

Observational study: Sperling Lobby

Summary

An observational study of the Sperling lobby conducted from September 22, 2015 to October 5, 2015 revealed that the majority of entrants to the lobby from outside the building are not confused, do not look for signage, and do not use the kiosk. In addition, most visitors entering from outside use the lobby to get to the Perkins Library but do not use the computers and printers in the Smith Ferracone Reception Area or view the display in the Chappell Family Gallery.

Background¹

Emma Boettcher and Canon Brodar conducted an observational study in the Sperling Lobby from September 22, 2015 to October 5, 2015. Observations were made in sessions of varying length and tracked only people entering the lobby from outside and passing through, not people exiting the library or waiting there for friends or a change in weather. Data was collected using Suma².

From the Sperling Lobby, people can enter both the Perkins and Rubenstein libraries, as well as the Perk coffee shop, Smith Ferracone Reception Area and the Chappell family gallery. The Smith Ferracone Reception area contains two ePrint stations and two public computers, though these were removed on October 2, 2015 because of Homecoming. Homecoming may have also caused a variation in traffic, resulting in a higher proportion of alumni and trustees than would normally be entering the space. At the time of the study, the Chappell Family Gallery held the exhibit “Languages of Anatomy.”

The total number of observations made was 349 over three hours and 48 minutes, on four separate days. Three observations were deleted because of error during the study, so the final number of observations was 346.

¹ For more information, please contact emily.daly@duke.edu

² <https://www.lib.ncsu.edu/reports/suma>

Table 1. Observation Sessions in Sperling Lobby

Date	Duration	Start Time	End Time	Observations
September 22	43 minutes	3:57 PM	4:31 PM	39
September 28	32 minutes	7:41 PM	8:13 PM	41
October 2	73 minutes	2:40 PM	3:53 PM	134
October 5	89 minutes	12:31 PM	2:00 PM ³	135

Questions we hoped to answer through the study included the following:

- Do people look for signage upon entering the Sperling Lobby?
- Are people confused upon entering Sperling Lobby?
- Do people look at the donor wall when entering the Sperling Lobby?
- Do people use the kiosk in Sperling Lobby?
- What do people do after entering Sperling Lobby?
- Where do people go after entering Sperling Lobby?

Results

Do people look for signage upon entering the Sperling Lobby?

Nine people (2.6%) looked for signage upon entering Sperling Lobby outside.

Are people confused upon entering Sperling Lobby?

Eleven people (3.2%) looked confused upon entering Sperling Lobby from outside.

Do people look at the donor wall when entering the Sperling Lobby?

Two people (0.6%) looked at the donor wall when entering the Sperling Lobby from outside.

Do people use the kiosk in Sperling Lobby?

Two people (0.6%) appeared to successfully use the kiosk when entering Sperling Lobby from outside. No unsuccessful interactions with the kiosk were observed. Google analytics data on kiosk usage can provide more comprehensive information about how often it is used.

What do people do after entering Sperling Lobby?

Because the ePrint stations and computers in the Smith Ferracone Reception Area were moved to accommodate Homecoming on October 2nd, only 212 of the observations made could have possibly involved use of ePrint and computer stations. Of those, one person (0.5%) entering Sperling from outside used the ePrint station, and one person (0.5%) used the computer station.

³ Though Suma marks the end time of this session as 1:07 PM, notes from the collector on the day indicate that the session lasted until around 2PM.

An unrecorded number of visitors who entered the Smith Ferracone Reception Area from Perkins instead of from Sperling Lobby used the ePrint and computer stations more frequently.

Twenty-six people (8%) were observed looking at the exhibit in the Chappell Family Gallery after entering Sperling Lobby from outside. An unrecorded number of visitors who entered the Gallery via Perkins instead of Sperling Lobby did look at the exhibit.

Where do people go after entering Sperling Lobby?

After entering the Sperling Lobby from outside the building, patrons can go in the direction of the Rubenstein Library (which may include entering the library or the Biddle Room) or the Perkins Library (which may include entering the library or the Perk). Three hundred and ten people (90%) entered the Perkins Library, and 36 (10%) entered the Rubenstein Library.

Appendix A: Suma Survey

Confused	Yes	No	
Looks for signage	Yes	No	
Uses kiosk	Yes – successfully	No – unsuccessfully	No
Looks at donor wall	Yes	No	
Looks at exhibit	Yes	No	
Uses Computer	Yes	No	
Uses ePrint	Yes	No	