

Records at Play: Leveraging Exhibition for Public Engagement and Archival Literacy
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Research Question:

How can archives in academic libraries help achieve broader university goals for community engagement and simultaneously pursue specific objectives related to archival literacy?

Methodology:

Case study of the exhibit *Records at Play: The Institute of Jazz Studies @50*

Propositions:

- Exhibits and related programming provide a meaningful way to connect universities with the communities in which they are located.
- Archives can/should develop exhibits with local community engagement as a primary goal and view exhibition as an opportunity to teach archival literacy to a diverse public audience.
- Meaningful engagement can be realized through an audience-focused curatorial vision, best-practice exhibition design, and leveraging partnerships and supplementary programming to increase an exhibition's reach.



Results and findings:

- High visitation: 6,760 total attendance
- Programming: 125 events
- Engagement: Local/grassroots media coverage, informal visitor observation, filming location requests, audience participation
- Curatorial approach, exhibit design, and programming as vehicles for archival literacy, broadly defined
- Partnership, timing, and location critical to engagement/teaching archival literacy

