The use of Iterative Design to improve the collection of User Feedback

1. Background
In the Spring 2019 term, we decided to use iterative design to improve the effectiveness of surveys. The following are survey elements we adjusted:

- **Equipment:**
  - Software and devices used

- **Distribution:**
  - In person

- **Question Type:**
  - Closed / open ended questions

- **Method Type:**
  - Paper vs. digital

- **Location:**
  - Outdoors / indoors
  - Time of day

- **Prizes:**
  - Office supplies
  - Packaged snacks

2. Design Methodology:
We rapidly tested, analyzed and adjusted survey elements to create a cycle of continuous improvement.

3. Findings:
Quantity and quality of feedback increased with the following changes:

- **Equipment:**
  - New software (Qualtrics)
  - Multiple devices

- **Distribution:**
  - Printed QR Codes
  - Multiple devices

- **Question Type:**
  - Fewer questions
  - Closed questions
  - > 3 mins. surveys

- **Method Type:**
  - Digital surveys
  - Compatible with multiple devices

- **Location:**
  - Alternating locations
  - Alternating dates / times

- **Prizes:**
  - Substantive, consumable goods

4. Key Takeaways
From Spring 2019 to Winter 2020, the Library saw a 209.9% increase of user feedback gathered per feedback session. The numerous adjustments to the survey design increased the number of responses and quality of feedback received.

The iterative design process can be used to critically examine and adjust methods of gathering feedback that best fits user preferences and institutional constraints.

Author Biographies:

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This work was conducted when Carmen Peters was an E-Learning and User Experience Assessment, Library Associate at the University of Waterloo Library. She currently is the Librarian for Fine Arts and Philosophy at the University of Waterloo Library. Her interests are in UX research and design theory.

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This work was conducted when Emily Christofides was the User Experience Specialist at the University of Waterloo Library, where she established processes for gathering user input to improve spaces, services, and the website. She is now a UX Researcher at Google.