

Observational Research Toolkit for Libraries

Helping to create measurable improvements to patron interactions with promotional materials in the library

Problem

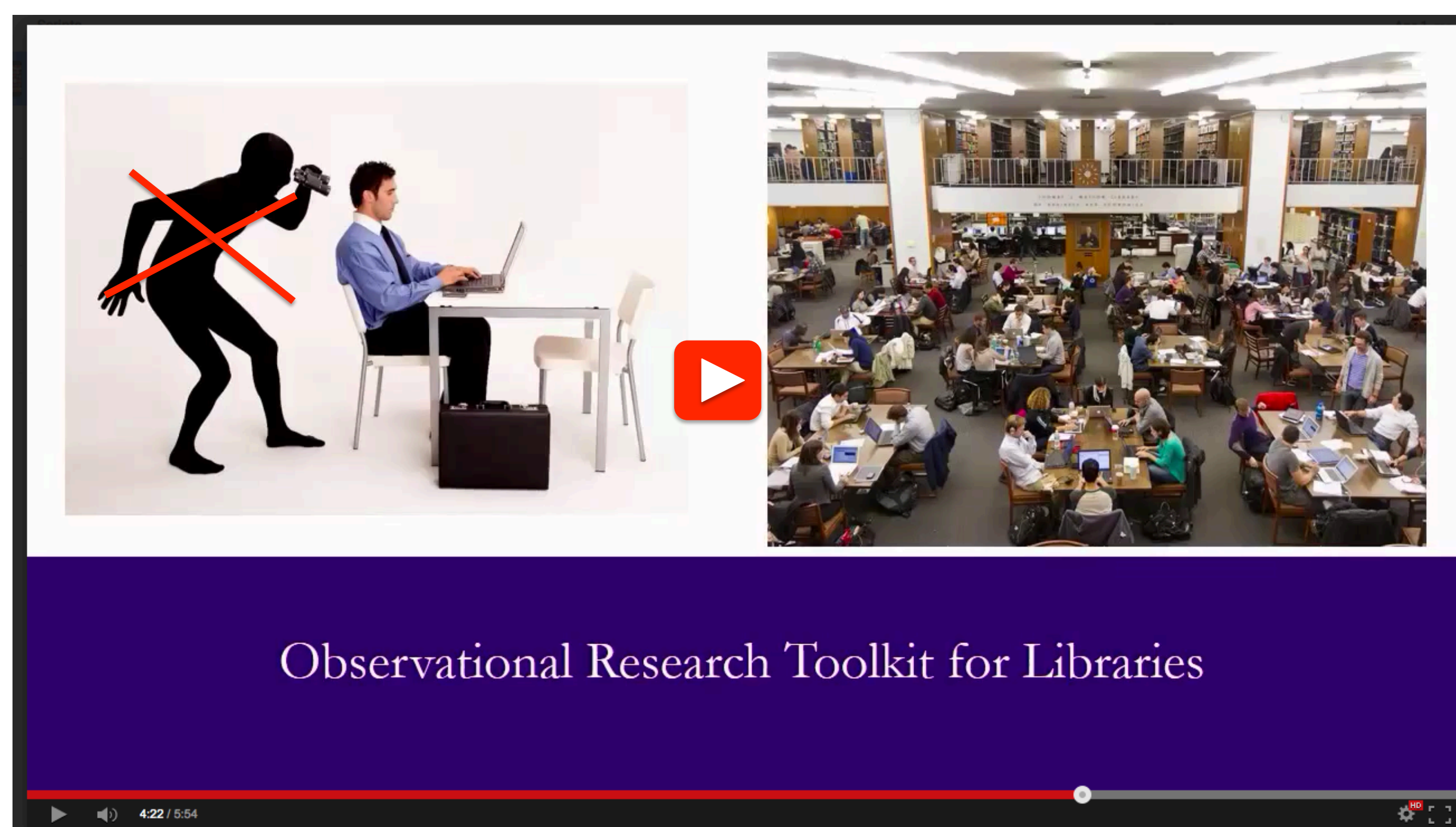
With limited budgets and low staffing, many libraries lack the resources to conduct effective and comprehensive research on how to enhance the patron library experience.

Origin

From a summer internship with Sno-Isle Library, this observational research project grew into the creation of a toolkit to enable every library to use unobtrusive observational research to determine the effectiveness of displayed material.

Toolkit Components

Tutorial Videos



Modules include:

- Guidance on Planning Observational Study
- Safeguards for Confidentiality, Privacy, and Freedom of Inquiry
- Practical Tips for Conducting Observational Studies
- Protocols for Promotional Item Observations
- Tenets of Attention
- Instrument and Data Tool Instructions

Observation Instrument

Map and Coding Information Sheet

Date: ___/___/___ Time from ___:___ until ___:___

Branch name and number: _____

Note the first time the customer enters the area of observation.

Identify each customer with a consecutive number and circle solo or group.

If in a group— enter the total number in the group and the identifying numbers of the others in the group.

Write the code for each trip past the target and try to capture whether this is their 1st, 2nd, 3rd, or 4th trip by the target and time for each pass, if possible.

Demographic information, if collected

Apparent Gender: ___ (M) Male (F) Female (I) Indeterminate

Apparent Age: circle the range which appears most accurate

Apparent Race: ___ (C) Caucasian (L) Latino (A) Asian (B) Black (NA) Native American (PI) Pacific Islander (I) Indeterminate

2-3 Descriptors (clothing color, etc. "Blue t-shirt, brown shorts")

Action Descriptions

Notice of target: ___ (D) Disregard (G) brief Glance [1 second] (L) Look [2-3 seconds] (R) detailed Reading (T) Touching (P) taking Photos (N) taking Notes (I) Item taken (S) Staff directed to target

Note which action occurred on which pass by the target and the length of time customers engage in reading, touching, note-taking or photographing the target.

Note any other applicable information in the bottom area of each entry.

Diagram and Code for Passes (path and direction of travel)

___ Target

A 1 & 2 code for _____

B 1 & 2 code for _____

C 1 & 2 code for _____

D 1 & 2 code for _____

E 1 & 2 code for _____

F 1 & 2 code for _____

G 1 & 2 code for _____

H 1 & 2 code for _____

Target: _____

Time: ___:___ AM/PM Record # _____

Solo group (w/ _____)

Path Designation: 1st ___ 2nd ___ 3rd ___ 4th ___

Demographics

Gender: M F I

Age: 0-5 6-11 12-19 20-29 30-39 40-49 50-59 60-69 70+

Race: C L A B NA PI I

Time Notes: _____

Differentiating Descriptions:

___ shirt | dress ___ jacket | coat

___ pants | shorts | skirt

Notice of target: Approached Staff-directed

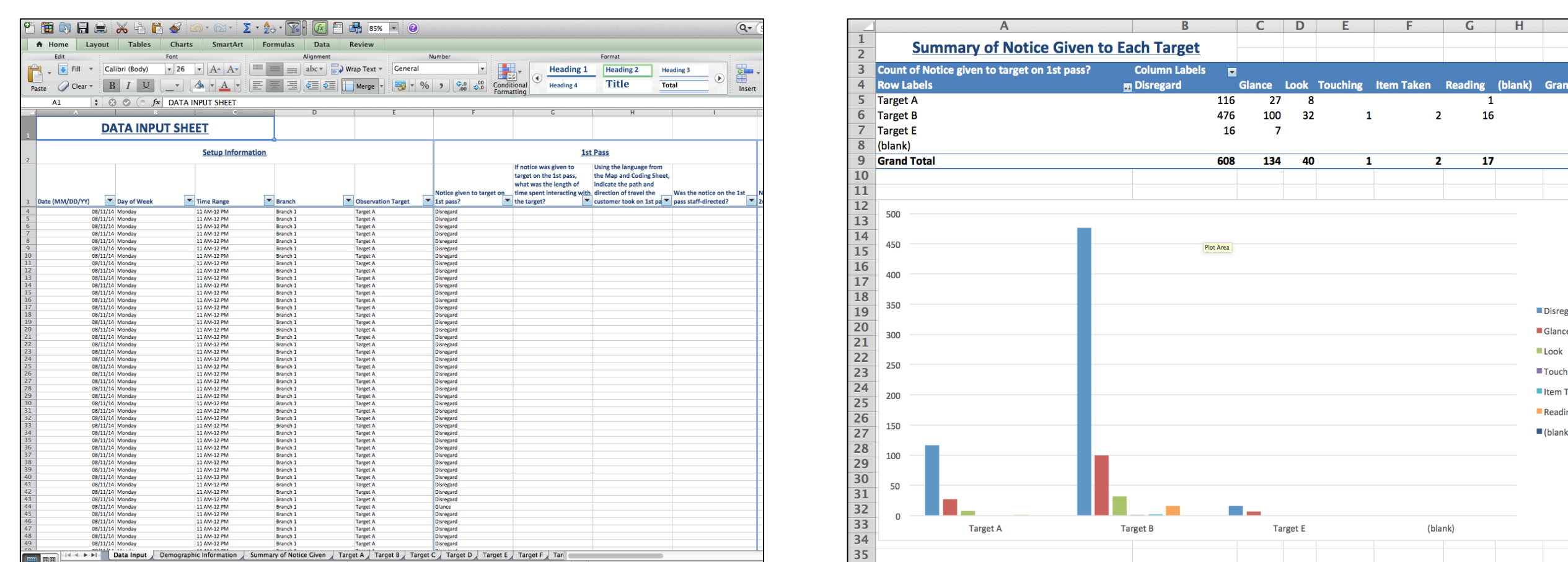
D G L R T P N I T

Pass #: - - - - -

Length of time spent: - - - - -

Notes: {

Data Input and Analysis Tool



Next Steps

The toolkit components will be handed off to Sno-Isle Libraries and Spokane County Library District and made available to interested libraries on a web-based platform.

Sponsors

