

# Pop-up Library

University of Westminster  
Library Services Pop-up Library

## *About the organization*

<b>Organisation:</b>	University of Westminster
<b>Department:</b>	Information Services
<b>Team:</b>	Library Services
<b>Size of team</b>	50 employees
<b>Industry Sector:</b>	Higher Education

## *Brief description about the University of Westminster and the Library Service.*

The University is a post-1992 institution with a rich history dating back to 1838. There are five faculties based in four locations: three in central London and one at Harrow in north west London. We have four libraries each with a team of front-line library staff led by a Site Library Services Manager. Each library also has a team of Academic Liaison Librarians.

## *Background*

Two library staff attended a World Café-style event and discussed how to connect with students who never or rarely use the library. They explored ways to show students how the library services we offer could improve their studies and that by using the library, they would get better results. Library promotional activity is displayed on the library website and in printed formats within library spaces. However, we wanted to reach the students in a different way, so realised that promotional activity had to happen elsewhere on campus. Pop-up restaurants and pop-up shops are fairly common in London and this concept inspired us to come up with the idea of pop-up libraries. We started with a small group of interested staff, sharing and developing ideas of how our pop-up library would work.

## *Purpose*

The aim of the pop-up library events is to make the library service more visible around the University and outside of the traditional library space. We want to bring the library service out to students in spaces they frequent in order to reach those who don't use the library and maybe feel daunted by it. We planned to be present in the places where students spend time socializing between classes such as social learning spaces, cafes and reception areas.

### ***What we did***

We used portable event displays with the library branding printed on them. There was no additional cost as these were purchased for our planned promotions at the start of term. The displays have a table surface on which staff can display printed materials and items to give away to students – with chocolates and sweets as additional incentives. Each pop-up library event has a theme on a particular aspect of the service we wish to promote, eg. 24/7 library opening hours, giving feedback, accessing electronic resources. Library staff select the best location on campus where the pop-up library will attract the most students. The events are run mid-morning and mid-afternoon for five days during a designated week. We staff it in 30 minute slots so a number of library staff have the opportunity to participate. We are currently aiming to have three per year.

### ***What it achieved***

We aimed to increase the number of students using our services, and also increase opportunities for library services staff to engage with students outside of the library. Our review of pop-ups so far has shown that more are students are participating in our feedback activities and we are trying to develop further tangible evidence of the impact by looking at 24/7 library usage and electronic resources access figures. Such data over a period of time will help to identify trends.

### ***Future plans***

For 2014 -15 we are running three pop-ups, in October, December and March. At the end of the academic year we will take an overall view of the arrangements, objectives and impact and then develop a plan for the 2015 – 16 academic year.