

Exhibitions at the academic library: promoting the community and public research communication

In the past few years, the role of academic libraries has been changing. From being the aggregators of information, libraries have been challenged to be increasingly embedded in institutional research activities, namely implementing tools, delivering services and supporting recognition mechanisms that promote excellence in the current scientific environment.

Libraries are now placed to play distinctive new roles in research pipeline, providing support communication of scientific research activities to the general public, among others. That's what we do, at FEUP's Library, with an emphasis on exhibitions, research support services also include opening communication to broader publics.

Regarded as a key strategy, evidences show that exhibitions can play an important role in establishing stronger links with researchers and enhancing the value of library's services and assets. Assuming the purpose of scientific communication, exhibitions promote sense of community belonging, communicate research (impact) to a broader public and can constitute starting points to new research (both aggregating past research and pointing new research directions).

This paper will examine exhibitions as participatory experiences within FEUP's academic community and will explore how interaction between library services and researchers can be outlined in practice. From the Library's point of view, the different goals and the exhibition creation processes are examined. Finally, factors contributing to the success of the experiences and the obstacles that challenged these participatory processes, demanding new structures and skills, are discussed.

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