

# Badging at OELMA: What Are All Those White Square Stickers For?

## It's Not a Sticker ... It's a Badge!

Many of us remember scouting and the fun of completing tasks and learning skills in exchange for a fabric badge we sewed to our sashes or uniforms. We learned a lot in those informal settings, and we knew a lot about what our friends could do just by looking at their badges. As learning explodes everywhere -- online, offline, formal classrooms, and informal clubs, back yards and libraries -- we need new ways to capture that learning. So badging is back ... and it's gone digital! The movement is in its infancy, but significant resources have been invested by the MacArthur Foundation, DML, HASTAC, and others, so we think it will hit the big-time in the next year. We're the Michigan Makers from the University of Michigan School of Information, and we thought OELMA members would want to be among the first beta testers! At selected events, you can fill out an exit slip and trade it with your presenter for a badge (a 1.5 x 1.5" sticker with a code you can redeem at [badg.us](http://badg.us)) that represents your new learning. Collecting your digital badges helps you build a portfolio representing what you know! And if your presenter isn't participating, no problem -- stop by the badging table in the registration area. Fill out a Badge Yourself form, and we'll swap it for a badge.

## What Might The Benefits Be of Designing Badges In Our Library?

When we design a badge, we're not just thinking about what image to put on our sticker. We think through three key questions:

- What do we want learners to know and be able to do as a result of the instruction we have planned?
- What evidence would learners need to show in order to demonstrate that they have learned those skills or understood the concepts?
- What learning activities would get learners to the finish line?

Merely asking these three questions can have transformative effects on how you plan activities and instruction for learning. And it's not unique to badges. It's similar to Wiggins and McTighe's Backward Design methodology (*Understanding by Design*, ASCD, 2005). It's just good planning. Beyond that, badges can be a

motivating way for your colleagues and students to keep track of their learning over time. Turn your activities and programs from implicit to explicit learning experiences!

## Why Might People Want to Earn Badges?

This is something we want to test out ... and you can help! By taking <http://badg.us> for a spin (keeping in mind that it's still in beta), you can help us brainstorm ideas for what appeals to your community. We're eager to hear your stories via our post-conference survey.

## What's Next?

Want ideas for how you could use badging or <http://badg.us> in your school or library? We have some, and we'd love to swap. You can contact Kristin Fontichiaro of the University of Michigan School of Information at [font@umich.edu](mailto:font@umich.edu).

## OK, So What Do I Do With This Sticker?

The stickers you earn will look great attached to your conference badge ... but there's more. Type <http://badg.us> into your browser, register for an account, type in the unique redemption code (in big letters on your badge), and you've just earned your first badge and started documenting your learning.

## What's Badg.us?

[Badg.us](http://badg.us) is a free and open source badge creation, issuing, and displayer site focused on developing features and uses to empower the badge community. It uses Mozilla's Open Badge Infrastructure and was created by a senior Mozilla developer. Want to help build it? Contact Greg Austic ([greg@austiclabs.com](mailto:greg@austiclabs.com)).

## Learn More

- Visit the badging table at the registration desk.
- Check out the links at <http://bitly.com/bundles/activelearning/1>.
- Check out the available OELMA badges at <http://bit.ly/ODLXhe>
- Visit <http://oelmabadges.wordpress.com> to read what people learned about at OELMA from conference presenters!

