place their own learning and experience within the broader context of research at the university. Showcase has been developed from the ground up by the first and fourth authors as a knowledge mobilization initiative for core faculty and select student research.

Showcase includes two walls of the library building for hanging displays, counterposing a glass wall and the stack ends. It also has four standing, foldable wall panels that can be deployed to create additional space to mount materials vertically. Three iPads and a separate media room with a touchscreen TV are available to display digital research items, such as videos and data visualizations. Although the goal is to augment this space into one that inspires Royal Roads Library users and visitors through displays, Showcase continues to provide study space for students. The Library closely collaborates with faculty and/or their research teams to plan, organize, curate, and promote their exhibits in two ways: 1) identify the faculty member’s goals for research dissemination and support them through the curatorial process; and 2) coordinate the display period with related on-campus student

residencies, giving faculty opportunities to engage their students with their research. To extend engagement with faculty research online and beyond the display period of six to eight weeks, the library also archives photographs of exhibits in the institutional repository, VIURRSpace.

Challenges and Lessons Learned

Challenge 1 - Encouraging Faculty Participation - Exhibit: *Life off Grid*

Sourcing research content to exhibit in Showcase is an ongoing challenge, as many faculty members at Royal Roads University work remotely. Therefore, in order for the first author to develop a solid understanding of research activities at the university, it was imperative to proactively reach out to faculty and establish relationships with them to learn about their research activities, interests, and goals. To gain a preliminary understanding of current research projects and activities, she researched Royal Roads faculty biographies, scholarly profiles (e.g. ResearchGate), and the personal research websites of faculty members. Working with the fourth author, she then developed a list of faculty who might have research content that could be translated into various multimedia formats to create engaging exhibits. Invitations for participation were sent to each faculty member on the list. Meetings were then coordinated with interested parties to provide more information about how Showcase could support their research initiatives, especially in promoting and disseminating their research outcomes.

This process presented two challenges. First, the first author began reaching out to faculty shortly after she was hired in her role. However, this resulted in a low response rate as she did not have established relationships with the campus community, and the latter was unfamiliar with the services she offered. Second, when faculty responded to invitations, it was difficult to describe and demonstrate the potential of the new Showcase venue for the promotion of research without having any concrete examples to which to refer.

To address the first challenge, partnering with other internal colleagues was essential as the first author could leverage already-established faculty-librarian relationships to make new connections and promote Showcase. For example, the first author met faculty through the University Librarian (fourth author) and also joined meetings with colleagues and was subsequently invited to casual work meetings to further foster the relationship. This personalized strategy was successful as faculty were more responsive to invitations to participate in Showcase, given their new familiarity with the first author. The library was also fortunate to receive some financial support from the Office of Research for exhibit-related supplies.

Cultivating relationships with faculty was, therefore, essential to getting Showcase off the ground and for laying the foundation for further collaborations. These steps helped the first author better understand the research landscape at Royal Roads and the rich scholarly output of faculty and research groups. This information then helped determine the potential for research outcomes to be translated into multimedia formats and subsequently communicated to both academic and non-academic audiences. Maintaining relationships with faculty is also important in staying current with new and upcoming research activities at the university, which is essential for finding future research content for exhibits and for providing ongoing scholarly communication support for faculty.

To demonstrate the potential of Showcase, the first author collaborated with the Archives Manager and a faculty member, Dr. Phillip Vannini, who had donated his “Life Off Grid” photo and film collection about Canadians living off renewable energy to the Royal Roads Archives. While Showcase had previously displayed two displays featuring Indigenous artworks, this would be the first exhibit of institutional research.

The curatorial process began by liaising with Dr. Vannini to better understand his research and exploring how to optimize dissemination strategies using Showcase infrastructure and materials. This was particularly important as the literature stipulates that collaboration is essential to curating a successful exhibit. The first author then posed three questions to help guide the discussion: 1) describe the research (what is the *purpose* of the research); 2) what outputs will be/were used to disseminate research (how will the research be *shared*); and 3) who are the target audiences (who will *use* the research). These initial questions and the subsequent discussion helped the first author learn more about the researcher’s work and supported the development of a unified vision for the exhibit based on a shared understanding of how it could support mutual knowledge mobilization goals. Establishing this foundation, along with following recommendations from the literature, helped guide the early stages of the curatorial process.

Based on the recommendation to exhibit story-based materials, the donated photographs were displayed alongside quotes from the researcher’s new book. This more traditional form of research output helped illustrate the story of how Canadians live off grid and how research methods can be carried out in remote locations. One curatorial goal was to highlight and support teaching activities about video ethnography in practice, therefore a documentary produced about the project was made available for viewing in the Showcase media room. The intention was to engage students and other visitors with arts-based research methods. The first author and Archives Manager also created a book display encouraging visitors to borrow *Off the Grid: Re-Assembling Domestic Life* from the library’s collection.

To further broaden the reach of the research, the exhibit was promoted to the Royal Roads community via the library's social media channels and the university newsletter. Photographs from the exhibit were also deposited in Royal Roads's institutional repository to preserve and promote the exhibit online, making it accessible to off-campus library users and the public. The University Communications department also retweeted social media posts about Showcase via the main university Twitter account. The first author subsequently received questions about Showcase from a few faculty and staff members who learned about the venue through these promotional channels. The questions were predominantly general inquiries about Showcase, however a couple of faculty members inquired about exhibit potential of their research. The first author used these questions as a foundation for building deeper connections with faculty and to find potential Showcase contributors. This process highlighted the importance of strategically promoting Showcase exhibits to faculty to increase engagement and participation with this library initiative.

The first author also received suggestions from library staff for enhancing the exhibit, such as using larger fonts for the text excerpts of the manuscript, creating a large title panel to draw visitors into the space from afar, and including an introductory panel or curatorial statement to briefly describe the exhibit and research outcomes for visitors looking to "get the gist." Upon further reflection, the first author also recognized the need for the existing text panels to portray stronger connections between the *Off the Grid: Re-Assembling Domestic Life* manuscript and the research outcomes of the project. This feedback and reflection highlighted the need for museum interpretation practices and frameworks to be applied in the curation of future exhibits.

Challenge 2 – Reformatting Academic Research into Multimedia Formats – Exhibit: *Applied Interdisciplinarity in Scholar Practitioner Programs*

Most academic research is typically disseminated in peer-reviewed publications, books, and conference proceedings. These research outputs are not always accessible to the public because of a variety of barriers, including paywalls, academic jargon and language, and a lack of public distribution. These create challenges for interpreting, curating, and reformatting academic information into engaging multimedia formats for diverse audiences. These barriers were amplified during the process of curating an exhibit showcasing an academic book edited by Dr. Siomonn Pulla, Associate Professor and Program Head of RRU's Doctor of Social Sciences program, and Dr. Bernard Schissel, Professor Emeritus. Entitled *Applied Interdisciplinarity in Scholar Practitioner Programs: Narratives of Social Change*, it featured chapters authored by the first eight graduates of Royal Roads's Doctor of Social Sciences program. Each chapter details the student's thesis or dissertation project along with their research process.

As this publication was written for academic audiences, the first author and Dr. Pulla tackled the challenge of reformatting this output by using the “Idea, People, Object” museum framework to interpret the information. To achieve this, the first author requested each graduate provide a photograph or graphic such as a chart or diagram to represent their research project as the material element (object) along with a text selection from their book chapter for context (idea). Each graduate was also asked to share a brief description about how the material and text selections connect to their research, as this provided insight into their respective processes for integrating applied research into their workplace to address real-world issues. Some graduates also created short videos discussing their research projects, which were also included in the media room to provide a narrative element in the exhibit (people). The eBook was also available on iPads to encourage visitors to further engage with the research in its original publication format.

As this was the library’s first attempt at experimenting with reformatting academic research into multimedia formats, the library hosted an open house for Royal Roads staff, faculty, and students as well as some non-Royal Roads affiliated visitors to informally assess visitor engagement. Over the course of the event and the exhibit display period, library staff received feedback from numerous visitors from across the university. Many commented on how they connected to different interpretive elements—text selections and project description (ideas), photographs and/or diagrams (objects), or videos (people). Some faculty suggested the addition of interactive elements in the exhibit, such as a feedback wall or digital presentation of the research outcomes, to further engage visitors with the research. In addition, this exhibit display period coincided with a Doctor of Social Sciences on-campus residency. These students in particular expressed interest in accessing the full thesis or dissertation of the exhibited projects to inform their own research. While the first author recommended the institutional repository to access the full project, a laptop should have been included as part of the exhibit so that students could delve further into the research displayed. The feedback received from instructors and students emphasized the importance of presenting information in various layers, including technology to have other media formats available, and incorporating interactive elements so that visitors can choose the level of engagement they have with the content, thereby engaging diverse audiences. The first author continues to improve upon applying the “Idea, People, Object” framework for the development of future exhibits when reformatting academic research into different mediums. Feedback from this exhibit was taken into consideration going forward.

Challenge 3 – Integrating Technology – Exhibit: *Sustainable Communities: Making a Difference*

The second and third authors collaboratively curated “Sustainable Communities: Making a Difference,” a multimedia exhibit showcasing Professor Ann Dale’s 15 years of research on sustainable community development in Canada. As the Canada Research Chair in Sustainable Community Development (2004-2014), a Trudeau Fellow Alumna, and the Director of the School of Environment and Sustainability at Royal Roads University, her research team, *Community Research Connections (CRC Research)*, has a diverse research agenda including more recently integrating curatorial practices from the museum field into their dissemination strategies, under the leadership of the second author. As they collaboratively developed the practice of research curation (Clifton-Ross, Dale & Newell, 2019) they curated research exhibits as a way to not only share their research with the university community and the wider public, but to also test the efficacy of certain curatorial methods within an academic setting.

Given the volume of research produced during the lengthy period of Professor Dale’s research program, it was challenging to develop a cohesive and engaging interpretive program. The main curatorial goal for the “Sustainable Communities” exhibit was to experiment with disseminating complex social science concepts and academic research in engaging and interactive ways. As a multimedia exhibit, it showcased CRC Research’s outcomes through the following media types: framed giclee canvases designed with high-quality photographs and text; interpretive panels; web pages displayed on iPads; an interactive climate scenario activity; a monitor with interactive content (videos, data visualizations, etc.); a message board; a painting; and reports and books. Highlighting their research subjects, methodologies, and outcomes, they framed their exhibit by project rather than theme. To establish consistency between each project, they developed a content formula of four parts: project outline, challenges, research process, and research outcomes. Following museum label writing methodologies, they wrote the text at a fifth-grade reading level, included shorter sentences, and ensured their writing style was engaging. They designed colourful and aesthetically pleasing framed canvases and juxtaposed the text with relevant photographs for each project. When hung along a track system, the canvases mimicked artworks by bringing the white ‘gallery’ walls of the library to life.

For many years, CRC Research has experimented with integrating technology into their research agenda and prioritized the use of social media for research dissemination. As a result, much of their research outcomes are reformatted into videos, data visualizations, interactive maps, and across their social media channels, in addition to the traditional academic streams (e.g. peer-reviewed publications, conference presentations, and books). The

main challenge that the CRC Research team encountered when curating this exhibit was how to adequately incorporate technology while balancing visual, text, and digital content (2019). When integrating technology into exhibits, “using technology for the sake of technology often makes for ineffective displays” (Clifton-Ross, 2019, para. 7). It also runs the risk of devaluing the content as technical features can sometimes overwhelm or overshadow content. The use of technology should therefore be deliberate as it is supplementary to interpretive content in exhibits (Oleson, 2016). Devices such as iPads should only be used if they enhance experience, provide deeper meaning, and are contextually relevant (2016). They must also seamlessly integrate with non-technological elements, such as canvases, text panels, photographs, and artworks.

Since CRC Research reformatted many of their research outcomes into data visualizations, videos, maps, and subsequently shared them widely across their social media channels, it was important that this content be seamlessly integrated with the canvases and interpretive panels (2019). A solution to this issue was developing a series of web pages on Squarespace to showcase select projects that had extensive portfolios of digital content. These microsites were displayed on iPads and positioned in front of their coordinating canvases. Without duplicating content, the CRC Research team’s objectives for visitors was to be able to jump back and forth between digital and print content. For example, one display showcased a project exploring the co-benefits of climate action. The canvas detailed the research process and outcomes while the microsite shared climate models, an interactive Kumu map, and a video. Through a simple design evocative of the “white cube gallery” and high-quality photographs, the web pages linked to interactive content referenced on the canvases. As the canvas content formula provided visitors with a high-level summary of the project, the iPads encouraged them to dive deeper by exploring data visualizations or learning more through case studies and videos. This feature provided visitors with user-control and encouraged them to click on content and trigger animations. It also established an interplay between print and digital content, thereby enhancing visitor interactivity. CRC Research subsequently adapted the Squarespace microsites into a full exhibit website highlighting both the original digital and print content.

Another curatorial issue the CRC Research team encountered was either oversimplifying or overcomplicating their research projects, given “Sustainable Communities” was displayed in a public yet academic setting. To tackle this curatorial challenge, they integrated the “skim, swim, dive” museum framework developed by Charlotte Sexton, the former Digital Media head at The National Gallery, as this ensured visitors had access to varying depths of information. For example, if visitors wished to “skim” the surface of the exhibit, they could read the canvases. If they wished to “swim” deeper, they could explore content on the iPads. If the two previous levels encouraged them to engage further with the subject, they could scan

QR codes hyperlinked to peer-reviewed journal articles and case studies or they could read books and reports that were on display. This also encouraged visitors to move back and forth between content levels as well as the digital and print elements. What made this curatorial process successful was the collaboration between the first author and the CRC Research team. With a range of knowledge and skills in the areas of sustainable community development, climate change, social learning, curatorial practice, digital communication, graphic design, scholarly communication, knowledge mobilization, web development, and data visualization, they were able to harness the power of transdisciplinarity.

In order to test the “power” of this exhibit, the third author invited one of her environmental studies classes to tour the exhibit and to act as an informal focus group to discuss the most captivating features and what curatorial elements could be improved. The CRC Research team was impressed by how engaged the students were and how much they enjoyed exploring the different facets of interpretive content. What was most striking was that every student was attracted to something different. For example, many students spent a considerable amount of time exploring content on the iPads, others enjoyed watching videos in the screening room, some preferred testing the scenario activity, while fewer read the text on the giclee canvases. Some expressed surprise and appreciation for the painting, while others found it too abstract and did not understand its connection to the research outcomes. This confirmed the importance of presenting research in a variety of media formats (i.e. iPad content, scenario activity, books, giclees, videos, data visualizations, etc.), using the “Idea, People, Object” framework, in order to provide multiple points of entry for visitors that appeal to their diverse interests and learning styles. One criticism was that the exhibit content was too high-level for the students, given their existing knowledge and background in environmental studies. For this particular audience segment, they wanted more in-depth explanations and solutions. However, this criticism underlines the importance of curating exhibits around audience engagement. In this case, the research interpretations were intended for audiences who had little to no knowledge of sustainable community development.

Although the faculty community were invited to bring their classes to the exhibit, there was very little take-up of this option. This underlines the importance of continuously advertising the venue through a variety of formats (i.e. social media, newsletters, blogs, etc.) and demonstrating potential engagement activities (i.e. tours, curator talks, class discussion activities). The third author also received direct feedback from members of the larger community who “happened” by the exhibit in the course of the use of the library as a public space, and then contacted CRC Research expressing a desire to engage with her research team.

NEXT STEPS AND CONCLUSION

The Royal Roads Library Showcase has hosted 15 faculty and 5 doctoral candidate research exhibits to date. The next steps in developing Showcase are to assess and evaluate the impact of this initiative, capture attendance statistics via survey; and develop a digital site to facilitate greater accessibility of the exhibits and widen the reach of the exhibited research to distance users and the public.

Assessing the impact of Showcase is an important next step. The library recently started requesting faculty feedback via a survey in LibCal, a platform for library scheduling and event management, about their experience with curating research exhibits at the end of the display period. The goal of the survey is to ask faculty and research groups about their experiences collaborating with the library to plan and promote their research, and to provide open-ended questions to invite suggestions and comments. The library is also exploring the use of LibCal to capture attendance statistics to Showcase events (such as an open house or launch event for exhibits) and to survey visitors about their overall experience.

Many faculty members expressed a desire to exhibit research in Showcase in order to share their work and secure opportunities for collaboration with other faculty members and researchers at Royal Roads University, in particular, those who work remotely. While photographs of each exhibit are uploaded—with the addition of relevant metadata—to the institutional repository, this format is intended as a tool for archiving and recordkeeping rather than community engagement.

Therefore, in order to meet this faculty request and engage distance users, a Wordpress site is currently in development in collaboration with Royal Roads's Centre for Teaching and Educational Technologies. To mimic the experience of visiting the physical exhibit, the library is experimenting with creating a virtual tour using the Wordpress 360 panoramic image plugin. In addition to Wordpress, and in response to the temporary closure of campus due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the library is exploring Omeka to create born digital exhibits as the platform provides specific functionalities for sharing photographs, videos, curated text content, visualizations, and links to faculty research bios and outputs to encourage users to dive deeper into the various layers of information from each exhibit, further building on the in-person experience of Showcase.

Academic library professionals can also benefit from widely available museum literature and resources on curatorial, interpretation, and audience engagement best practices. However, such information will require adaptation to meet the needs of academic library environments, as there are unique challenges specific to the library sector in relation to roles, re-

sources, and scholarly research. More research is needed on developing specific curatorial practices for academic libraries as communicating research outcomes differs from communicating museum research and collections. One way this could be achieved is by having library and museum professionals collaborate to develop exhibits and integrate their practices. Library professionals can also participate in museum conferences, join online communities of practice (i.e. Facebook groups), and engage in resource sharing with museum professionals.

The physical academic library space, no matter the size, has great potential for research interpretation and communication via non-traditional media formats to engage academic and non-academic audiences alike, contributing to the reach and impact of research. It is our hope that by describing the process and sharing lessons learned in developing Showcase, our experiences can provide a unique perspective and guidance for library professionals who are curating exhibits to support scholarly communication and research dissemination within and beyond their institutions.

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