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Read Between the Lines: Marketing Graphic Novels

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Read Between the Lines: Marketing Graphic Novels
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This poster session highlights a marketing initiative for graphic novels, an underutilized collection, at the University at Albany. The marketing initiative was a collaboration between the presenters and the University Library’s Marketing Coordinating Committee. It included an exhibit case, book marks, a library Pinterest page, a designated location for the books with signage to draw attention to the books, writing a piece for the Libraries’ newsletter, creating a promotional slide for the library lobby and website, coordinating with the bibliographer in the Science Library about her graphic novel display, and sending emails notifying staff about the display.

Methodology
- Identified our graphic novels
  - Located throughout stacks, not tagged or necessarily given genre heading in the catalog
- Put on display on special bookcases at the front of the library, with a promotional poster
- Scanned images and covers to display in cases, with props, in different areas of the library
- Created Pinterest page, advertised on the library website and lobby TV, and promoted through the library newsletter
- Identified initial circulation statistics & tracked several times through the semester

Results
- Circulation of graphic novels increased by 28% as of April 28, 2014.
- 25% of graphic novels circulated once from February 18 to April 28. 2% circulated more than once during that same period.
- 10 of the circulated titles were showcased in the display case or on the promotional poster. 2 additional titles by highlighted authors circulated.

Discussion
- Having books on display did increase circulation
- Anecdotal evidence: increased interest in the graphic novel collection. After the display went up:
  - Two people were seen browsing the collection and had taken a book to circulation to check out. At the same time their picture was taken and the one of individuals said that the picture was being posted on the SEEN photo gallery on the Times-Union
  - A user came to the Reference desk looking for comics from the Cold War era
  - A user went to both the Reference and Circulation desk trying to locate a specific graphic novel that was on display but off the shelf.
- Further research: Collect data on cataloging and housing of graphic novels in other ARL library collections

References
David S. Serruya. The Librarian’s Guide to Graphic Novels for Adults (New York: Neal-Schuman, 2010), 123-141