Presenters

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Smart Spaces are Community Places

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Topics for Today

- The Smart Spaces Process
- Creating Smart Space at Laurel Public Library (DE)
- The Toolkit for Creating Smart Spaces
The Smart Spaces Process
What does transformation look like?
Before: A bland space for DVD’s and VHS tapes...
Glenns Ferry
Make It Space

After ...transformed into
a bright, inviting space
for STEM/STEAM
focused active learning
Cornwall Public Library, Cornwall, NY

**Before:** No space for teens in the community to gather

The almost non-existent teen space crammed next to the children’s area

Prime real estate occupied by the reference desk
Cornwall’s Community-built Teen Space

After ...transformed into a warm inviting space that teens own and activate
How did transformation happen?
Making space “smart”

If you do not build what people actually want, they will not come
The essential process

Discovery

- Discover who your community is and what they value

Experimentation

- Experiment to imagine a world of possibilities for services and programs and keep experimenting to meet evolving needs
It’s all centered on the community
Connections continue through COVID

“The Library has been one of the most active organizations during the pandemic, thinking and reaching outside the traditional boundaries of what a Library does and can be, and that has been an exciting silver lining to the whole pandemic mess.”
ANNOTATION TOOLS

1. Mouse over slide to find **long pill menu** at far left
2. Select **squiggle icon** to open annotation tool panel
3. Go to **square** icon for submenu
4. Select **check mark**
5. Click on slide to practice
What tools have you used to learn about your community?

- Surveys
- Focus groups
- Interviews
- Dot boards
- Wish trees
- Talk-back boards
- Journey maps
- Design workshops
- Photo essays
- Empathy maps
- Observation
- Other
Tools for discovery

Start a conversation

Imagine with pictures

Workshop it

Left: Community event in LaGrange, TX; courtesy of Fayette Public Library; Middle: Dot board voting, courtesy of Waimea Public Library; Right: Teen visioning workshop by SDOT Photos on Flickr CC BY-NC 2.0
The best tool?

Listening!
“I felt the community discovery portion of the project was so important to my community and to me professionally. ... I will continue to use techniques I learned from this project when developing programs and evaluating other spaces.”
Experimentation

- Ideation
- Prototyping
- Iteration
IDEATION

Photos provided by Smart Spaces cohort participant
PROTOTYPING

- Make ideas tangible
- Test assumptions
“The **two main concepts** I will continue to apply in my work are:

1) **involve the community** in decision making about library services as much as possible;

   and 2) **just try stuff** and see what works.”
Creating Smart Space at Laurel Public Library

Gail Bruce, Director
DISCOVERY PHASE

How we connected with our community to understand their needs
DOT BOARDS - HIGH SCHOOL

- Visited during lunch
- Asked “What kind of space would you like at the library?”
- New tech

Photos courtesy Laurel Public Library
ELEMENTARY SCHOOL VISITS

• Casual conversations
• Liked being active and anything water related
• Computer games
COMMUNITY EVENTS

• Attended numerous community events
• Requests for Arts and Culture
• Wanted to create something to take home/own
• Kids were overwhelmingly interested in “Things”
PHOTO INTERVIEWS

Photos courtesy Laurel Public Library
CASUAL CONVERSATION

- Teens shared benefits of technology and video games
- Families shared need for access to technology
Subjective Discovery Through Observation

- Homeschool art classes full
- Craft programs are very popular
- Always asking for art supplies
- Very creative community
IDEATION

COMPILING THE DATA AND IMPLEMENTING IDEAS
INNOVATION STATION

- Very creative community
- Lack of arts programs
- Way to express themselves
- Making something tangible to keep

Photos courtesy Laurel Public Library
TEEN GAMING STATION:
✓ Benefits of gaming – problem solving, fine motor and social skills, perseverance
✓ Most don’t own/can’t afford systems
✓ A space they can call their own

Photos courtesy Laurel Public Library
HYDROPONICS STATION

- Agricultural community
- Food insecurity
- 51% of population live in apartments/rentals
PROTOTYPING

WHAT DID WE LEARN FROM THE EXPERIMENTAL PROCESS?
Filled an unused closet with craft supplies and games

Kids could freely use any of the supplies they wanted to create items

- Helped shape the Innovation Station
- Kids crave their own space
- Created tangible items
- Availability of craft items

Photos courtesy Laurel Public Library
WHAT’S HAPPENING NOW?

- Covid Impacts
- Looking Forward
- Using the Smart Spaces Tools
THANK YOU!

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Toolkit for Creating Smart Spaces
We need public space more than ever

“...libraries have effectively unfolded, moving services outdoors, and moving librarians to other spaces, finding new ways for people to access the library even though the building itself was closed.”

–Eric Klinenberg
Do you want to...?

• Understand active learning and community-driven spaces
• Discover community needs and interests
• Find community collaborators and partners
• Translate community needs and expand possibilities
• Rethink use of physical space
• Test ideas with prototyping
• Create and implement a project plan
• Activate your space with programming
• Sustain your smart space efforts
• General resources on design thinking and transformation

The Toolkit
Curated resources

Practical applications of the Smart Spaces process
Community discovery in pandemic times

How might you learn how your community’s needs and priorities have changed?

Enter comments in chat
How will you transform your library as a community place?

Left: Woodland Public Library obstacle course on Facebook; Right: Gardening Zoom class at Beardsley Public Library on Facebook
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Thank you!