



DIGITAL ALCHEMY: TRANSFORMING BORROWED TECH INTO DIGITAL GOLD

Norrita Campbell

UW iSchool MLIS Capstone | 2024

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ABSTRACT

Technology lending programs in academic libraries are vital for improving resource accessibility for students and faculty. This capstone project focuses on enhancing the Technology Lending Program at UC Santa Barbara's library through research-based solutions. A comprehensive set of recommendations was developed by conducting surveys, literature reviews, and gathering staff input. These recommendations target Access, Policies, Sustainability, Marketing/Awareness, and Collaboration to optimize the Tech Lending Program. The aim is to tailor the program to better align with the specific needs of UC Santa Barbara library users, fostering a more efficient and user-centric lending experience.

TEAM INTRODUCTION

Norrita Campbell is a third-year online MLIS student from Southern California, currently employed at the library at the University of California at Santa Barbara. For this project, she was responsible for conducting relevant research, gathering data, and putting together the deliverables. One of her main areas of interest is equity and access in academic libraries, as well as how knowledge is created, disseminated, and preserved in various communities and cultural contexts. She received her Bachelor's degree in English and Psychology from Mount Holyoke College in 2017.



SPONSOR INTRODUCTION

Marti J. Kallal is head of Access Services at UC Santa Barbara's Davidson Library. She serves as Project Manager of the Technology Lending Strategic Planning Committee and the sponsor for this capstone project, responsible for helping to guide the project and its deliverables.



PROBLEM

Technology lending is an integral part of UC Santa Barbara's library and its mission to create a seamless research experience. There are many aspects, however, of this program that could be updated and improved to be a more beneficial service for our campus community.

First Problem

Our technology lending program requires some overhauling to better meet the needs of our community of users, including our policies (loan periods and fines), as well as the materials we offer for loans.

Second Problem

Finding ways to collaborate with other groups and organizations on campus could create a more intentional program with convenience, sustainability, and accessibility in mind.

OBJECTIVES

● **Objective 1**

To build on technology that is already being provided in order to support student academic success and increase access to affordable and open educational resources

● **Objective 2**

To provide a way to interact with and use technology that students would normally not have access to, and to create opportunities for experiential learning through this service

OBJECTIVES

● **Objective 3**

To support all students by working with groups on campus and student outreach, in order to figure out if we are meeting their needs and how we can improve our program in order to do so

● **Objective 4**

To help people understand our technology offerings and how it can be used to enrich their academic experience, which can include events, collaboration with other organizations, and the creation of hybrid spaces where students can work with the technology

KEY PROJECT INSIGHTS

● **Insight 1**

By taking a user-centered approach to our technology lending program, we are prioritizing the needs and preferences of our users. This occurs by looking at the statistics of our current program as well as seeking direct input from our users. This allows us to improve accessibility, efficiency, and engagement and to create a better program for our users that suits their needs.

● **Insight 2**

To be a truly inclusive space, the solutions and services implemented to improve our technology program within our libraries must be accessible to all users, regardless of their abilities. This includes making sure our spaces are accessible, as well as researching and providing assistive technology for use inside and outside of our library.

KEY PROJECT INSIGHTS

● **Insight 3**

Incorporating sustainable practices in our technology lending program is key to reducing our program's environmental impact and promoting its long-term viability. Working with other groups on campus to find ways to make our program more sustainable in the long term is an important goal for the success of our program

● **Insight 4**

Collaborating with project stakeholders, academic institutions, and other campus groups will improve our program while helping us support learning all over campus in different ways. Looking at the programs of other institutions also allows us insight into what is being done at other institutions that we can learn from and incorporate into our program.

METHODOLOGY

● **Environmental Scan**

An in-depth gathering of information about libraries and their technology lending programs, as well as those that offer Library of Things services, was conducted. Information gathered included what items are loaned, as was information such as loan periods, policies, and fines. This also included a survey of our own policies, fees, and fines, as well.

● **Literature Review**

A literature review was conducted to address the theoretical basis for some of the recommendations devised during this project. This literature review provided a basis to look at what was already being done, as well as what we were not addressing with our policies and ways that other institutions have gone about improving their technology lending programs, as well as ways that technology can add to the learning experience.

METHODOLOGY

● **Statistical Analysis**

An analysis of lending statistics from our circulation software was performed to see the popularity of items we currently loan out, how many of each item we own, as well as our fines for these items. The statistics began from Fall of 2022 to the current quarter to allow us to track actual student usage of the items.

● **Technology Display/Survey**

A display to show off what we currently lend was placed in the Paseo for the entire month of April to advertise our program. Part of this display included a survey used to gather information from the campus community about what we were doing well and what we could improve, including items or services that were desired that we may not be currently providing to our community.

DELIVERABLES

- The main deliverable created for this item was a list of recommendations created using the information gathered from the various methodologies used throughout the project. These recommendations, along with a summary of what was done during the project will be presented to the UCSB Library Technology Lending Project Strategic Planning Team as part of a monthly meeting in May.
- A Library of Things Environmental Scan was conducted, as mentioned earlier, and shared with the Strategic Planning Team in an earlier monthly meeting as a way to show where we could make improvements and what other libraries were doing.
- The Technology Display in the Paseo was created to both advertise our available technology and solicit opinions from our community on what we could add to benefit them. This involved designing a survey and looking over it with the Strategic Planning Team to come up with questions that properly conveyed what we were aiming to find.

EVALUATION

Due to the nature of this project, success cannot be measured in quantitative terms, as there is no current way to measure the success of the recommendations made without implementing them, something that is not currently possible at this point. Working with the Technology Lending Project Strategic Planning Team has been a great way to practice working with a large group of people from different parts of the library and learning to take input from many different people and collaborate on a project. While being able to measure the project's success is not something that can be done at this exact time, the main measure of my project's success is that I can align my recommendations with what I have learned through the work done during my capstone project and present it to the Strategic Planning Team. Whether it is implemented or not, it will serve as a good starting point to improve our program and give us a solid starting foundation. As someone who does not have a great deal of experience collaborating with a committee in this way, and found that this project enabled me to use the skills that I've learned in this program is a new and different way.

NEXT STEPS

I hope to continue to work with the Technology Lending Program Strategic Planning Team to work on improving the Technology Lending Program at UC Santa Barbara and to see some of the recommendations I've made come to fruition. Future steps include working on ways to sustainably acquire new technology and replace older models, as well as figuring out ways to increase collaboration between not just the library's MakerSpace and DREAM Lab, but also with other organizations on campus. Over the next two years, the Strategic Planning Team will work on overhauling the program and I intend to continue my participation, as I feel invested in the success of this project and know how important it is to have a Technology Lending Program that increases access to materials so that the campus community can have an uninterrupted, inclusive research experience.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thank you to everyone who has supported me through this project, including my professors, and special thanks to my TA, Ishita Chordia, for her patience with me! Thank you to my family, especially my father and grandmother who have always supported me, as well as my siblings, who have always been there for me. Thank you to Harold Baldwin for his support during this time, as well as others. Thank you to my coworkers, Ellie, Janet, and Vaiva for being so understanding as I tried my best to balance work and school and always cheering for me while I did it, even if it meant I had to take a day off. Thank you to Mina Marciano who I could not have gotten through this program without and thank you to Coffee for being a great emotional support animal. Thank you to my mom, who I wish could have seen me do this.

And thank you to the UW iSchool for allowing me to further my studies and learn so much and thank you to the UC Santa Barbara Library for allowing me to do this work! Special thanks to Marti Kallal the Technology Lending Team for helping me and allowing me to support them with this project.

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THANK YOU

Presented By : Norrita Campbell