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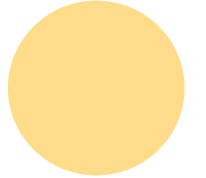


Civic by Design - Lessons from a Pop-Up Store as a Public Engagement Space

Dr. Mareike Kardinal • June 1, 2026

“I don't have a university degree.
May I still come in?”

Spontaneous visitor







THINK OUT THE BOX
MAY-JULY 2025
LANGE GASSE 16

PopUpStore in Tübingen

University and Public in Dialogue



Pop Up Store "ECKSTEIN"

Opening hours
Mon – Fri 10 – 18 h
Sat 10 – 14 h

Duration: May - July 2025

Location: city center (old town)

Management: CIVIS Open Lab Tübingen
UT's Public Engagement Hub

Collaborations: theater club
secondhand furniture store
engineering company





Tanz
Queere Literatur
Umwelt
Sicherheit
Therapie von Internetsucht
Nachhaltigkeit und Pflanzenzucht
Böden
Künstliche Intelligenz
Gut Altern
Lokaljournalismus und Medienforschung
Rechtsextremismusforschung
Gesellschaftliche und systemische Resilienz
Krisenvorsorge und Blackout
Bürgerbeteiligung
Zivilgesellschaft
Kunst
Andere Ästhetik
Lokale Relevanz von Kultur
Demokratie
Analyse von Mikroben
Digitalisierung

Engagement opportunities

- 67 open days (spontaneous dialogue)
- 98 public events in total
- 17 events by community partners
- 9 exhibitions
- 7 interactive surveys



Audience

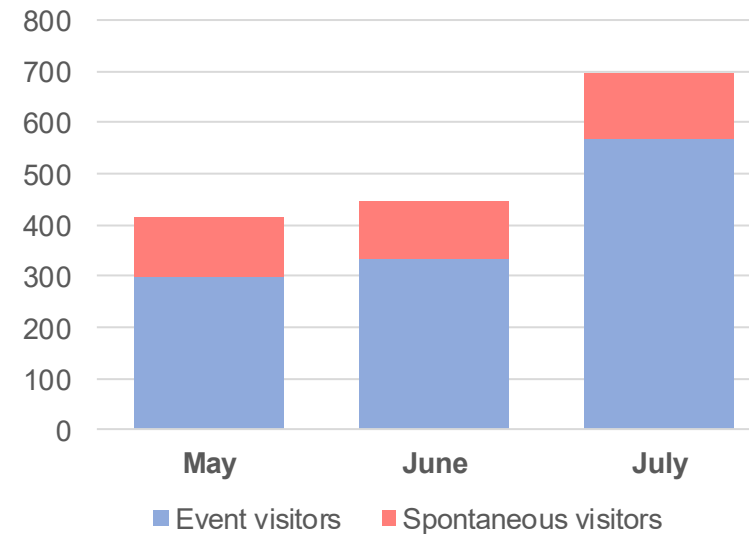
1500+ visitors in total

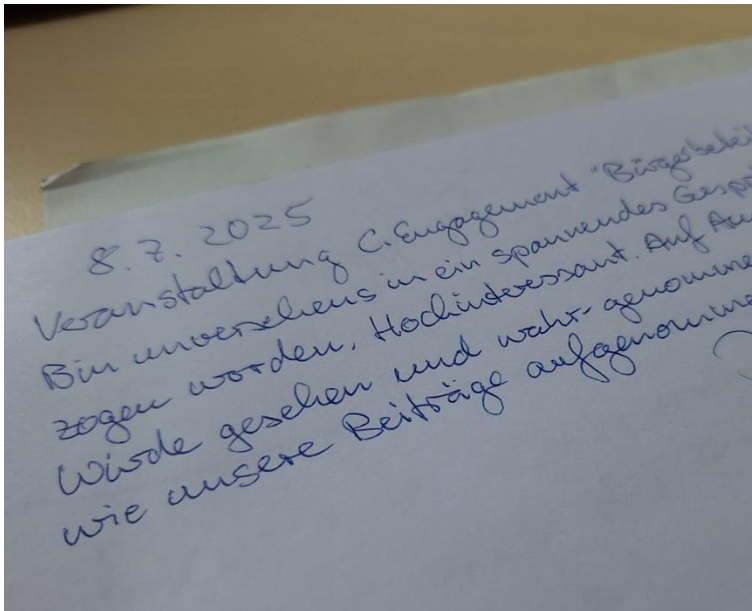
360+ spontaneous visitors

most visitors: 5 pm and later



Number of visitors





It's not the numbers, it*s the impact

- continued dialogue
- new collaborations
- impulses on research



*"The exchange was so rewarding.
Now I have finally found a way into university."*

Ulrich Junginger, president Sportkreis Tübingen e.V.

*"This is a wonderful idea – back in the day,
the university was completely off-limits"*

Anonymous visitor

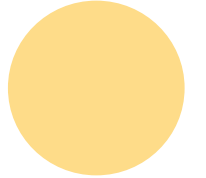


*"I don't have a
question, but
thank you for
the cookie"*

Anonymous visitor

"I don't have a university degree.
May I still come in?"

Spontaneous visitor



Lessons learned

1. Open and low-threshold spaces encourage spontaneous dialogue
2. Engagement starts before people enter the space
3. Pop-up engagement is resource-intensive
4. Carefully chose community partners
5. Physical space matters more than expected

Take-Home Message

When science moves next door, people who never planned to engage may suddenly feel invited to enter.

Pop-up engagement is not about the perfect format, but visibility, accessibility, and creating an atmosphere in which people feel welcome and heard.



More information on

civis.eu

