

Books on Bikes



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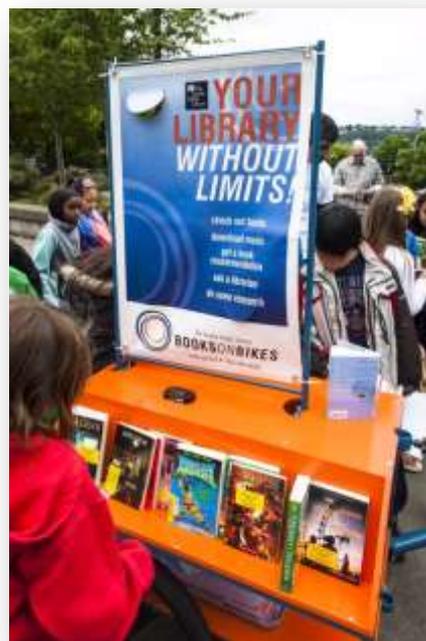


Background

On 21 May 2013, the Seattle Public Library launched its Books on Bikes pilot project as part of the Library's Innovation Campaign, an internal project to develop innovative ideas.

The original idea was proposed by Supervising Librarian Jared Mills and planning for the project began in March 2013. The idea was one of about ten that was selected for further development. The Books on Bikes (often referred to internally as "BoB") was launched with a ride with the full BoB team and Seattle's Mayor, Mike McGinn, to TOPS Elementary School.

Books on Bikes involves teams of two Library staff biking to events and making an impact by immediately connecting people to Seattle's Library services. The team brings the Library to where people are by signing individuals up for Library cards, suggesting books and music, teaching people how to access Library eBooks, and handing out popular trade paperbacks. Library staff utilise bikes from the City's bike pool and a Library purchased bike trailer. Books on Bikes had a media campaign and a well-defined brand carried through to the trailer, staff jerseys and social media presence.



Objectives

- To literally bring Library resources to where people are by providing Library services at high profile community events.
- Through offering Library services on-the-go and by drawing attention to the Library and its services, the Library will be placing itself as a civic focal point and resource hub.
- During events, Library staff suggest books, sign people up for library cards, teach about resources and connect community members to individual services that matter to them

Target audiences

- Millennials
- Non-library users
- Families

Process

Equipment:

BoB team members generally used their own bikes, helmets, and locks for the project, but loaner bikes were available through the City of Seattle employee motor pool. The team received orientation training on how to reserve these bikes, and at least one member used them. BoB did purchase a large team bike messenger bag which was used on most events for carrying new library cards, rack cards, tablets and booklists. BoB had two bike trailers custom-made locally for the project.



Marketing and Communications:

The Marketing Department created a special BoB logo which was used on the BoB collection, team t-shirts, Seattle Public Library website, and posters on the two bike trailers.

Technology:

In order to do check outs, card registrations, and help show online Seattle Public Library resources, BoB requested mobile wi-fi access via “hot spots.” In addition, the team used iPads (usually two) for each outreach event. These were either borrowed from ALT or from the regional Digital Download kits. Concurrent with BoB, Seattle Public Library was working on creating and refining a Horizon app for use on tablets while doing outreach or collection maintenance in the stacks. The BoB team asked for specific modifications to the app prior to and during implementation of the project, and used the app during all outreach events.

Relevant statistics:

- Patron contacts: 717
- Story time attendees: 119
- Items circulated: 281
- Card registrations: 31

Events:

The original goal was to conduct 10 Books on Bikes outreach opportunities at a variety of events, for a range of different audiences and communities, to help determine which events were best suited to bike outreach.

The BoB project incorporated a number of innovative approaches in outreach methods, use of technology, collection and event selection.

Promotion of Library:

The Library received a flurry of local and national press surrounding the Books on Bikes project. We had featured stories in the *LA Times*, *The Economist*, *Library Journal*, *The Huffington Post* and *The Seattle Times*. We also had segments dedicated to the project on NPR, KEXP, KOMO News and Canadian National Radio. We also received numerous mentions, articles and interviews on various blogs both locally and nationwide.

Outreach to new types of venues:

BoB was able to create a more robust or entirely new library presence at a number of community events. These were events that were not otherwise easy for the Library to participate because of the venue or layout.

Additional information:

[The Seattle Public Library](#)