National Library Week Caption Contest

Madison College Library, Madison Area Technical College

National Library Week Caption Contest

Aug 2, 2018

$101-250

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Byline

Autumn Hall-Tun, Regional Partnerships Librarian, Madison (Wis.) College Library, Madison Area Technical College

Madison Area Technical College Library hosted a caption contest in celebration of National Library Week using historical photos from the college's archive collection. The photos, dating from the 1960s and 1970s, featured students and staff in our original campus library, complete with the era's décor and styles.

Students were encouraged to create clever captions for the photos, with speech and thought bubbles added to each. We received 114 contest entries, and the winner was awarded a Kindle Fire HD and a $50 Amazon gift card.

View some of the submissions under Photos and Images at right.

Advanced Planning

Our primary goal with the contest was engagement. We wanted to create a contest that would fit into students' busy schedules. The contest was planned and executed by our outreach and marketing team, which consists of members of the library staff. Our team thought creating a humorous caption would be a fun, quick way for students to engage with the library and its history. We began planning the contest about a month in advance.

We started by locating suitable photos from our college's archive. We scanned six different photos and made each into an entry form, complete with spaces for the students' name, college email address and primary campus location. We printed paper copies of the entry forms to have on hand at each library location. Students were also able to submit their entries via email or via our library's Facebook or Twitter pages.

To be eligible to win the prize, entrants had to be current students, and each entry had to include the student's name, email address and primary campus location. Students also had to agree that the library could use their entry form in our promotions. Students were permitted to create multiple entries.

Marketing

We marketed the program using our primary social media channels: Facebook, Twitter and Pinterest. We shared entries throughout the week on our social media pages, including creating a Pinterest board of submitted entries. Our team also created a custom LibGuide with information about the contest, including the rules. Library staff designed print materials including an 8.5-by-11 flier and small table tents to post at the libraries and in different locations around campus.

We allowed students to submit contest entries in person and via social media. One challenge we faced was figuring out the logistics of accepting entries through Facebook and Twitter. We came up with the plan of monitoring any entries shared to our Facebook or Twitter accounts before sharing them, and allowed students to either post their image to our Facebook page or share it with us via an @ mention on

Twitter. Most students submitted entries in person, but having the plan in place for online submissions was helpful for future contests.

Budgeting

Budget for this program included staff time to plan the contest, create the entry forms and materials, and promote them — in addition to the prizes. We purchased a Kindle Fire and a $50 Amazon gift card as the grand prize, although any prize could be given for a similar contest, depending upon budget.

Day-of-event Activity

Throughout National Library Week, all library staff encouraged students to pick up and complete the entry forms. As the forms were completed, we taped them to several rolling whiteboards for students coming and going from the libraries to enjoy. Seeing the contest entries in physical form also seemed to encourage students to stop and participate, both by checking out the humorous entries and creating their own.

Staff made a photocopy of each entry form and stored them in our office before posting the original to our rolling whiteboard display. This way, when we sat down to judge the contest, we could be assured no entries had gone missing while on display.

Our college has seven campus locations with libraries, and each library participated. At the off-site locations, staff scanned each entry form and emailed them to coworkers on the outreach and marketing team, who collected them along with the rest of the entry forms. We made a display at each campus of the entries as they came in.

Program Execution

We received a record 114 entries for the contest, and the winner was awarded a Kindle Fire HD and a $50 Amazon gift card.

One positive outcome was that, in addition to the number of students who completed multiple entries, we had the most individual entrants of any of our yearly contests. As our primary goal was to increase engagement with the library, our staff felt the contest was a success. Students enjoyed being able to take part without a big time investment, such as participating in an essay contest, which we have also had in the past.

Students enjoyed the displays of the entries throughout the week, and seeing the forms already filled out encouraged students to participate. We received positive verbal feedback on the event as well. Community college student engagement with the library can be a challenge, and our library staff was very pleased with the high number of entries.

The success our team experienced with this contest has influenced subsequent contests and programs, and one of our main considerations is often our students' time. We recognize more than ever after this contest that college students lead busy, active lives and do not necessarily have the time to put into events that require a big time commitment. Moving forward, we have used this program as a model for much of our programming, and try to find a balanced goal of student engagement and things that can be done in between classes or studying.

Advice

Staff should be sure to keep an eye on your contest entries as they come in. We asked students to hand their entries to library staff before they were posted to the display in the library, in case of any inappropriate or explicit entries.

If you allow students to enter via social media, have a plan in place for how to handle those entries. We monitored our accounts closely and did not allow anything to be posted to our Facebook wall without our prior approval.

Be sure you own the rights to the photographs you use for a caption contest, or try to find suitable Creative Commons licensed images to adapt.

Did you try this program at your library? Share your experience using this form.

Supporting Materials

Document
entry_form_1.doc
Document
entry_form_2.doc
Document
caption_contest_flier.pdf
Download this Program as a PDF

- Programming Librarian Facebook Group

Slideshow Images





Image





More Programs

Mar 29, 2013
Young Adult (17 - 20)+ |
Image



Reaching Teens through Passive Programming

Audiences:

Audience
Young Adult (17 - 20)
Apr 12, 2017
Children (9 and under)+ | $
Image



Paint by Sticker

Audiences:

Children (9 and under)
Tweens (10-12)
Teens (13-16)
Young Adult (17 - 20)
Adults (21 and up)
Intergenerational
Apr 17, 2018
Teens (13-16)+ | □□
Image



Creating Engagement Through Questions

Audiences:

Audience
Teens (13-16)