

Adding new space to enhance research data analysis and foster multidisciplinary collaboration pays dividends

University of Washington partnerships create and fund space that accelerates health research and innovation with multifaceted approach

The Health Sciences Library at the University of Washington formed a partnership in the summer of 2015 with the Institute of Translational Health Sciences, the University of Washington Medicine Research Information Technology, and the National Network of Libraries of Medicine-Pacific Northwest Region.

The partnership sought to create and fund a space on campus that would accelerate health research and innovation by supporting researchers and investigators and allowing a multifaceted approach to research.

"The researchers don't have a lot of space—some of them are lucky to even have their own desks—so this was an opportunity to come to a shared location, use equipment their departments might not be able to fund, and do multidisciplinary collaboration," says Emily Patridge, assistant director of clinical research and data services at the University of Washington.

The Institute of Translational Health Sciences specifically requested using digital signage to support the researchers.

"We realized we didn't want just another conference room or another space to teach," says Patridge. "We wanted the space to have a unique signature so that we could provide something new on campus that a lot of people aren't offering."

After conferring with an AV integration firm, the library settled on a 2-by-3-foot video wall comprising 55-inch displays, which would help health sciences clinical researchers analyze and visualize data, and give researchers the ability to send six different sources from various devices to any or all of the displays. The firm recommended NEC Display Solutions as the manufacturer that would supply displays for the wall.

Tania Bardyn, associate dean and director of the Health Sciences Library, adds that the changing needs of researchers in the digital age—including research data management, survey creation support, librarian consultations, data visualization space, bibliometrics, team science and more—made a video wall the best solution.

Successful Space

The TRAIL incubator space offers comfortable sofa seating, a table with a whiteboard surface plus two smaller wall-mount-



ed whiteboards. The flooring is hardwood-style acoustic tiling to absorb sound. The main focus is the six-panel video wall adorned with NEC displays. Users can bring their own devices or use the university's computer tower for data visualization projects, 3D imaging and presentations.

Patridge says the response from researchers and users has been positive.

"People have been very pleased," she says. "They say it's a relaxing and inviting space, and they've really enjoyed having the data wall and being able to see what everyone is seeing, and using it to visualize data."

Patridge adds that the video wall sparked interest across the campus. A librarian at the university's Foster School of Business library came to look at the TRAIL incubator space to investigate whether a video wall was right for that library as well.

"We do have other digital signage on campus, but typically it's used more traditionally—for displaying events and student lounge areas—so it's kind of cool that we took the same product and transformed it into something researchers can use for data visualization and 3D imaging projects," Patridge says. "It's been a really big success."

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