

Local Action and National Impact

A Summary of Project Outcomes and Learning from Geek the Library

Sharon Streams

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and Learning from Geek the Library**



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OCLC would like to thank ORS Impact for their independent evaluation of the Geek the Library project, the summary of which is included in this report.

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What was the purpose of Geek the Library?

The Geek the Library program created and shared resources that guided nearly 1,800 U.S. public libraries through implementation of a local campaign that forged meaningful, personal connections between community members and the library, and provided a foundation for productive local conversations around public library funding and sustainability.

The intention of the Geek the Library campaign was to increase awareness about the value of public libraries and influence public perceptions of the library and library staff, all toward a long-term outcome of increased or sustained funding for these essential institutions.

With funding from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, the program was implemented by OCLC in four phases from June 2009 through June 2015:

- **June 2009–April 2010:** In partnership with Leo Burnett USA, the Geek the Library campaign concept was developed, piloted and assessed.
- **April 2010–June 2011:** Access to campaign materials was extended, the results of the pilot program were distributed, and support resources and training were developed to enable public libraries to launch local campaigns.
- **June 2011–September 2012:** The scalability and reach of the program was improved, through operational efficiencies, statewide initiatives and promotion.
- **October 2012–June 2015:** The reach of the program was further expanded, and the program incorporated additional activities to increase the knowledge, skills and confidence of library leaders and their staff for local community engagement, marketing and advocacy.

Geek the Library was formulated from the idea that everyone is passionate or “geeks” something, and the public library supports it all. The campaign also encouraged residents to think differently about the library—not only as relevant and necessary, but also modern and transformational.

The campaign devised visually appealing, professionally produced materials for local libraries to use for advertising, marketing, public relations and community events. A public-facing website geekthelibrary.org¹ and social media channels were used to amplify the actions of the participating communities and spotlight real-world examples of how public libraries are embedded in the fabric of our lives.

¹ The website was decommissioned on February 29, 2016.



The campaign piloted with nearly 100 public libraries in southern Georgia and central Iowa, and additional communities in Illinois, Indiana and Wisconsin. Qualitative and quantitative research before and after the pilot, as well as stories from participating libraries, provided proof that the campaign can help library leaders and staff make a positive impact on changing public perceptions about the library and library funding.

The full story of the Geek the Library conception and pilot is documented in the 2011 OCLC report, [*Geek the Library: A Community Awareness Campaign*](#).

As the campaign evolved from pilot to nationwide rollout, greater emphasis was given toward coaching participating libraries to adapt and deploy the campaign in ways that inspired and motivated staff, resonated with the community and could be repeatable. Libraries were encouraged to conduct an initial planning phase to onboard staff and build internal commitment, focus and excitement for the campaign. Then, participants were guided through three campaign stages:

1: Create awareness. Introduce the campaign to the community via strategic advertising and public relations initiatives. The goal is to make a personal connection with individual residents and introduce the library's role in helping people explore their passions.

2: Generate engagement. Engage library staff directly with residents, community organizations, local institutions and businesses, and community influencers. The objective is to leverage the awareness raised by advertising and public relations by taking Geek the Library to community events, cultivating relationships with local media, and forging or strengthening local partnerships.

3: Encourage action. Shift messaging to put more focus on public library funding. Public relations activities reinforce the role that the library plays in helping people find jobs, start new businesses and plan for their future, and the community is asked at every opportunity to join the local public library funding discussion.

A final phase, Sustain the Momentum, emerged as some of the earlier participants completed the major activities of Geek the Library. Many library staff discovered that once they had developed the requisite knowledge, skills and confidence, and formed strong relationships and partnerships in the community, the library was primed to continue to build on the successes of the campaign with ongoing advocacy and awareness activities.

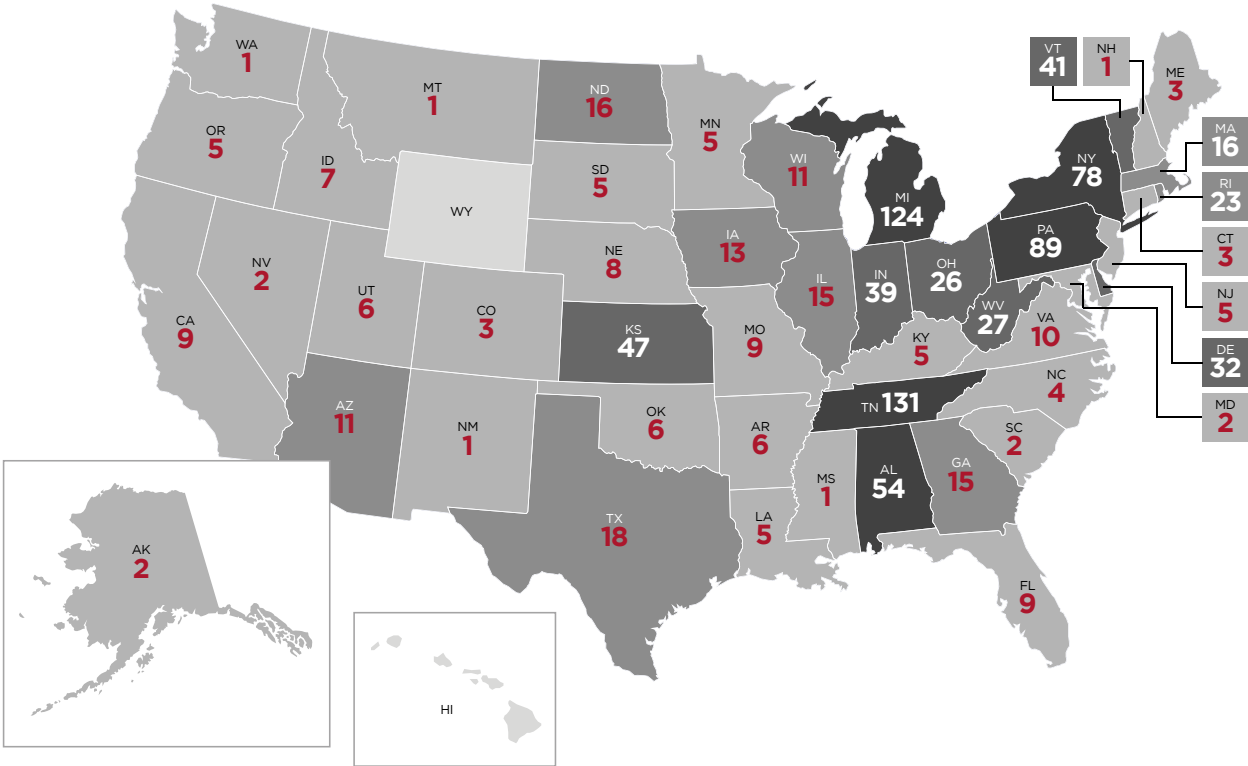


Who participated in Geek the Library?

During the span of the project, 1,779 U.S. library locations representing 959 library systems (referred to here as administrative units) enrolled as Geek the Library campaign participants. Libraries in every state except Wyoming and Hawaii participated in the Geek the Library campaign.

Nearly two-thirds (65%) of participating libraries serve populations of less than 25,000; and 36% are in rural locales. Nearly half (49%) have 1 to 5 FTE staff, and 47% have budgets of less than \$300,000².

Number of Geek the Library participants per state



² Per 2011 IMLS data.

What were the activities of Geek the Library?

Enrollment

The project team deployed an array of tactics to inform the public library community about the opportunity to participate in Geek the Library, including

- presentations at state library association conferences, and group/consortia and library system meetings;
- monthly informational webinars;
- exhibit presence, programs and events at industry conferences;
- case studies, stories from the field and other information about the project published through OCLC communication channels;
- one-on-one touchpoints (in-person, by phone and by email) with libraries that indicated interest or requested information;
- partnerships with state libraries, state library associations, consortia, regional and large library systems;
- active social media presence.

When the enrollment period closed on June 2014, the number of administrative units that had signed up exceeded the project target by 20%.

Launch


Among enrolled libraries, 35% launched within two weeks of enrollment, 39% took up to one month, and 24% waited longer than one month. The duration of local campaigns also ranged from a few months to longer than one year, as there was no prescriptive amount of time required by the campaign. Some libraries have conducted annual campaigns that revive the “Geek” theme and align it with topical community events or ballot issues. Over the course of the project, 1,732 enrolled locations (919 administrative units) were recorded as having launched their local campaign. As of June 2015, there remained 20 libraries that indicated that they would launch later in the summer.



Field support

The project developed a suite of resources and engagement activities to build library staff competency in the skills necessary to run a successful local awareness campaign:

- **Campaign Management Center (CMC):** The CMC website housed a plethora of content—from a detailed outline of the staged campaign process, to sample marketing collateral and letter templates to download and adapt, to case studies, news articles and tips from other participants. These resources were all created as part of the project, with new content developed as the campaign progressed to capture and share learning and success stories from participants and their communities. Many of the resources from the CMC have been adapted and migrated to [WebJunction.org](https://www.webjunction.org), as Advocacy in Action; see www.webjunction.org/explore-topics/advocacy-in-action.html.
- **Field management:** Field managers used a customer relation management system to schedule touchpoints with each library, check in with the primary contact and provide guidance or encouragement as need. These contact points included phone calls, emails and site visits.
- **Webinars and presentations:** Newly enrolled libraries watched a planning webinar to orient them to the program. Actively campaigning libraries were offered 30 “Five Simple Ways” webinars that provided advice from the field on specific topics related to local awareness campaigns and advocacy. Other webinars and conference programs were produced to broadcast emergent findings from the project, with participant success stories and lessons learned.
- **Tips and informational emails:** Campaign tips and information were emailed to participants throughout the project.



“Geek the Library resonated so well because it is a progressive awareness campaign that leads up to what we all need to do, which is ask for support. You can warm people up, you can take them out to lunch, you can show them the programs, you can show them the smiling faces of the kids, but at some point, you have to say, ‘Look, we really need your support.’”

Mary Lou Carolan

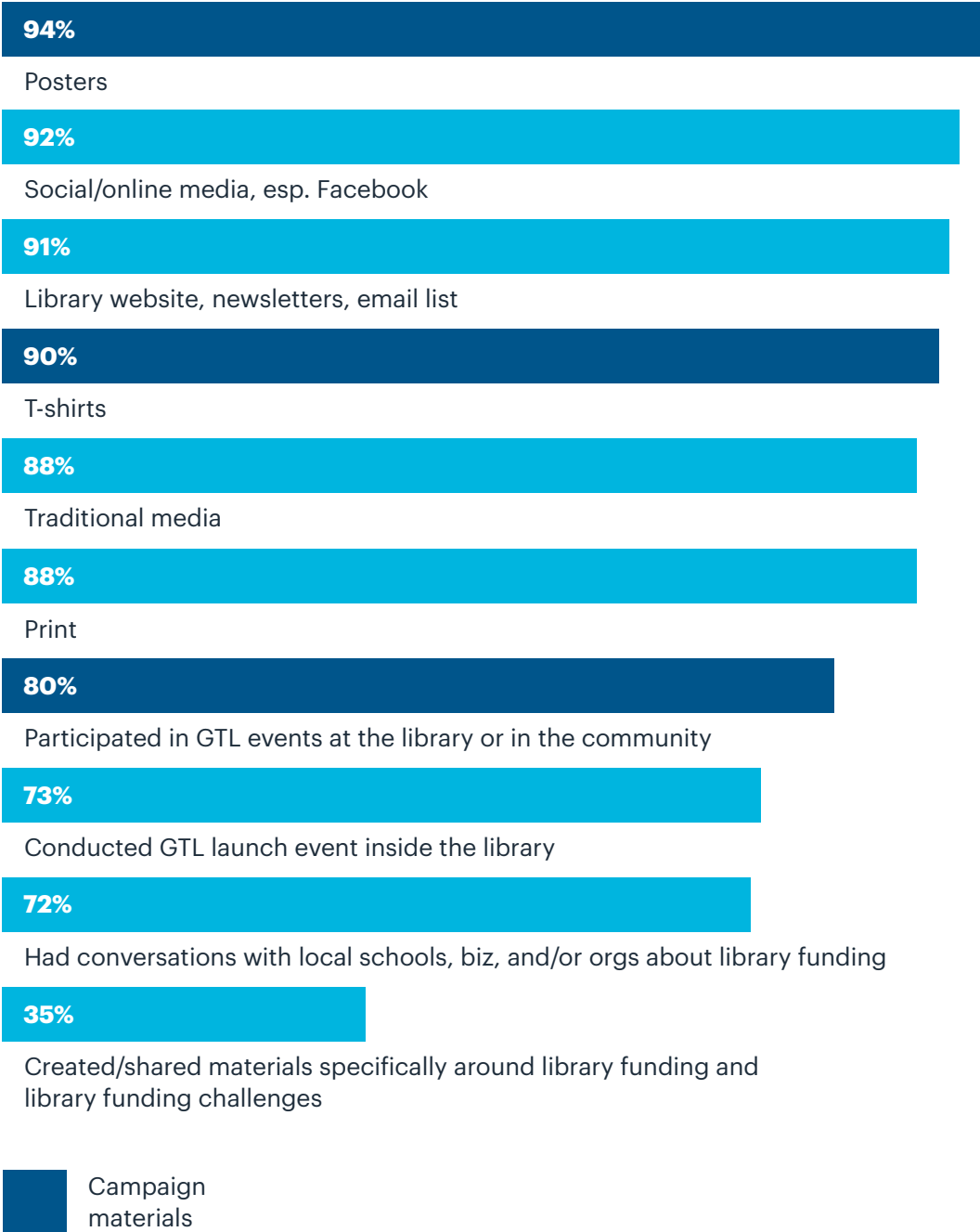
Director, Wallkill Public Library

Local campaigns

Fourteen published case studies capture the range of ways that libraries used the Geek the Library concept and materials in their communities. Those can be read on WebJunction.org here: www.webjunction.org/explore-topics/geek-the-library.html.

The evaluation survey conducted by ORS Impact indicates to what extent libraries used the various methods to engage their communities with their campaign, including use of the campaign materials supplied by the program:

WAYS THAT LIBRARIES ENGAGED THEIR COMMUNITIES IN THE GEEK THE LIBRARY CAMPAIGN



Public outreach

The project communicated directly to the general public through social media to reinforce the messages of Geek the Library and to showcase individual communities that were engaged with the campaign. In addition to geekthelibrary.org, a Facebook page was created that built a following of more than 50,000 Facebook users. A Flickr group and hashtag were used to gather photographic images from local communities and libraries that documented their local awareness campaign activities, including their personalized “I geek _____” posters. Videos created by libraries were posted to YouTube, and Twitter pushed out news and information about the campaign and libraries in general. WebJunction continues to use the Facebook page to showcase library stories; see www.facebook.com/geekthelibrary.

European initiatives

An unexpected development during the project was the interest that was spawned outside of the United States. In 2013–2014, a German-language pilot, “[BiblioFreak](#),” modeled after elements of the Geek the Library program, was conducted in Germany, Austria and Switzerland. In addition, the Netherlands conducted a three-month pilot “Geek de Bibliotheek” media campaign between November 2013 and February 2014 to raise library awareness among 20- to 34-year-olds in the cities of Amsterdam, Rotterdam, The Hague and Utrecht. Switzerland subsequently launched a national, multilingual implementation in April 2015. By October of that year, 320 Swiss libraries had already enrolled to participate, exceeding the interim goal of 300.



What were the outcomes of Geek the Library?


A presentation of the results of the program evaluation conducted by ORS Impact is included at the end of this report. Here is a summary of the key outcomes that were measured during the span of the project:

Increased staff competency and improved library advocacy. As a result of their participation in Geek the Library, library staff reported

- better skills and increased motivation to engage in advocacy and marketing activities as a result of the campaign;
- more frequently, more skillfully and more confidently engaging in advocacy, public relations and partnership development activities—and plans to apply new skills in future work;
- increased engagement in activities that build support for the library, maintain positive public relations with all stakeholders, and form strategic partnerships;
- increased recognition of the need to be regularly out in the community promoting the library, its services and its funding situation, and an increased commitment to do so.

Increased awareness and understanding of the library and its funding. Participating libraries also reported a positive change in their community:

- increased public awareness of the value of the library;
- increased positive profile for the library;
- increased perceptions of the library as a central asset for the community;
- increased public understanding of how the library is funded;
- increased understanding among community members of their role in library funding;
- new or strengthened existing connections with community groups and leaders;
- new library champions who were likely to take action on behalf of the library in the future;
- increase in observed/heard community members showing general support for the library.



“If one person learns something about the library and becomes a supporter, we have reached our goal.”

Cathy Reeves

Director, Dodge City Library

Libraries noted that the Geek the Library campaign helped to “enlighten members of the community concerning the role of the library” and introduce a “cool factor.” Successful external rebranding began inside the library, and library staff reassessed their role and relationship to the community; the campaign’s materials and messages helped encourage staff to become more attuned to community needs and interests, and to be more aware of the need to interact with the community outside of the library and with more than just existing customers.

One library staff participant commented, “[As staff], if we don’t know what our patrons want, and if we don’t have it, they won’t come into the library. What are our patrons interested in? What gets them excited? Do we have those things? We have come up with a new strategic plan; we have changed many things. It is a result of the momentum from the Geek campaign.”

Another staff member noted, “The Geek campaign has been an impetus for us to get out of our building more, and get into community spaces where we can interact with a variety of people. This has been great, and it’s something we plan to continue.”



“Libraries must be able to demonstrate that they are difference makers in their communities. The library exists to help solve community problems and help transform people’s lives for the better, and I believe this more than anything is what we need to do in order to justify funding support.”

Bill Harmer

Library Director, Chelsea District Library (now Westport Library)

What did we learn from Geek the Library?

Local action, national impact

The evaluation consultants observed, “The Geek the Library campaign’s adaptability and sense of playfulness and fun were widely regarded as assets. A major strength of the campaign was how the materials could so easily be customized to highlight local people and local interests. Another asset was how the campaign could be successfully implemented by a variety of libraries, regardless of their size.”

Although Geek the Library can be considered a national (and budding international) campaign, it focused on making a difference in local communities, and letting those grassroots results ripple together toward a collective, national shift in perspective. This community-centered approach has shown to be an effective way to incubate change. A number of participating libraries reported that targeting on funding for specific programs and services seemed a more effective tactic for eliciting community member support than seeking funding support for the library in general; i.e., the closer the library can connect services and programs to specific needs and interests of individuals, the more likely that those individuals will support funding for those services.

Leaders set the tone

The mindset and level of buy-in of library directors or equivalent administrators had an effect on the length, the amount of activity and the perceived success of a library’s local campaign. Evaluators noted the degree to which library leaders were excited by the campaign, envisioned possibilities of transformational change it afforded, saw the campaign as more than “just one more thing” demanding their time and attention, and motivated, encouraged and supported their staff.

Skin in the game

The Geek the Library project supplied an extensive set of marketing materials, from t-shirts to posters to shopping bags and more. Some libraries chose to augment these materials with their own resources. Data showed that libraries that put in more than \$500 toward Geek the Library activities were more likely to realize positive changes in staff advocacy skills,




community engagement and community support. It is possible that this investment, even when relatively modest, showed a level of commitment to the success of the project that resulted in more positive outcomes.

Transformational libraries

A transformational library can be characterized as one that seeks to understand the needs of the whole community, and engage community members with the library to deliver, assess and adapt services in response. Libraries that have leaders and staff with a transformational mindset are more likely to realize stronger outcomes in terms of refreshing the library's self-perception and image in the community. This approach also appears to be associated with increased library support, such as participation in library events and willingness to advocate for the library, as well as increased funding resources.

One participant described their own library's transformation: "When the library's millage went on the ballot in November 2012, we lost by 28 votes. When we went back on the ballot in August 2014, we passed with 68% Yes votes. During that time I think we were out there talking about the library, getting people to understand who we are—that we've got so much more than books. We were able to raise awareness that the millage funding was critical to the library's survival. While we still have work to do [in terms of refreshing our library brand] with the general public and some local policy makers, we've come such a long way!"



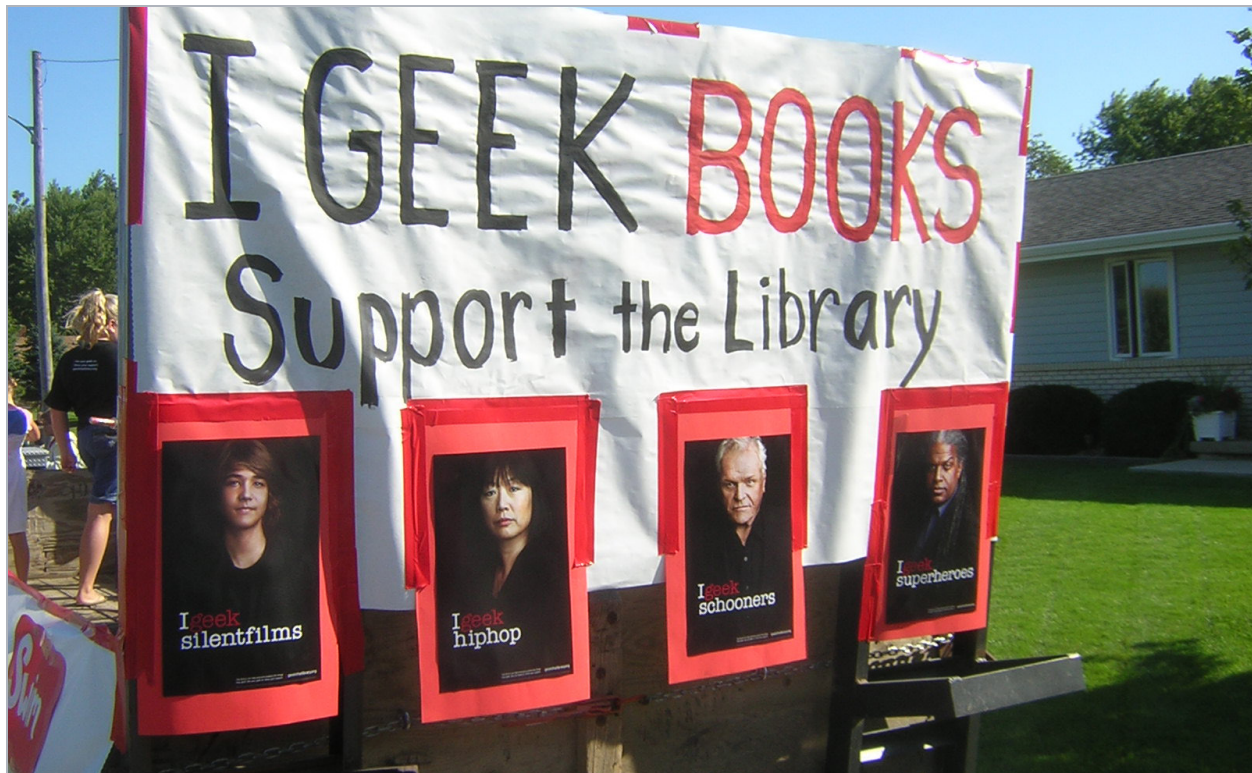
"The campaign helped teach the community that the library is there for everyone. It has made it easier to go out there and tell people about what the library needs. They see the library as a part of them and an important part of the community."

Angela Semifero

Library Director, Marshall District Library

Throughout the evaluation, library staff emphasized the need to update the library's brand, both internally and externally. This means moving away from traditional notions of the library as a quiet, responsive place that primarily houses books, toward a view that the library is a dynamic, proactive, energizing community hub.

"Everyone assumes we only have old dusty books and research materials for school work. We want people to think of us in a different way," said one participant.



Keep your friends close

Data revealed that the library benefits from a close alignment between its Friends groups, board of trustees or library foundation and its marketing, communications and public relations activities. As natural allies, these close partners can engage in collateral activities, including fundraising and advocacy, which complement and amplify the library's campaign. As with the transformational library, it is helpful when these groups also understand the value and possibilities of a local awareness campaign, community engagement and library brand.

One participant commented, "The campaign spurred many people to join our Friends of the Library group. It is great to have this group that is willing to speak on our behalf. Many from the Friends group were on our 'Library Yes!' committee and made a giant difference in our millage results."

Evaluation hesitation

There was notable reluctance among a significant number of libraries to participate in the evaluation activities provided by the Geek the Library project. This points to a larger issue of libraries not effectively measuring the impact of their services, thus limiting their ability to communicate data to stakeholders who apply evidence-based decision making. Many library staff either do not see the benefit (and necessity) of evaluation, do not understand how it is used, or are uncomfortable with providing data and information that may be judged as unsatisfactory or held against them. There is much room for helping the field to understand and embrace evaluation.

Evergreen resources

The resources created to support the participants, and documented experiences of those participants, can be used to support other kinds of local awareness campaigns beyond Geek the Library. The Advocacy in Action section of WebJunction.org was created to support and inspire library staff to continue to campaign for their library. It is hoped that other library awareness initiatives, such as ALA's Libraries Transform, will take advantage of these resources; and that learners who use PLA's Turning the Page will find the Advocacy in Action resources an excellent complementary resource to guide them through applying the learning from that curriculum. These resources also underscore how effective it is to let the experiences of program participants be visible; when peers can hear directly from their colleagues, the learning is more direct and powerful.



“In order to position the library as something vital for a healthy community, we don’t need to tell the people in the library about what makes us valuable, we need to get the message to everybody in the community.”

Ann Miller

Community Relations Coordinator, Solano County Library

Conclusion

Over its nearly seven years as a project, Geek the Library has scaled nationally and even internationally, extending the impact of local marketing and advocacy programs for libraries far beyond the original pilot campaign.

The benefits for the libraries that participated were many, from relating more meaningfully with their communities, to strengthening key partnerships, bolstering staff skills and confidence, to early successes with funding for the future. The program reinforced the notion that, especially when inspired by fresh opportunity and leadership support, library staff can be tremendously effective at connecting the library to individual and community needs in ways that will truly make a lasting difference in peoples' lives. It is hoped that the concepts behind Geek the Library and the learning produced by the project will inform future programs that work with libraries, and that the myriad local success stories will continue to ripple through the field for inspiration and emulation, together supporting every library as the strong heart of their community.

Geek the Library evaluation

From 2012 to 2015, ORS Impact implemented an evaluation of the Geek the Library project. Evaluation activities were aimed at assessing the following changes:

- increased capacity of libraries to implement marketing, communications, public relations, and advocacy;
- increased support for libraries, and
- increased library resources.

The following pages illustrate a summary of the findings from the evaluation, as analyzed and produced by ORS Impact. The case studies referred to here can be read in full on WebJunction.org, here: www.webjunction.org/explore-topics/geek-the-library.html.

3-Year Geek the Library evaluation

Data Collection Methods		
Reflects 4 rounds of data collection, January 2014- June 2015		
Methods	Respondents	Participation/Response rate
Pre/Post Survey	149 primary contacts	86% completed both
Staff survey	102 staff	47% of individuals invited (representing 59% of participating libraries)
Focus group	4 focus groups	4 to 7 participants per focus group
Case studies	2 libraries	Including focus groups with 4-6 staff and 6-7 interviews with community leaders

About participating libraries



58% serve communities with populations of 20K or under



64% are in rural areas



70% had total campaign budgets less than \$500

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About respondents

80% of pre/post survey respondents were *managers*

60% of pre/post survey respondents were *library directors*

90% staff survey respondents had *high involvement* in campaign planning and/or implementation

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Library staff are satisfied with the GTL campaign and OCLC support

- 82% of staff reported a very positive or *positive overall impression* of the campaign
- 79% of staff indicated they *would recommend implementing* the campaign to peers
- CMC was most frequently named as the *most helpful type of support* (85%) followed by one-on-one field manager support (74%)

Very good support---Jenny is amazing and very inspirational. Her visit here was a huge motivator for our staff. The webinars were very good. Wish that we could have spent more time with them. Hope to in the future.

The one on one consultation with Karen Austin was invaluable, I can't thank you enough for providing that!

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Outcomes

- 1.** Increased advocacy capacity and activities
- 2.** Increased public support for libraries
- 3.** Changes in library resources
- 4.** Emergent findings

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1.

Increased advocacy capacity and activities

Staff consistently reported **better skills** and **increased motivation** to engage in advocacy and marketing activities as a result of the campaign

- 80% to 99% of staff agreed or strongly agreed to statements about their own and other staff members' improvements in different aspects of advocacy capacity

I have learned the importance of advocacy and marketing. It is not enough to set a few flyers out, or to post things on our website. To reach the public we have to be in the public eye. We have to be out talking to non-profit groups, businesses, at schools, festivals and county fairs. If we want the community to recognize the library as a community center, we have to be the center of the community.

We learned how to "word" our promotions to catch community attention; how to explain our funding in simple terms and brochures and just how to promote to every aspect of our community.

We visited a local business and promoted the library - not only the physical building but the virtual materials you have available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. We also explained how libraries have changed & many of the new services that are available.

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1.



Post-campaign, primary contacts report increased engagement in activities that build **support** for the library, maintain **positive public relations** with all stakeholders, and form **strategic partnerships**



Post-campaign, primary contacts and staff reported more **frequently**, more **skillfully** and more **confidently** engaging in advocacy, PR and partnership development activities and that they plan to apply new skills in future work

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Icons from flaticon.com

1.

Increased recognition among primary contacts and staff of the ***need to be regularly out in the community*** promoting the library, its services, and its funding situation, and an ***increased commitment to do so***

I became much more aware of the fact that even members of the Friends group and Board members aren't always knowledgeable regarding funding and/or what services/programs we have to offer. If [our close-in partners] aren't aware, then its much more likely that the general public is lacking this information, and [we need to be talking to them more].

We built interactive book displays based on what our community geeked. We learned how to include messages on our check-out receipts. We found ways to incorporate our message into events or in conversation.

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1.

Qualitative data indicated that libraries were ***more successful at building advocates within the community if they made a specific ask***

We asked different people in the community to write an article about what the library means to them and our local paper printed one each week for about two months. The paper designated an area for library news due to these articles.

Most of the people who posed for posters became stronger supporters because people would ask them about their poster and they became our advocates. The people who were on our billboards were especially noteworthy because so many people drove by and called or emailed them to ask them about the billboards and what geek meant. The businesses who chose to put their own "we geek" on their own business signs were also stronger supporters as they talked to people about their signs.

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2.

Increased public support for libraries



Primary contacts reported increased *public awareness* re: the value of the library (82%); staff reported an increased *positive profile* for the library (77%) and increased perceptions of the library as a *central asset* for the community (70%)



Staff reported increased *public understanding* re: how the library is funded (57%) and primary contacts reported increased understanding among community members of their role in library funding (66%)



Change in awareness about the library's value and public's role in library funding was seen as strongest among local *policy makers/decision makers* and *business owners*

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2.

Weight of evidence indicates the community's *increased sense of value and support for the library*:

- Increased comments by patrons (76%)
- Increased social media activity (67%)
- Increased visitation (43%)
- Stable funding (37%)
- Increased library website activity (32%)

Books-A-Million had a December campaign for the library. As people paid for their books they were asked if they would like to donate a book (from a bunch selected beforehand) to donate it to the library. We received 582 items - books, stuffed characters from children's books, and trains for our train table. How great is that for community support!

[We saw a] huge increase (67%) in the number of patrons utilizing our public access computers.

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2.

New/stronger connections were reported with schools, local businesses and business associations, local government, and patrons.

What I enjoyed most was touching base with our local businesses. Our campaign was welcomed with open arms!!!! As a result of this experience, I plan to build on these important relationships through continued contact.

We really wanted to make new connections within the community and make the community aware of all the services we provide. When we went out into the community, many people were surprised to see all the things we do offer and became more inclined to take advantage of our services.

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2.

Libraries identified *new champions*; those who have spoken out and taken action on behalf of the library, including patrons, elected officials, business leaders, and civic groups

We have added many people to our Friends of the Library group, and have found that there are more people in the community that are willing to speak on our behalf than we knew. Many of them were on our Library Yes! committee, and made a giant difference in our millage results.

Some of our new patrons/champions have had contact with our elected officials in the community and continue to make their voices heard regarding our proposed new library. They have had either email or phone contact with our officials.

Superintendent of schools who released news releases to the area papers to promote the schools support of our library, on their website, twitter, Facebook and newspaper.

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2.

Many libraries identified a *shift* in the way their communities view the library.

[Geek the Library] added a cool factor. For so long, libraries have had a concept of being nerdy, not fun. The campaign changed that.

When we were at a budget session with the county, it was the first year we left and they were saying they were appreciating the library and all that we do in the community. A few years ago, they still saw us as a book warehouse. They didn't know we do research, technology drop-ins, literacy efforts – not just checking out books. The Geek campaign really helped that.

I would say the perception of the library has been lifted substantially... I think it dismantled stereotypes people have about the library.

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3.

Change in library resources

Some library staff indicated that because it is easier to talk about library funding in the context of the library's value to the community, *the Geek campaign provided a natural and effective opening.*

The main thing I learned through Geek is that when you implement something like that which is interesting to many people in the community it's easy to start conversations and bring awareness to important topics such as funding.

I think that the Geek campaign gave us an intro to talk about library funding. It would be awkward to step up to a group of people and ask, "Do you guys know how your library is funded? Do you know what services your library has to offer?" The Geek campaign gave people a reason to ask us, "What is this Geek thing all about?"

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3.

Library staff identified a funding challenge: sometimes there is *greater willingness to fund specifics* rather than the library in general

We have seen an increase in donations from community members specifically ear-marked for their favorite aspect/department of the library.

Although it is not a library services or operational funding example, we have begun a capital campaign for a new building... [the campaign] has given us an opportunity to talk to people about giving funds for both the building and operations.

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4. Emergent findings

Traditionally, libraries relate to the community via *transactions*; Geek the Library helped some libraries see themselves more expansively – engaging with communities in a *transformational* way.

- Some libraries adopted an intentional and proactive *outward focus*
- Some libraries *engaged more deeply with community members*

It seems like people aren't asked very often about what they like. People loved talking to us. [People's openness with us] was not something I expected.

If we don't know what our patrons want and we don't have it, they won't come into the library. Our patrons are very diverse. What they are interested in? What gets them excited? When we look at the geek board, do we have those things? We have come up with a new strategic plan; we have changed everything. It is a result of the GTL campaign.

I can't stress enough that the campaign came to us at a point when our library was in need. It educated not only the community, but also staff. We came out of our own shell a bit. It was exactly what we needed at exactly the right moment. It saved our library.

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4.

Some libraries *maintained the “transactional”* way of operating

We implemented our campaign for 6 months...the challenge was in the follow up. It wasn't clear what kind of follow up the campaign would offer. We had [community members] geek whatever, but what comes next?

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4.

Geek the Library led to many successful *business-library partnerships*. Business-library partnerships work well when there is a reciprocal, win-win relationship.

We have established a relationship with a local physical therapy business after helping them with a race last year and plan to continue volunteering at that event. The owner and manager of said business is a big name in our community.

At a local Vienna Coffee House, we conducted a kick-off campaign event--with gifts, Geek photos, program and entertainment--for local business people with the idea of helping them know more about library resources and services that are especially relevant for them.

We also partnered with other non-profit groups by raising awareness for each institution. The library had programs at some local museums which helped increase the number of visitors to the museum and therefore entitled them to increased funding opportunities. We have started to write grants together and share programs.

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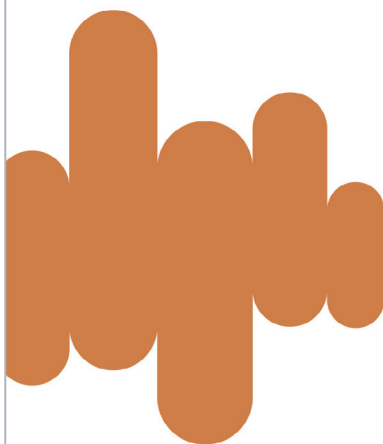
Via campaign implementation, some libraries *recognized a need and made adjustments* (staffing, board engagement) such that marketing, PR and communications gained more stability, prominence and permanence within library operations.

[The campaign helped us realize] we need to make the effort. We altered a position and added a marketing coordinator.

The campaign enabled board members to see the importance they had in sharing our story. Board members stepped up and became strong advocates. [Staff and board realized that] sharing personal stories is a source of efficacy for libraries; people like a good story. GTL taught us to keep telling stories!

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Additional Analysis

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Are *implementation of funding-related campaign activities* and *advancement of select outcomes* explained by library characteristics?

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Funding-related campaign activities

- **Education materials:** posters, ads, local statistics, display
- **Partner engagement:** had conversations, asked to talk about

Select outcomes

- Raised awareness re breadth and value of library services
- Raised awareness re library funding
- Increased community support for the library
- Connected with the community
- Drew in more patrons
- Attracted younger patrons
- Improved library advocacy skills
- Improved marketing skills
- Value advocacy for sustaining funding
- Changed: Information reaching target audiences
- Changed: Community member understanding about how library is funded

Library Characteristics

- **Service area:** Rural versus Other
- **Staffing:** Greater than two FTE versus two or fewer
- **Legal Basis Code:** Municipal Government versus County/Parish
- **Campaign budget:** \$500 or more versus less than \$500

METHOD KEY

Post Survey

Library Staff Survey

IMLS data

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Do *library characteristics* explain differences in implementation of funding-related activities and/or outcomes?

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- Trend toward *rural libraries and those with fewer than two FTEs* being more likely than counterparts to discuss library funding with partners...
 - ...but less likely to report campaign had raised awareness about library funding
- Trend toward *libraries with County/Parish Legal Basis Code* being more likely than libraries with Municipal Government Legal Basis Code to use funding-related education materials...
 - ...but no difference in funding-related campaign outcomes

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“Skin in the game” was associated with positive perceptions of campaign outcome achievement

↳ with the exception of “raised awareness about library funding”

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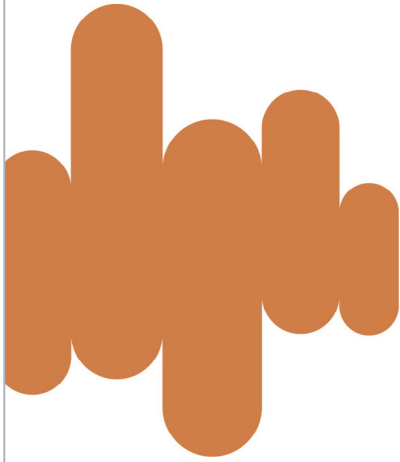
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Libraries that spent more than \$500 on their campaign were more likely than those that spent less to believe the campaign helped the library...

- Raise awareness re breadth and value of library services
- Increase community support for the library
- Connect with the community
- Draw in more patrons
- Attract younger patrons
- Improve library advocacy skills
- Improve marketing skills

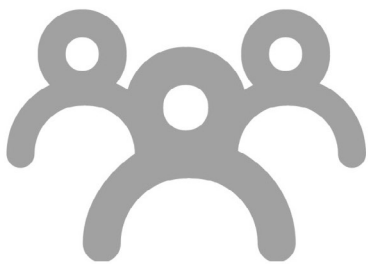
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Case Studies

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The case studies in selected communities offered the opportunity to

- *more deeply explore* libraries' experiences with GTL implementation, community perceptions about the campaign, and outcomes, and
- *draw insights* to inform continuation of GTL or other campaigns

Case studies: Austin Public Library and Manatee County Library

- Each library was *exemplar* re: campaign implementation
- Differences in how libraries are funded and in structure allow for some *comparisons*

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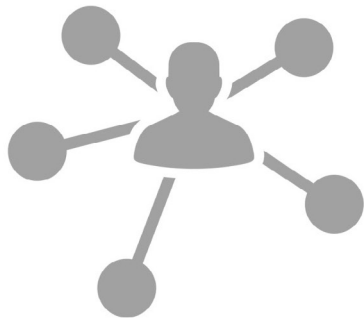
Case studies revealed

- *No discernable relationship* between source of library funding and campaign outcomes
- Both communities successfully advanced an *updated library “brand”*
 - Library not a “quiet,” “old-fashioned” place
 - Library is exciting, edgy
- *Being proactive* led to productive community partnerships



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- Sustained campaign implementation and an orientation towards “transformation” led to *increased library support*
- *Strong library leadership* is a key factor to sustaining campaign and optimal outcome advancement
- *Sustaining resources* for campaign implementation is always a puzzle; creativity and flexibility are necessary
- The library benefits when *there is strong alignment* between library staff, leaders, Friends groups, and board/trustees

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For more information about Geek the Library, please visit:
www.webjunction.org/explore-topics/geek-the-library.html



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