

Introducing and Promoting Love Data Week

Stephen Fadel

Tanimura & Antle Family Memorial Library
California State University Monterey Bay

Abstract: The growing awareness of the importance of data and statistics, especially over the past decade, has become a top concern for many who work in higher education. This article describes the efforts of one library to introduce and promote an annual international event, Love Data Week, at a mid-size public university from 2018 to 2021. Included in this discussion is the development of a Love Data Week web page, the creation of a range of Love Data Week workshops, the introduction of a single, campus wide engagement activity—the Data Challenge—and the impact of COVID-19 restrictions. Promotional strategies reviewed include both physical and virtual materials. The article concludes with planned future changes.

Keywords: Love Data Week, outreach, gamification, peer promotion, assessment

Introduction

Instruction at many colleges and universities today reflects a growing awareness of data and statistics. As one working group from the National Science Foundation states, “It is imperative that educators, administrators, and students begin today to consider how to best prepare for and keep pace with this data-driven era of tomorrow” (National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, 2018, p. 8). Over the past decade, various data-related subjects have appeared on the Association of College and Research Libraries’ (ACRL) biannual list of top trends in academic libraries, which covers topics such as data curation (ACRL Research Planning and Review Committee, 2012), research datasets (ACRL Research Planning and Review Committee, 2016), and data ethics (ACRL Research Planning and Review Committee, 2020).

Much of the attention has focused on research data and research data management. Henderson (2017) defines research data as “data that is collected, observed, recorded, or created, for purposes of analysis to produce original research results for a study” (p. 2). Although faculty and librarians at larger research institutions are often concerned with original research, librarians at smaller, less research-driven institutions are frequently more focused on promoting basic statistical skills such as the ability to find and interpret charts and tables. In a 2017 edition of ACRL’s *Keeping Up With...*, a publication that documents library trends, Davis and Kellam describe the relationship between data and statistical literacy:

While statistical literacy and data literacy are connected, they represent two distinct skill sets. Statistical literacy requires the ability to interpret aggregate statistics and is a baseline skill for understanding and navigating information, while data literacy requires the ability to manipulate datasets with the goal of performing data analysis. (para. 1)

Professor Emeritus Milo Schield of Augsburg University, with his online resource *Statistical Literacy* (2022) has also been a key advocate of statistical literacy.

In line with the interest in data and statistics at local, national, and international levels, the year 2016 marked the launch of Love Data Week (LDW), a nationwide annual commemoration described as a “social media event coordinated by research specialists working in academic and research libraries” (Love Data Week Planning Committee, n.d.,

para. 2). Sponsors hoped to promote and raise awareness of data tools, resources, and services. The initial event listed over 25 participating academic libraries. In 2021 the Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research (ICPSR) became the new coordinating body for what was then called International Love Data Week. Promotional materials for 2021 included colorful data characters (Figure 1), Love Data Valentine photo cards, and an Adopt a Dataset initiative (Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research, n.d.). Using the theme, "Data: Delivering a Better Future," Twitter served as the event's primary social media promotional channel. Despite the emphasis on data, LDW can also serve as an opportunity to promote both data and statistical literacy.

Figure 1: International Love Data Week 2021 Characters



Note. From ICPSR. (2021). "Love Data Week with ICPSR." (<https://www.icpsr.umich.edu/web/about/cms/1576>). Reprinted with permission.

Literature related to LDW has been sparse. In their article, Wissel and DeLuca (2018) describe efforts at a research-heavy private university to use LDW to introduce a new campus data repository and new data management services. The authors highlight the development of workshops, types of promotion used, and lessons learned. Gao, Malone, and Simmons (2019) describe efforts to raise awareness of data resources and services in conjunction with LDW at a Tier 1 research institution. With an emphasis on research data, their article walks readers through the development, funding, promotion, and outcomes of a day-long data program held during LDW 2019. More recently, a study (Rod et al., 2021) of LDW 2021 activities identified 37 participating entities, of which over 30 were university libraries or university research data departments. Most organizations were based in the United States, and over 240 events were held, of which the majority were workshops (57.9%), followed by lectures, panels, and talks (19%).

Topics included data analysis programs, research data management, data products and services, data visualization, social justice and equity, open data, data ethics, and more.

Located just north of Monterey along the central coast of California, California State University Monterey Bay (CSUMB) is one of 23 campuses that make up the California State University System. Its enrollment of approximately 7,000 students (Institutional Assessment & Research, 2021) qualifies the institution as a mid-sized university, while CSUMB's Carnegie Classification is listed as Master's Colleges & Universities: Medium Programs with a very high undergraduate enrollment profile (Center for Postsecondary Research, n.d.). CSUMB has especially large undergraduate populations of first-generation students (54%) and low-income students (32%; Institutional Assessment & Research, 2021). CSUMB students can choose from 25 undergraduate and nine graduate programs. The university also offers a recently-introduced Bachelor of Science in statistics. CSUMB promotes competence in quantitative reasoning as part of both undergraduate and graduate learning outcomes (Academic Affairs, n.d.). In addition, different programs on campus highlight data and statistical literacy through their Major Learning Outcomes (MLOs). For example, one of CSUMB's College of Business MLOs stresses the importance of data literacy: "Be competent in quantitative skills - Analyze data using quantitative tools to support business analysis" (College of Business, n.d.). The library's promotion of LDW at CSUMB will help support undergraduate and graduate students, as well as faculty and staff.

Love Data Week at CSUMB

Plans for the introduction and promotion of LDW at the CSUMB campus began in the fall of 2018, months in advance of LDW 2019, which was scheduled to take place from Monday, February 11, 2019, to Friday, February 15, 2019, as LDW is held every February. Initial plans for the one-person team were modest: Create and advertise a library-hosted web page of available print and online library books related to data and statistics.

First, some groundwork needed to be laid. The library's collection of data and statistics-focused titles—items shelved primarily in the HA, HM, and QA Library of Congress classification areas—was reviewed. Then, potential new additions were


evaluated, selected, and processed to help update and improve coverage of relevant topics. Twelve new titles were ordered.

Simultaneously, work began on creating the library's LDW 2019 web page. The process of creating web pages differs from organization to organization. At CSUMB, University Communications maintains overall control of the university's website, while each department, college, and school have editors who can create, edit, and update relevant web pages. Editors use shared university-wide web page templates and web page authoring tools. To highlight data-related books and ebooks, the LDW web page included book covers for items available through the CSUMB library. The page listed titles under two categories: data literacy and data analysis software. The category of data analysis software was further subdivided into five categories according to data package: R, SAS, SPSS, STATA, and Tableau. For 2019, the LDW online guide highlighted 28 linked book covers (eight under data literacy and 20 under data analysis software) with additional links to more complete book and ebook listings within the library catalog. The LDW web page (Figure 2) also included a brief description of LDW and pointed to the LDW website.

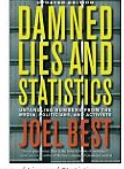
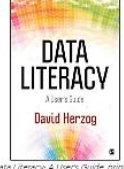
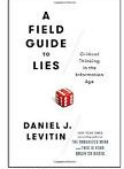
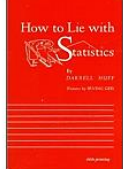

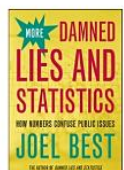
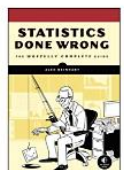
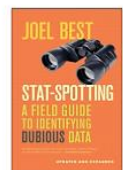
Figure 2: *CSUMB Library's LDW 2019 web page*

Love Data Week

[Love Data Week](#), an event coordinated by research data specialists across the US, is from Monday, 2/7 to Friday, 2/15. Upgrade your data skills with this collection of library books and ebooks on data literacy and data analysis software.



▼ Data literacy books and ebooks

 <p><i>Damned Lies and Statistics: Untangling Numbers from the Media, Politicians, and Activists, print and online</i></p>	 <p><i>Data Literacy: A User's Guide, print</i></p>	 <p><i>A Field Guide to Lies: Critical Thinking in the Information Age, print</i></p>	 <p><i>How to Lie with Statistics, print</i></p>
 <p><i>Misused Statistics: Straight Talk for Twisted Numbers, print and online</i></p>	 <p><i>More Damned Lies and Statistics: How Numbers Confuse Public Issues, print and online</i></p>	 <p><i>Statistics Done Wrong: The Woefully Complete Guide, online</i></p>	 <p><i>Stat-Spotting: a Field Guide to Identifying Dubious Data, online and print</i></p>

► Data analysis software books and ebooks

[Is there anything wrong with this game?](#)

Another part of web page development involved the selection of a data and statistics-themed promotional image. Use of images within marketing materials can be problematic. Copyright is one issue. Image licensing search limits available on internet search tools such as Google and Yahoo offer one possible option for finding images usable for marketing materials. However, restricted images can still appear, even in results limited to public domain resources, so searchers still need to verify an image's availability. A visit to the image's web page can often help verify licensing restrictions. Another issue concerning images is authenticity. Students today are mass media savvy, and there is a good chance that they can spot stock imagery (Hunt, 2019). Event organizers should be careful about using recycled images and clip art that might be perceived as unoriginal and inauthentic.

In 2020 and 2021, the CSUMB LDW web page continued to evolve. For 2020, the web page grew from 28 to 38 highlighted books and ebooks. In 2021, the web page featured 49 titles and added coverage of two new data analysis programs: Google Docs Studio and NVivo.

From the modest starting point of a web page promoting books about data for LDW 2019, the library expanded its programming to include data and statistics-related workshops for LDW 2020. With just one person coordinating events and resources, adding workshops required more work. This included recruiting workshop instructors, selecting workshop topics, arranging workshop sites and resources, coordinating workshop scheduling, and developing workshop promotion materials.

Workshop presenters were recruited using a Google Form. The form included six questions asking for name, department, workshop description, desired learning outcomes, and duration, and it also included an option to list additional information.

The call for workshop volunteers and the form's link were shared with other CSUMB librarians for distribution to those in their respective liaison areas. Three faculty members responded. Workshop topics and descriptions were then reviewed and selected. Timing was also important. Since this event lasts a week, it was important to avoid bunching workshops over one or two days, and instead to distribute events evenly throughout the week. All this entailed coordinating busy faculty schedules as well as reviewing and revising marketing information provided by others. For example, some instructor-developed workshop titles and descriptions, which would be posted on the library LDW website and used in other promotional materials, were wordy and needed editing.

For LDW 2020, the library hosted four workshops. An assistant professor from CSUMB's Department of Health, Human Services, and Public Policy proposed a session on SPSS; a professor from the Mathematics and Statistics Department expressed interest in holding a session on R Studio Cloud; and an assistant professor from the College of Business volunteered to host a session on SAS. In addition, a librarian chose to host a fourth workshop on reviewing the U.S. census data website. All workshops lasted 60 minutes with three held in-person and one hosted online via Zoom.

With experience and materials from 2019 and 2020, it was expected (and hoped) that planning and hosting LDW in 2021 might be somewhat easier, and in some ways, it was. There was an established LDW web page that could be updated, and past workshop presenters had the opportunity to lead workshops for LDW 2021. However, COVID-19 presented new challenges. For one, faculty, students, and staff were now working, studying, and taking classes from home. Since buildings on campus, including

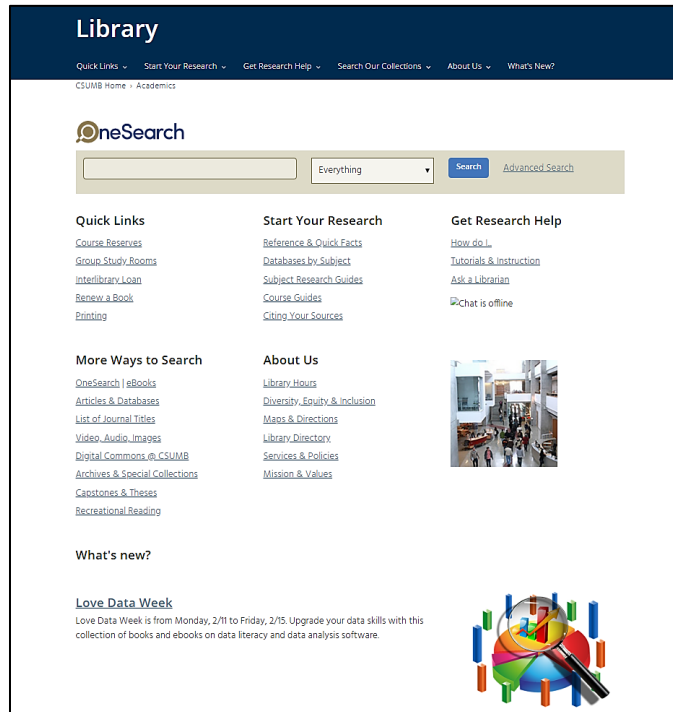
the library, were closed, LDW 2021 promotion and events needed to take place completely online. Workshop instructors needed to change their teaching methods and learning materials, and workshop participants would be attending from home or another off-campus location. In the end, the library hosted four virtual workshops. Topics covered cloud-based versions of SAS, PSPP (a free alternative to SPSS), R Studio Cloud, and a librarian-led session on data and statistical sources and search techniques.

Promoting Love Data Week

With a core target audience for LDW of students and faculty, the materials and methods used to promote LDW have changed over the three years it has been held at CSUMB.

Beginning in 2019, LDW received little promotion. With no workshops, there was only the LDW web page to advertise. Like many library websites, the CSUMB library's site includes a current news section on its home page called "What's new." A brief description of the LDW bibliography, along with a rights-free image, appeared under "What's new" at the start of LDW 2019 (Figure 3).

Figure 3: What's New LDW 2019 Listing




A linked description of the LDW bibliography was also placed on CSUMB's campus-wide events dashboard and liaison librarians shared the LDW web page with their liaison areas. In 2020 and 2021, the addition of workshops along with increased collaboration with others on campus resulted in a corresponding increase in promotion. As in 2019, a "What's new" LDW notice appeared on the library's home page for LDW 2020 and LDW information was posted to the campus events dashboard. However, this time, for promotional images

Figure 4: What's New 2020 LDW listing

What's new?

[Love Data Week 2020](#)

Members from CSUMB's Mathematics & Statistics Club help promote Love Data Week at the Library. On the left is Leanne Miron (club Treasurer), on the right is Christina Mabry (club Vice President), and in the center is Moo (club member). Attend one of the free data workshops, enter the Data Challenge, or check out one or more library books and ebooks on data literacy, data visualization, and data software.



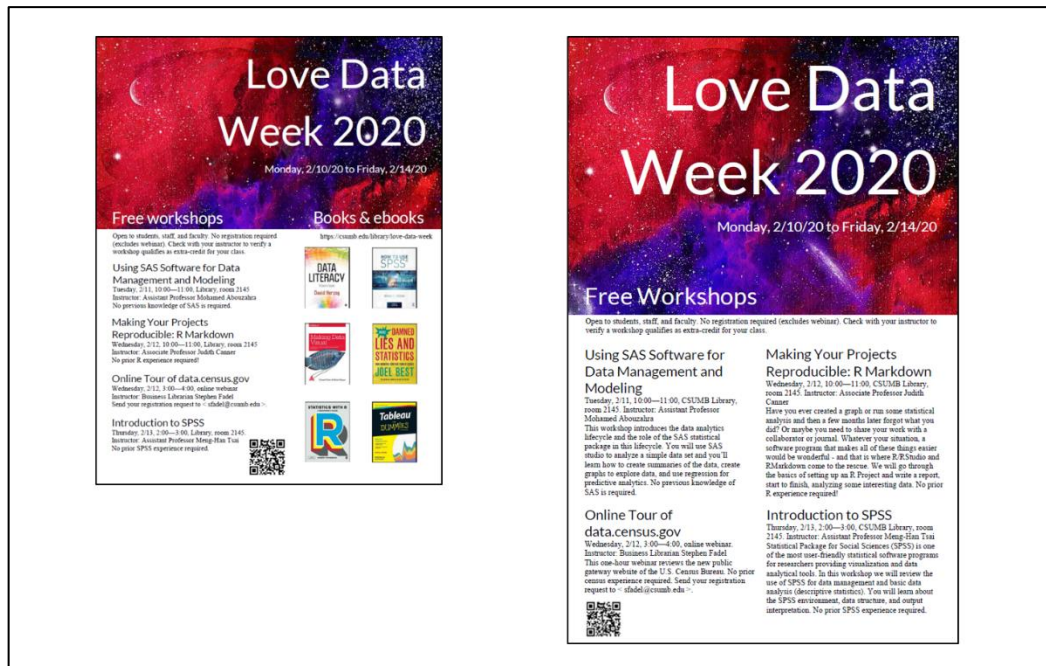
The image shows two women, Leanne Miron and Christina Mabry, sitting on a bench with a black dog named Moo. Leanne is on the left, holding a sign that says 'PLAYFUL DATA'. Christina is on the right, holding a sign that says 'STATISTICS WITH AN R'. The dog is sitting between them.

with a more authentic and more personal touch, students in CSUMB's Mathematics & Statistics club agreed to take part in promotional pictures, with club officers posing alongside sample data books (Figure 4).

Peer promotion is helpful; however, working with students brings different challenges. Taking pictures with students took time and trying to coordinate busy schedules was challenging. For example, a student canceled the first scheduled photo shoot due to a family emergency. Depending on available photo equipment and photography skills, it made sense to take several photos to ensure the availability of several in-focus and well-lit images. For LDW 2020, student club members then selected their preferred image. Students also needed to complete an image release legal form provided by CSUMB's University Communications Department.

For 2020, the LDW web page not only increased the number of data- and statistics-related book titles, but it also included details about LDW workshops. With the help of the University Communication Department, information about LDW appeared for the first time on the university's Twitter account. In addition to online promotions, 8.5" x 11" flyers and larger, 11" x 17" mini-posters were posted in the library and other locations on campus (Figure 5).

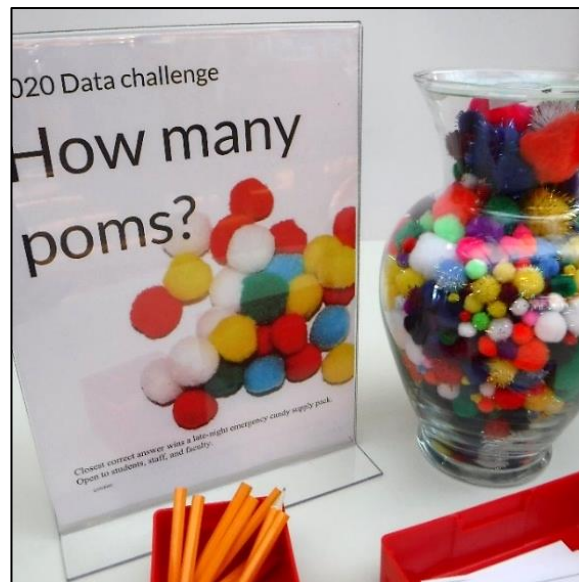
Figure 5: LDW 2020 Flyer and Mini-poster



A workshop certificate of completion was developed for student attendees in case some faculty opted to use workshops as an extra-credit class assignment. A small table in the Library's atrium, which included a mini-poster as well as a rotating collection of data books, helped advertise LDW to students and others. The table display also held another tool used in the Library's LDW 2020 promotional campaign: the Data Challenge.

Since data and statistics can be intimidating, the Data Challenge offered an easy way for students, staff, and faculty to take part in LDW activities while also sparking interest about data and statistics in the campus community. Rather than circulate a data- or statistics-related question for each day of LDW, the Data Challenge consisted of one single guessing game. People simply needed to estimate the number of items (in this case poms of different colors and sizes) contained within a glass vase on display (Figure 6). The closest answer won a late-night emergency candy supply pack.

Figure 6: LDW 2020 Data Challenge



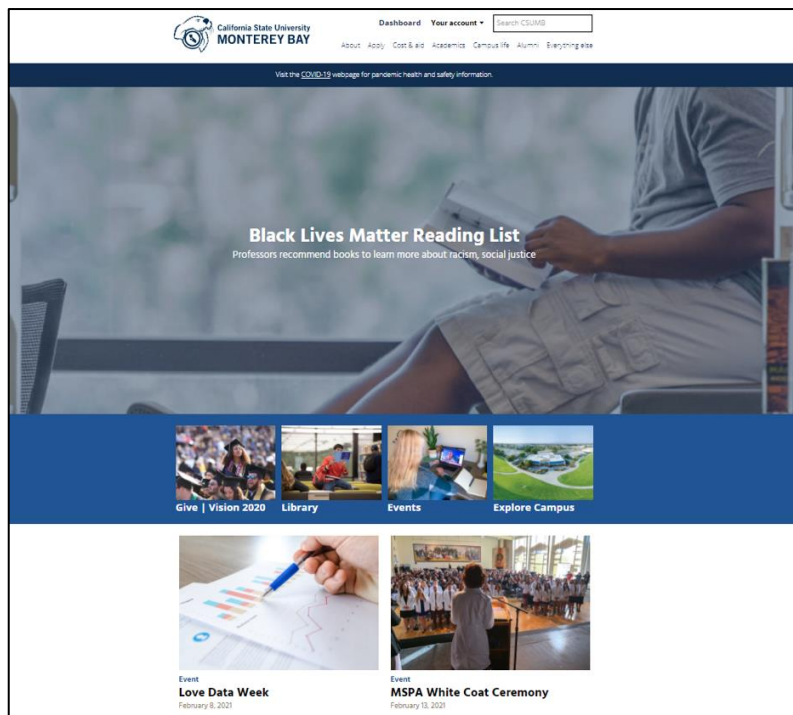
Unexpected events in 2021 presented what Rod et al. (2021) have described as, "an interesting challenge for hosts as the COVID-19 pandemic made in-person events less feasible" (p. 1). At CSUMB, restrictions mandated to combat the spread of COVID-19 limited physical promotion for LDW. There were no posted flyers or mini-posters and no atrium display table. Missing, too, was the Data Challenge, as well as student involvement in LDW promotion. Instead, advertising for LDW relied heavily on digital formats.

The LDW 2021 web page grew again to include new book titles and new upcoming workshops. An image, this time found via a copyright-free image search, was located and utilized in promotional materials. As with previous promotions, the library's home page advertised LDW under "What's new" and the university's events dashboard included a reference to LDW.

Behind the scenes, the University Communications Department now required a completed Policies and Event submission form that included approximately a dozen questions. Some questions, such as name, email, and department, were easy to answer. Other questions required more thought. For example, one question about social media asked, "What is the most important thing for the reader to know and when is the best time to post and why?" Once completed, LDW postings started to appear on the university's Twitter and Facebook accounts. An unexpected but pleasant notice about LDW also appeared on the university's home page (Figure 7).

Figure 7: LDW 2021, CSUMB Home Page

Liaisons promoted LDW 2021 within their liaison areas, including during their



course-integrated instruction sessions. Groups that might be interested in data-related

materials were also contacted. The following is a sample promotional email that was sent to members of the CSUMB's Post Graduate Studies Committee (PGSC):

Good afternoon,

I wanted to let PGSC members know of events hosted virtually by the CSUMB library scheduled for next week during this year's national and international Love Data Week. Although activities are open for all students, staff, and faculty, topics covered might be of particular interest to graduate students. Workshop sessions will cover various free data analysis programs as well as data search tools and search techniques. More information is available from the library's Love Data Week web page. Our web page also offers access to a select list of available data-related books and ebooks.

If you have any questions, feel free to contact me.

Stephen

Assessment

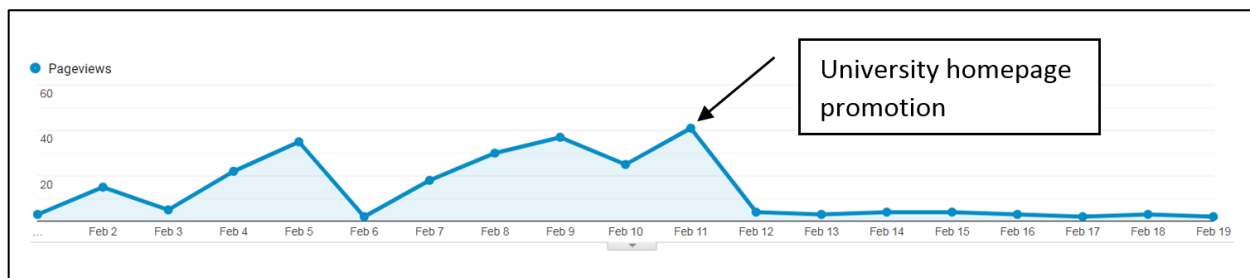
Having now hosted LDW materials and events in 2019, 2020, and 2021, it was easier for the event's promoters in the library to determine which things worked well and what needed improvement. The LDW workshop volunteer Google Form was an efficient way to collect key information from interested instructors, but the form needs broader exposure in the future. So far, the form has generated just three interested faculty respondents (plus one librarian) and workshop topics have focused on data analysis programs. It would be interesting to include a wider range of workshop topics and to involve faculty from more departments. During LDW, other colleges and universities have hosted workshops on topics such as data management, ethics and data, data-themed zine and button making, student data lightning talks, web scraping, and even a data haiku contest (Carnegie Mellon University Libraries, n.d.; Hesburgh Libraries, 2021; University of California, n.d.). A change in terminology might also help expand interest in LDW. Adding references to statistics and statistical literacy could increase involvement from others interested in more basic skills needed to find, interpret, and present statistics.

Workshop timing has been good. The library hosted workshops throughout the week with sessions on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday during a range of daytime hours.

Those involved with managing and promoting library-sponsored events have their own way of organizing materials. At CSUMB, an LDW computer folder contains subfolders organized by year that include copies of promotional images, the workshop certificate of completion template, and workshop slides. Each folder also contains an LDW assessment that helps with event evaluation, contributes to future planning, and serves as documentation for those involved in the tenure-review process. The LDW 2021 assessment includes screenshots of the library's LDW 2021 web page, a record of all promotional activities such as copies of promotional emails, screenshots of LDW postings on Twitter and the Library's "What's new" page, and statistics. Data includes the title, time and attendance of workshops, the number of views and checkouts of highlighted books, and the number of hits on the LDW web page.

LDW web page views for the three-week period surrounding LDW have been modest, but are increasing: 229 views in 2020 and 258 views in 2021 (views unavailable for 2019). For those tracking statistics, it is important to note that spacing out promotional activities over several days helps to tie viewership numbers to specific promotional events. For example, when a LDW 2021 notice appeared on the university's home page, it was easy to spot an increase in the number of page views (Figure 8).

Figure 8: 2021 LDW Web Page Views, February 1-19



Workshop attendance (Table 1) and checkout rates for data- and statistics-related books (Table 2) have been low. (Ebook views were not available.) Book format was one factor considered when the library purchased new data- and statistics-related books. It was important to consider the value of having a selection of print titles with eye-catching

covers that could be used in physical displays within the library because promoting ebooks in physical displays is more difficult.

Table 1: LDW Workshops

Title	Time	Attendance
2020		
Using SAS Software for Data Management and Modeling	10-11 am	4
Making Your Projects Reproducible: R Markdown	10-11 am	11
Online Tour of data.census.gov	3-4 pm	4
Introduction to SPSS	2-3 pm	7
2020 total		26
2021		
Analyzing Qualitative Data (text) Using SAS-Enterprise Miner	10-11 am	3
Introduction to a Free Alternative for SPSS	10-11 am	6
Searching for Data and Statistics: Tools and Techniques	4-5 pm	6
Making your Projects Reproducible Using R Markdown	4-5 pm	7
2021 total		22

Table 2: LDW Highlighted Books

Year	Total items	Print (checked out)	Digital
2019	28	15 (0)	18
2020	38	25 (4)	18
2021	49	26 (4)	28

Gathering the necessary materials for the Data Challenge took time. Some materials such as several packs of pompoms, a glass vase, and candy for the prize winner were readily available from local stores. Tasks such as designing a ballot

collection box required more thought and ingenuity. (In the end, a converted coffee container was used to receive ballots.) Expenses, up to this point nonexistent, broke down to about \$15 for ten packs of pompoms from Walmart; roughly \$5 for a glass vase from Goodwill; and approximately \$20 for candy from Target. The total cost was about \$40. With over 400 entries to the 2020 data challenge, response was high. One student even guessed the exact number of pompoms – 670. Although the virtual LDW 2021 event omitted the Data Challenge, plans are underway to restore the challenge in 2022.

Future Plans

Based on the experiences so far, there are several items that should be addressed. One is how to promote LDW workshops. Since this is a weeklong event, LDW promotions have advertised the event in its entirety (e.g., a library “What’s new” notice about LDW). In the future, material should instead promote each LDW event such as individual workshops, as well as the weeklong observation. Secondly, the LDW web page will be moved to an LDW LibGuide. This should improve the look and facilitate access to LDW information as well as provide more detailed statistical assessment measures. Slight changes in terminology by adding references to statistics and statistical literacy are also planned. Perhaps the most important change, though, involves time. For event promotion, the University Communications Department required a minimum of four weeks’ notice before in-person events and two weeks’ notice for online events. This meant that items such as the LDW web page, workshop descriptions, and workshop schedules needed to be settled and ready to go at least a month before the start of LDW. Up until now, LDW planning has severely underestimated the amount of time needed for event promotion. For future events, a new LDW promotion calendar should help. The draft resource that appears below lists major events that take place before, during, and after LDW (Table 3).

Table 3: LDW Draft Promotion Calendar

Date	Action
First week in September	Call for workshop volunteers
First week in October	Workshop volunteer deadline
Last week in October	Workshop descriptions schedules finalized Data Challenge materials finalized
Second week in November	LibGuide, flyers, mini-posters finalized

First week in December	Promotion material submitted to University Communications
Second week in January	Liaison librarians emailed
First week in February	Departments emailed, What's New? Posting, University Dashboard posting
Mon, Feb 14, 2022, to Fri, Feb 18, 2022	Love Data Week 2022
Last week in February	Announce Data Challenge winner
First week in March	Event assessment

Conclusion

Promoting and hosting an event takes work and effort. Allowing for plenty of planning time should help. Still, things might not go as planned. For instance, the sudden departure of a key contact in the University Communications Department the week prior to LDW 2020 disrupted social media promotion plans. Simultaneously, planning and managing library sponsored events can be gratifying. One memorable LDW moment occurred at the close of a LDW workshop on R: a student asked and got help from the workshop instructor about education and career options related to statistics. Moments like these help make prior work efforts worthwhile.

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About the Author

Stephen Fadel earned his Master's Degree in Library Science in 1993 from Florida State University. In his early career, he worked as a librarian at a joint-use community college/public library in south Florida, and then as a reference and instruction librarian at community college libraries in Oregon and Washington State. More recently, he has served as a business librarian at university libraries including the University of Maine in Orono, from 2008 to 2013, and also at Portland State University from 2015 to 2016, where he filled in as a temporary business librarian. Since 2018, Stephen has been the Business Librarian at California State University Monterey Bay, a mid-size public university situated along the central coast of California. As the Business Librarian, Stephen works with faculty and staff from CSUMB's College of Business while supporting campus business students. His main areas of responsibility include course-integrated instruction and collection development, both with a business focus. As the library's Reference Coordinator, he also coordinates the library's Ask-a-Librarian service and oversees reference collection development.



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