

Constitution Day Programming

Stephani Rodgers, User Services Coordinator, VCU Libraries, Richmond, VA



VCU
VIRGINIA COMMONWEALTH UNIVERSITY
Libraries

VCU Libraries celebrates Constitution Day with a variety of activities. With the support of the University, we purchased U.S. Pocket Constitutions as giveaways. Like many institutions, we do not have a large amount of funds to dedicate to our educational events. In recent years, we have run a social media campaign during Constitution Week, posting to Facebook and Twitter. We have also engaged students with interactive activities and various media. We started with the purchase of professional videos, but found that they were too passive and did not thoroughly engage students. From there, we moved to other ideas involving VCU faculty and staff. We have seen our engagement increase annually.

If you have...

- ✓ Post-its
- ✓ Pencils
- ✓ Whiteboard

...then you can encourage an **interactive activity**



Image: designforamerica.com/2013/12/08/dfa-its-a-post-it-culture/

What we did:

We placed a header sheet on the top of the whiteboard with the title **What word does the Constitution protect for you?** We placed golf pencils and post-it notes on the tray and invited students to participate. More than 300 words were added to the board, in 6 languages. We allowed self policing, so no staff time was involved beyond the initial setup and recording the words after the project ended.

Total cost: Little time, \$18.49

1 box of golf pencils: \$9.50
5 post-it pads: \$8.99

If you have...

- ✓ A cell phone with a camera
- ✓ Moviemaker or iMovie

...then you can create a **video**



Image: <https://pixabay.com/en/photos/patriotic/>

What we did:

Using a staffer's iPhone, we recorded VCU Libraries faculty and staff reciting the Preamble while going about their library tasks. We used the purchased product Camtasia to put the video together with sound. We have since tried with iMovie, and found the results to be similar. Arranging staff participation and piecing together the sound bites took time and effort, but the end product now lives on the VCU Libraries YouTube page.

Total cost: Time, no money

1 iPhone camera: FREE, already owned by staffer
Software: FREE, accessible on most computers

If you have...

- ✓ Experts
- ✓ An Empty Room

...then you can host an informative **panel discussion**

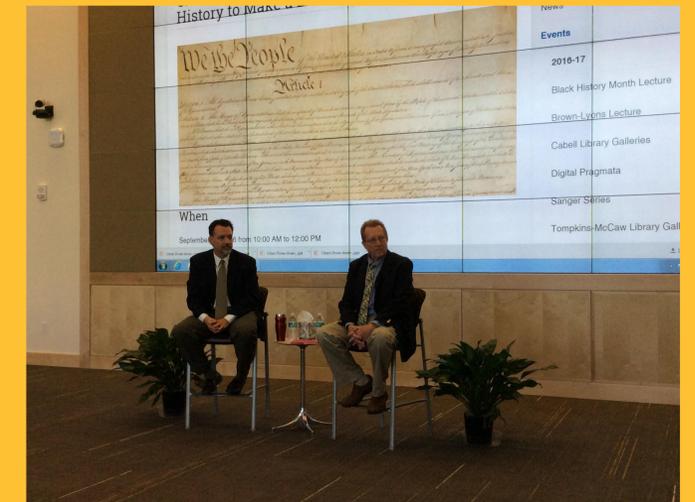


Photo by: Teresa Doherty, VCU Libraries

What we did:

We invited two professors from within the University, one from the History department and one from Political Science, to give brief presentations and then answer questions at our forum **Changing the Constitution: Learning from History to Make a Difference in the Future**. Local experts will often speak for free or low cost for occasions like Constitution Day. Because the library owns an event space, no room fees applied. We had 52 attendees.

Total Cost: Time, coffee money

2 guest speakers from campus: Nearly free, bottled water or coffee and friendly requests