

Innovative Archival Outreach: Rethinking Engagement in the Wake of COVID-19

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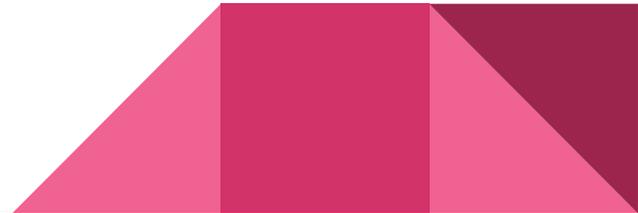
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University of Texas at Arlington Libraries Special Collections

Wide-scale shutdowns in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic made traditional engagement methods extremely difficult or impossible

- Special Collections staff were forced to rethink how we connected with researchers and promoted our collections
- We focused on instituting new outreach methods that:
 - Staff could work on at home
 - Promoted our collections remotely/didn't require in-person attendance to the library
 - Appealed to a wide audience, including members of the public unaffiliated with UTA
- Had success with:
 - *Compass Rose* blog posts
 - Mini-Exhibits



The Compass Rose Blog Posts

UTA Libraries Special Collections revived its defunct newsletter, [The Compass Rose](#) (which had been published from 1987 to 2009), on the UTA Libraries Blog.

Since July 2020, Special Collections staff has published **87 posts**.

- Posts have highlighted diverse collections, featured guest student and faculty contributors, and raised awareness of new acquisitions and uses of our materials
- Our most-viewed post “First Transatlantic Phone Call”: 2,825 views, 2,014 impressions on Facebook, and 1,230 impressions on Twitter
- Increased interest in researching these highlighted materials



Mini-Exhibits

Launched our inaugural mini-exhibit in fall 2021.

- Generally installed bi-weekly or monthly
- Features reproductions of photographs and archival documents, a title poster, and captions
- Helped increase foot traffic during business hours from an average of 4 monthly visitors (FY 2020) to 90 monthly visitors (fall 2021 and spring 2022 semesters)



Innovative Outreach Assessment

Our success with these innovative outreach programs made us curious about the experience of others in the field.

We are looking for archivists and librarians who implemented new outreach initiatives during the pandemic and would be **interested in discussing their experiences**.

- Please add your information to [this sign-up](#)

We are also **seeking feedback** about the interview assessment questions we have compiled.

- Please add your suggestions to [this document](#)
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Innovative Outreach Assessment

1. Can you describe how your institution's outreach efforts were affected by the COVID-19 pandemic?
2. Please describe why your institution decided to implement new methods of outreach during the pandemic.
3. Why did your institution choose this particular method of outreach?
4. Please detail how you went about obtaining administrative, departmental, and technical support in implementing these outreach efforts.
5. How would you characterize the success of these new methods of outreach?
6. What are your ongoing or future plans for these outreach activities?
7. Do you know of any other institutions that have also implemented innovative approaches during the pandemic?

Offer suggestions on this assessment:

<https://bit.ly/3RRkHxj>

Sign up for an interview to tell us about your outreach

experience: <https://bit.ly/3OkEF05>

Thank you!

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