

Library Tour Evolution (Analog→Digital→Mobile)

The Harold B. Lee Library (HBLL) at Brigham Young University has provided an informational tour to freshmen for decades. The intent of the tour is to introduce new students to library resources and services that will help them in their quest to perform research in a large research institution. The HBLL holds just under 10 million items and spans about 775,000 square feet, much larger than libraries most students have experience with, so there is a great need for an introduction.

The first iteration of the tour provided audio using a cassette tape player. To complete the tour students would listen and follow the directional instructions, learn the required information, and then take a bubble-sheet quiz. This technology endured for about 20 years until a new technology, in the form of CDs, was implemented. However, the form and format remained the same.

As technology has progressed newer ways to present the library tour were developed. Modes of completing the library tour have included, checking out a MP3 player (again the form and format did not change), a virtual tour (which could be completed online), using QR Codes with a mobile device, and finally affixing iPads for tour stops.

Each of the changes to the library tour has been in response not only to the advancement in technology but also to the adjustments in academic pedagogy and changing student preferences. Meeting the needs of the students, while providing them important information, has always been the purpose of requiring the tour. Improvements in technology have simply increased the effectiveness.

In addition to describing the library tour evolution in more detail, this presentation will address the issues that were faced and how they were resolved.