

# BOOSTING YOUR PRESENCE: USING CANVA TO PROMOTE ACADEMIC ARCHIVES



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## ABSTRACT

Promoting archival collections, exhibitions, and programs is an essential step in boosting visibility, traffic, and engagement. When the Central Piedmont Community College Archives moved into its new location in the summer of 2022, we turned to Canva — an online graphic design platform — to bring greater awareness to our redesigned physical space and enhance our digital presence. Incorporating Canva into our marketing activities also allowed us to create powerful first impressions, become more approachable, and generate interest and curiosity within students, faculty, staff, and members of the general public.

This poster describes the various ways in which Canva elevated our designs and kept us relevant, presents examples of its implementation, includes findings based on interactions with and feedback from archival users, highlights the main advantages of promoting with Canva, and provides ideas for other archival professionals from small academic institutions looking to promote their services and collections.

## INTRODUCTION & PROBLEM STATEMENT

The Central Piedmont Archives started looking for ways to promote its collections, exhibitions, and programs in August 2022, a month after moving into its new home. With the Archives equally divided into three modernized rooms for research, processing, and storage, the next challenge became **how do we let students and staff know we are here in a low-cost and efficient way?** We turned to Canva, a web-based graphic design tool.

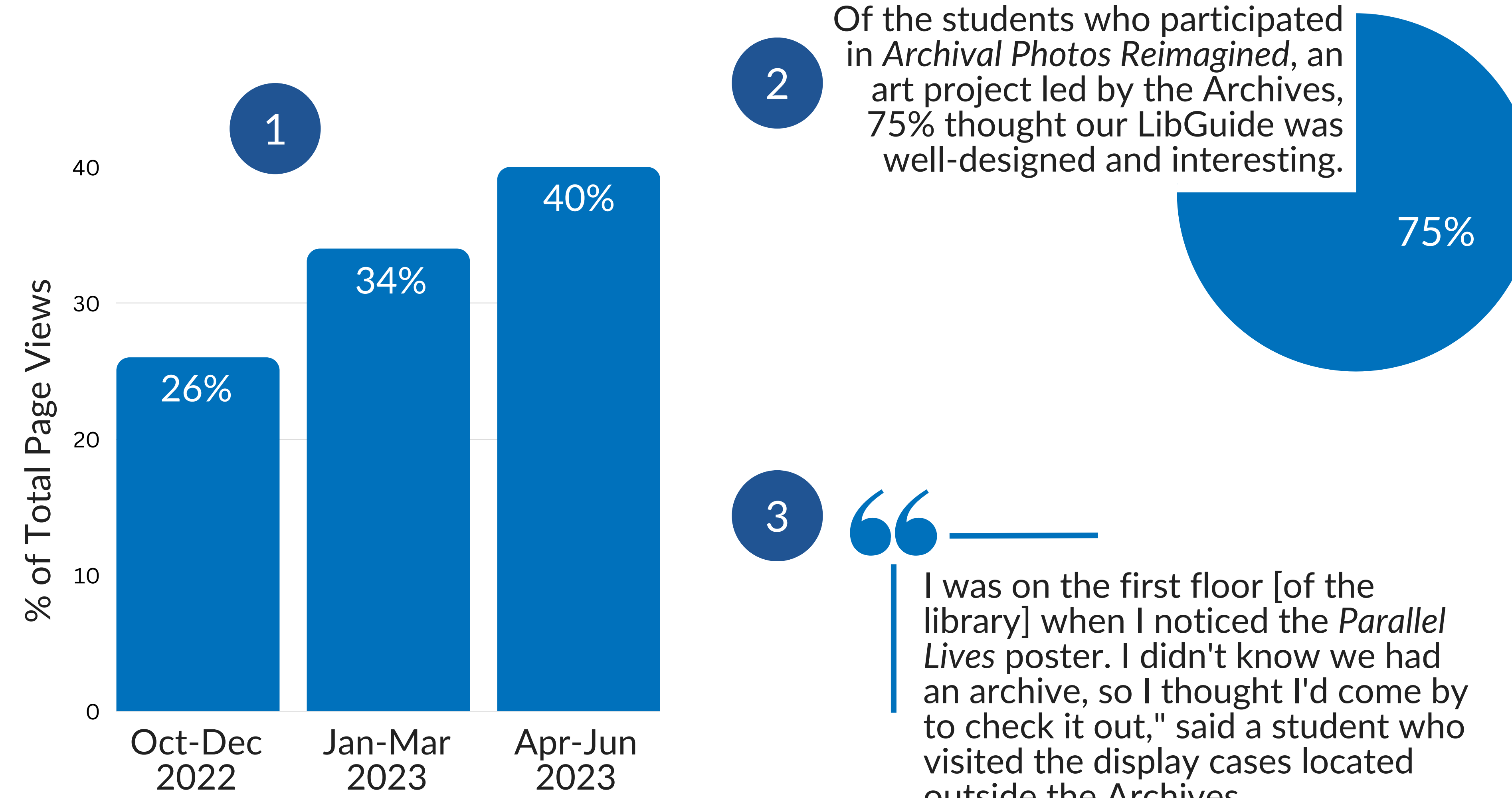
Since then, Canva has been used to create signage and information cards, build newsletters, and enhance LibGuides — all in an effort to visually communicate in an attractive and effective way what the Archives has to offer and help the community understand we are a resource for them.

## METHODS & FINDINGS

To understand the impact of Canva on our marketing efforts, we collected data from usage reports, surveys, and face-to-face interactions.

1. Newsletter statistics from October 2022 (when it launched) to June 2023
2. Student feedback on our *Archival Photos Reimagined* exhibition guide
3. Quote from a student who visited our *Parallel Lives* exhibition

While signage and other methods of promotion are important aspects of raising awareness, we learned that **100%** of students surveyed expressed interest in interacting with the Archives through social media.



## BENEFITS

Creating eye-catching and memorable materials, such as posters, newsletters, and information cards, using Canva or other similar tools can:

- Increase awareness
- Increase your value
- Change perceptions

## CONCLUSION & FURTHER EXPLORATION

Over the past year, Canva's user-friendly interface and customizable templates have played a significant role in our marketing activities, producing promotional materials that grab the attention of our target audience, generate interest, direct patrons to our physical and online spaces, and communicate care and credibility.

Additionally, based on the feedback we received, we are currently in the process of developing an account on Instagram (@cpccarchives). This next step will help us further promote the Archives on social media.

As we continue our outreach efforts and find more innovative ways to increase our presence, Canva will remain a valuable and reliable tool, helping us create quality materials that will connect with our community.

## IDEAS FOR INSPIRATION

- Headers and other themed images for LibGuides and/or blogs
- Signage pointing the way to new exhibitions/displays
- Newsletters with the latest updates and collection highlights
- Information cards with key archival collections and services
- Bookmarks with the archive's name and contact information
- Postcards with collection highlights and a QR code to the main website

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