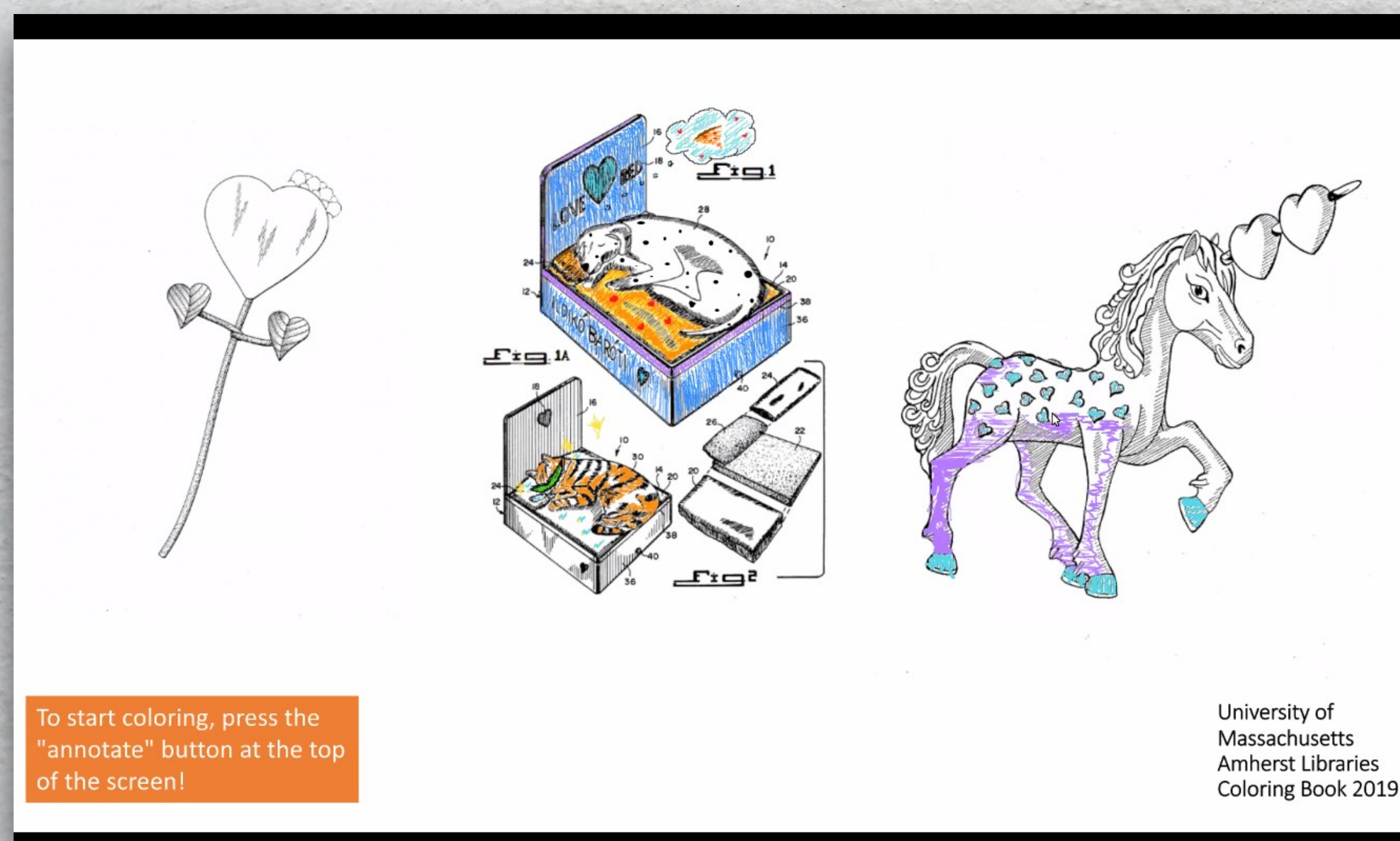


Scavenger Hunts, Zoom & Trolls: Lessons Learned from Virtual Outreach

by Madison Brents

Background

The Research and Engagement team of Willis Library aims to connect with students through fun and educational outreach events. The sudden closure of the library due to Coronavirus complicated this mission. To overcome the distance, the Graduate Services Assistant Outreach Coordinator, in collaboration with other GSAs and the Student Engagement Librarian, implemented several virtual outreach events. These events utilized Zoom's video conferencing technology and aimed to be entertaining while also promoting the library's virtual reference services.



Screenshot from the “Color our Collection” Virtual Event, which utilized Zoom’s “annotate” feature

Zoom Events

“Virtual” Scavenger Hunt- Game where students utilized library resources to “collect” materials, such as a newspaper from the day they were born or funny pictures from a Special Collections exhibit.

Library-Themed Trivia Competition- Collaborated with Collection Management to ask questions like “UNT Libraries most watched movie with 678 checkouts is...”

Color Our Collection- Utilized Zoom’s “Annotate” Feature to draw on library coloring pages.

Google Like a Scholar - Zoom workshop focused on virtual research options, like Google Scholar or library databases.

Speaking with Scholars on Scholarly

Communication- Peer-to-peer discussion on how to get started sharing research.



Lessons Learned

Security is a must! Require students to register to receive the Zoom information, which limits who has access to the room (thus discouraging potential trolls).

Promote Early- We could no longer rely on attendance from those passing by. We instead needed to promote as soon as possible, as well as send a day of reminder.

Collaborate with Contacts Utilizing library allies, as well as as student organizations, to spread the word brought many of our attendees.

Keep trying! Our first virtual event had many surprises and few visitors. By the third one, we are having more success.

