

RE-THINKING ACCESS POLICES & SERVICE IMAGE ON AN OPEN CAMPUS

Access Services Conference 2015

#ASC15

Who is this Guy??

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and the Rotch Library of Architecture & Planning at MIT**

Experience

3 years as access services manager

9 years with MIT Libraries

13 years in libraries

Education

Bachelor of Arts in Journalism

Minors in Creative Writing and Speech Communication

Important Information

- ▶ I am a PowerPoint novice.
- ▶ I talk with my hands, like, *a lot*.
- ▶ I have a tendency to talk quickly.
- ▶ I am incredibly nervous in front of crowds.

MIT + The Community



Issues and Early Efforts

The Issue

- ▶ Computer use
 - ▶ Hoarding
 - ▶ Inappropriate use
 - ▶ Non-scholarly use
- ▶ Threatening behavior
- ▶ Disrespectful behavior
- ▶ Lewdness & harassment
- ▶ Illegal activity

The (Short-Term) Fix

- ▶ 2000s: library use guidelines and computer use guidelines
- ▶ 2012-13: Time-out software
- ▶ MIT Community Officer

Tipping Point

Fall 2013-Spring 2014

- ▶ Explosion in total number of incidents
- ▶ Dramatic increase in the severity of incidents
- ▶ Increased backlash and attitude from visitors
- ▶ Staff felt powerless to enforce policies
- ▶ Staff felt unsafe around patrons

Game Plan

- ▶ Update and strengthen library use guidelines
- ▶ Define “excessive use” in a measurable capacity
- ▶ Improve relationships with MIT Police & MIT Counsel
- ▶ Improve and clarify paths of escalation and expulsion
- ▶ Improve internal communication
- ▶ Support and empower frontline staff
- ▶ Ensure consistent enforcement at all units

Revising the Guidelines

- ▶ New name: **Library Use Policy**
- ▶ Combines “Guidelines...” and “Computer Use...” into one
- ▶ Stronger language about harassment, borrows from MIT policy, applies to computing and behavior
- ▶ Defined Excessive Use: *“Use of visitor computers for more than two hours per day across the Libraries’ locations for two or more concurrent days, or in a clear recurrent pattern of multi-day use, is considered excessive use.”*
- ▶ Interpretation of policies is at staff discretion
- ▶ “Visitor” instead of “Public” or “Open”
- ▶ Buy-in from MIT Office of General Counsel and MIT Police

Relationship Building

MIT Police

- ▶ Established basic expectations from us to them and vice-versa
- ▶ Clarified procedures regarding removal of problem patrons
- ▶ Established contacts for information sharing

Office of General Counsel

- ▶ As a private institution, we can apply policies as necessary
- ▶ Library staff can share private information about problem users
- ▶ Use of Government Documents is not a loophole

Improving Internally

- ▶ **Communication + Reporting**
 - ▶ Shared more quickly and more widely
 - ▶ Includes “policy enforcement” for excessive use
 - ▶ Form will record incidents in a secure spreadsheet
 - ▶ Incidents are trackable over time for recurrent issues
- ▶ **Enforcement Consistency + Mindset**
 - ▶ Enforcement and reporting are necessary for escalation, disciplinary action, and/or expulsion
 - ▶ Failure to enforce the policies and report incidents maintains status quo for patrons and one another

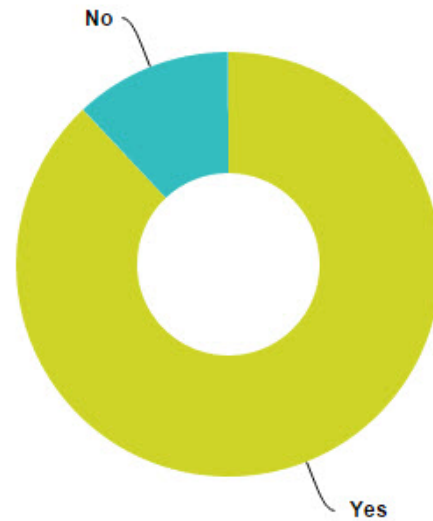
The Results

- ▶ Reduced historically large computer use and hoarding issues
- ▶ Reduced use by the most egregious problem patrons
- ▶ Fewer serious incidents requiring police intervention
- ▶ Response and follow-up with police is improved
- ▶ Staff are empowered and confidently enforce policy
- ▶ Staff are more aware and observant of users in our spaces

Staff Feedback

Do you feel more empowered and in control of the Libraries spaces with the new Library Use Policy in place?

Answered: 25 Skipped: 0



Answer Choices	Responses	
Yes	88.00%	22
No	12.00%	3
Total		25

To Be Continued...

- ▶ Building and maintaining staff confidence
- ▶ Supporting night/weekend staff
- ▶ Policies for other equipment and resources
- ▶ Technical enhancements for enforcement
- ▶ Relationship with MIT Police
- ▶ MIT-only hours (ie: nights/weekends/finals/etc.)

The background features abstract, overlapping geometric shapes in various shades of blue, ranging from light sky blue to deep navy blue. These shapes are primarily located on the left and right sides of the frame, creating a modern, dynamic feel. The central area is a plain, light grayish-white.

QUESTIONS?