

# LIBRARY *of* THINGS

- STARTERKIT -





Since the first Library of Things opened its doors in Berlin in 2010, over a dozen Libraries of Things have been founded in different European countries and even more are currently in the making. Furthermore, there is a very lively tool library scene especially in the US and Canada.

All of these projects are working towards a common goal: A more sustainable and cooperative economy. By granting people access to all kinds of items they would otherwise have to buy, a lot of resource, money and space is being saved. Moreover, by sharing those items people are empowered to realize their projects and are brought together as a community.

So let's dare to think big for a moment: By sharing items on a grand scale the whole way we consume as a society in

the west could be changed. Through replacing the necessity of buying tools and other items with the opportunity of accessing them through the Library of Things movement – and yes, you can now talk about a movement – this could bring real change to the patterns in which we think and act. In this way, Libraries of Things play an important role as pioneers for an “economy fit for the future”.

As the team of the Library of Things in Vienna/Austria, we have received a growing number of requests from groups or individuals who are interested in getting a Library of Things started in their neighbourhood. So we have decided that it is time to bundle all our wisdom into one handy manual. This “Library of Things Starter Kit” not only contains our experiences, ideas and tips, but also useful input from other Libraries of Things. In this way we hope to give you a full picture of what is possible and share what has been learned so far in running a Library of Things.

At this point we really want to thank everybody who has contributed to this manual for their input and their support!

We hope that the following chapters and attached documents will encourage and support the opening of many new Libraries of Things and will help to strengthen the Libraries of Things community. Let’s do it!

For queries, suggestions, additions or other feedback please contact [info@leihladen.at](mailto:info@leihladen.at).

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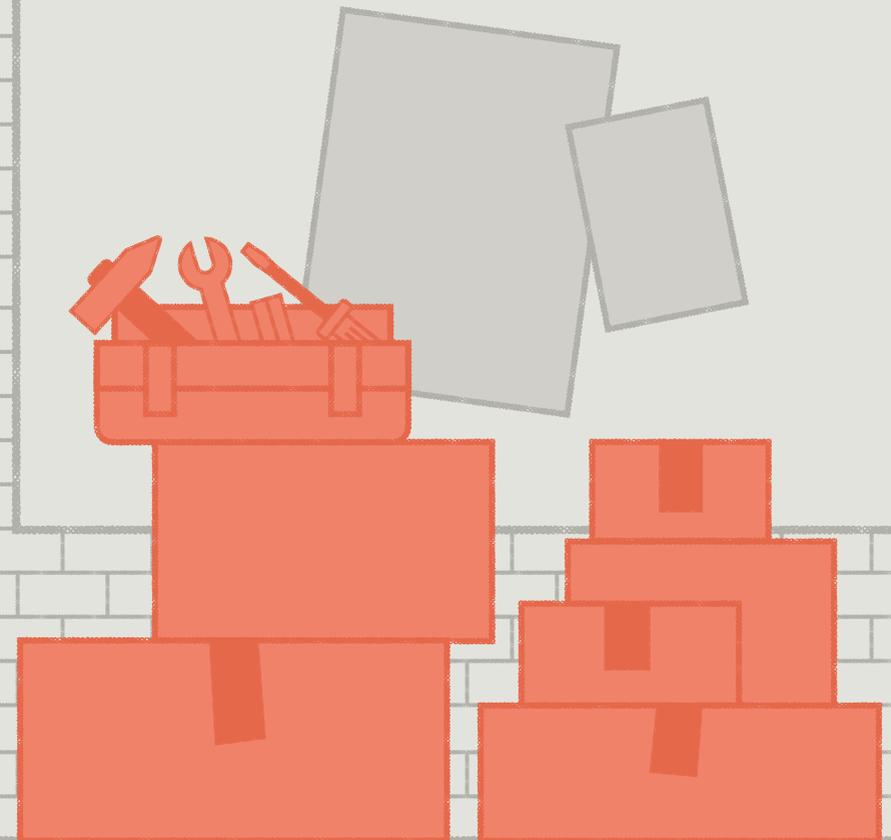
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# PART ONE

## ESSENTIALS



# 1

## HOW TO ACQUIRE A SPACE FOR A LIBRARY OF THINGS

**Finding a suitable space is a core issue. All of the existing LoTs had to search for a space that served their visions. It is really important to think thoroughly about the characteristics of your desired space. When you have a more specific idea of those characteristics and requirements you can learn from the stories of some LoTs and their search strategies.**

- 1.1 -

### REQUIREMENTS FOR A LIBRARY OF THINGS LOCATION



There are lots of aspects you can define as desirable characteristics of your "Dream-LoT". In reality you might not meet the standards you have set, but why not aim high and try to come as close as possible?

Chances are that in the end a lot of factors

will play a role that you can't entirely plan for in advance.

Inside a LoT many things can happen. How your space is shaped and equipped can facilitate or rule out certain functions. What we find in some LoTs and what certainly generates many possibilities are the following elements: Beyond the obvious such as wall space for storage and enough light, a kitchen or kitchenette is a great thing to have for all kinds of events. Eating and cooking together is still a top method for getting to know each other. Even more important is to have enough space for people to sit down and hang out. A few chairs and a table are essential. The more space you have for this the bigger your events can be.

### SIZE

One of the first questions the team of Leila Wien discussed was how big the space ideally has to be. This is not a simple question as it depends very much on the plans you have with your space. As a storage space just for items, we believe that 50 m<sup>2</sup> is a good size to aim for as a guide. Ceiling height and shape of the room(-s) play a role of course. If you plan to run a lot of workshops and events, you might want to look for a bigger space, just be sure you plan beforehand what your space will be used for and then choose the appropriate size.

### LOCATION

A major factor, the importance of which cannot be stressed enough, is the location. You should ask yourself whether it is easily accessible, both for your customers and for your team members. Is it a lively street with the chance of drop-in visitors? How visible is your potential space from the outside? What is the makeup of the neighbourhood with regard to your target group(-s)? The LoT in Frome is located in the very centre of the city and is much livelier than many other LoTs.

It is also important to keep the surroundings in mind. Maybe there is a garden or a patio that you can (co-) use. A nearby park and possibilities to shop for groceries can also be helpful. The main question here is - what would your project need to have close by to help run it in the most effective way?

### ACCESSIBILITY

Something a lot of people do not think of, but is nonetheless really important: is your space accessible for people with disabilities, men or women with prams etc.? This is one more reason for having a space ideally on ground level that resembles a shop.

### FEATURES

Now that you have thought about some general aspects we come to the point where you can ask yourself about the features of your space inside. This is a big

issue and highly depends on your plans and needs. First of all, it's worth taking a look at the condition of the main installations. What is the state of the electricity and plumbing? Does the heating work properly and is the building well insulated? Are the walls fit for putting up posters or mounting shelves and cupboards? In short: what renovations need doing and how much time/money would this cost?

After you have dreamed up the perfect LoT, here comes the reality check. Sorry, but it has got to be considered: What is your budget, how much can you afford? You will need to estimate your yearly income and expenses on top of the rent (→ CHAPTER 5) in order to figure out how much you will be able to spend. You will most probably come to the conclusion that the normal rental market is not a place you are likely to find your space, but don't despair – just read the next paragraph!

## - 1.2 - STRATEGIES FOR SEARCHING

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Having thought about the criteria for your own LoT, you can begin to search. Every LoT can tell you a story about how they found their location and all of them are different: from Leihladen Innsbruck who took the first place they ever looked at to Library of Things London who had to search for two years. So it can fall into your lap easily or it can require a lot of time. Often it depends on chance and on the possibilities available in your area. With a strategic plan you might increase your chances.

A good first approach is to find cooperation partners as many other projects are also searching for spaces. There might be other groups searching for a place or initiatives which already have a space, but still have extra capacity, such as Food-Coops, collaborative repair shops, workshops or co-working spaces. Leihladen Innsbruck is situated in a building rented by a social business, Leila Berlin is in a community centre and Library of Things London found a home in two cargo containers

on a parking lot. Other potential counterparts are the local authorities. In many cases there are different offices and levels that you can seek to work with. Library of Things London had a cooperation with a public library for a pop-up LoT, Leila Wien is situated in a space rented by an office for neighbourhood development and Allerleihladen Graz is run by a city funded bureau. Maybe your city is also taking part in the "Local Agenda 21", a UN programme for regional sustainable development, or is committed to the "UN Sustainable Development Goals". If there is a person or department in charge of these things in your city, then it could be very helpful to talk to them.

A lot of cities have a map or a database for empty spaces, like the so-called **LEERSTANDMELDER** in Vienna. This is a great way of getting an overview and knowing whom to contact for a specific place.

It can also be worth talking to land-owners and letting agents. In the UK for example, land-owners do not have to pay business rates on empty buildings if they rent them out (for free or very cheap rent) to a charity. There are some leasing agents that specialise in such charitable arrangements.

Existing businesses, non-profits and charities may also have underutilized space that they'd allow you to use. For example, the Santa Rosa Tool Library, uses a storage room at a local architecture firm, and uses the front of the office (a good retail space) when the firm that owns the space is closed. This limits their hours, but gives them a prime space they might not otherwise be able to afford.



Frontside of the LoT 'Leila Leipzig', Germany.



Frontside of the LoT 'DeDeelkelder', Utrecht, Netherlands.

## 2 HOW TO FIND NEW MEMBERS AND HOW TO KEEP THEM

**The members of a LoT are very diverse in the different projects, as the projects are shaped differently, located in distinct places and have various membership models.**

### - 2.1 - POTENTIAL TARGET GROUPS: EXAMPLES FROM LOTS

When starting a project that needs active members it is good to know as much as possible about the potential target group(-s). As many LoTs have voiced the wish to change consumption behaviours towards a more sustainable direction, the easiest answer would be: Our target group is everybody! Experience shows, however, that it is not possible to satisfy all the various groups at the same time. The best solution is to address certain groups without actively excluding any others.

At Leila Wien the member base consists to a large extent of students. This group is ideal in many ways: They do not own a lot of things. Many understand the idea of the project immediately. And last but not least - although many might deny it - most do have time on their hands to help out a bit with the maintenance of the LoT. As ideal as students might be as a group who borrow things, many are not as suitable as a resource for the items themselves. This is where another group of people comes in: more settled with more goods at their disposal - the 'established' people. Our experience shows that sharing unused goods is the preferred way of this group to collaborate with our project.



Entrance of the container used as LoT London, England.

There are a number of target groups you could also focus on. Each target group has its own needs, preferred way of collaborating and specific means of communication. Of course there are always exceptions and the groups are not homogenous themselves. In the end it is helpful to select certain target groups and to think about the general characteristics of those groups in order to address them better.

#### REACH YOUR NEIGHBOURHOOD

The ideal LoT member lives in the direct neighbourhood and drops by regularly. Therefore it can make sense to try to reach people within that zone. You probably know your own neighbourhood best, here are just a few ideas on how to communicate and promote your project.

First of all, it is good to use your own shop as a communication tool. Stand up displays, chalk drawings on the street or posters on the outside of your shop are easy ways of sending messages. Keep them short and welcoming! Classic methods would be canvassing from door to door or sending a mailshot, but those are costly and time-consuming methods and thus not ideal for projects with limited financial resources.

Good alternatives are the blackboards (or pin-up bulletin boards in the United States) that many houses have. Be aware that there are certain rules regarding what you can put on those, so talk to some residents beforehand. Other great opportunities to present your project are little neighbourhood festivals. If there is no such thing in your vicinity, maybe it is time to organize one yourself. Create value for your community and they will give back!

It is also advisable to have a google maps entry for your shop, so people can stumble upon you while checking their maps. In order to do that just go to [GOOGLEMAPS.COM](https://www.google.com/maps), enter the address of your project and click on the menu button at the top left of the screen. You will find the menu option of 'Add a missing business'. Click it, fill it in and after a period of time it should be active.

In Vienna there is an online neighbourhood platform called [FRAGNEBENAN.AT](https://www.fragnebenan.at) that people use to organize neighbourly help. If there is something like that in your city, it's a great tool for communicating directly with your local community.

#### - 2.2 - MEMBERSHIP MODELS

The membership model is a crucial decision that needs to be considered well. It determines the number and type of members you will have and what relationship you will have with them (e.g. customer, co-helper, club-member, a mix of these). This chapter will give you a few examples, so that you can get an idea of the diversity of models available. All the models have certain strengths and pose certain challenges. It is entirely up to you which one you choose in the end. The decision is important and will have a big impact on many things along the way. Feel free to contact each LoT for further details.

##### YEARLY MEMBERSHIP, NO EXTRA FEES

→ [LEILA WIEN](#), [LEIHLADEN INNSBRUCK](#), [ALLERLEIHLADEN GRAZ](#)

These LoTs have a yearly fee without any extra fees for each individual item lent out. There are differences in the amount these yearly fees are set at. At Leila Wien there are 2 options - 24 € and 36 € - and members can decide freely if they want to choose the normal or the reduced fee. At Allerleihladen Graz members can choose the amount entirely by themselves.

##### MIXED FEE + ITEM

→ [LEILA LEIPZIG](#)

Leila Leipzig charges 36 € for a yearly membership but also requires that members bring in at least one item for the lending pool.

### MEMBERSHIP FOR ITEM + ADDITIONAL VOLUNTARY FEE

→ LEILA BERLIN

At Leila Berlin the only requirement for becoming a member used to be simply bringing an item for the lending pool. Additionally, there was a voluntary fee with no fixed amount. This created a big member base of over 600 in a short timespan. After a while it was changed to a model of monthly payments of 1, 2 or 3 euros. New members have to prepay for at least 3 months.

### MEMBERSHIP FEE + LENDING FEE/LOAN CHARGE

→ LIBRARY OF THINGS LONDON / SHARE FROME

The two LoTs in England work with a membership model, where there are low membership fees but then individual lending fees that differ from item to item proportional to their value. For example at SHARE - A Library of Things in Frome the lending fees vary between 1-3 pounds a week.

- 2.3 -

## IDEAS ON MEMBER RETENTION/ RENEWING MEMBERSHIPS

The majority of LoTs have a membership model with a time limit. Most of them last for a year. This group of people already decided once to become a member of your LoT, so they are likely to do so again - especially if they had positive experiences during their membership period.

The first important step is to keep track of memberships that are about to expire. This is easy if you are using one of the databases described in CHAPTER 7. But you still have to remember to look at the statistics from time to time. A good investment for your future membership renewal rate is to keep regular contact with your members. This can be a newsletter, events that members can take part in and other means of communication (→ CHAPTER 9). In the worst case a member does not

hear from you for the whole membership period until an e-mail comes about renewing his/her membership.

When a member is at the point where his/her membership is about to end, a nice e-mail is a good way to remind him/her of that. You can also give an update about what has happened in the time since they signed up e.g. information about what events you have run, what nice new items you have added to your inventory or how many members there are now. Additionally, you can always give members a special renewal offer. It can be a discount or some goodies. You can be creative here, it all depends what you can offer and what you think your members would like.

# 3

## HOW TO GET SUITABLE ITEMS FOR YOUR LIBRARY OF THINGS

**How to acquire items for your LoT might be one of the first questions you ask yourself before starting a LoT. Believe it or not, in all our LoTs this has been the least of our problems! There is so much stuff out there waiting to be used - so let's concentrate on how to get the good stuff.**

- 3.1 -

## WHAT ARE SUITABLE ITEMS?

The definition of "good stuff" depends on your community. It doesn't make sense to have the world's best choice of gardening accessories if you are located in an area without a single bit of green. But in another location gardening stuff could be the items borrowed the most. So it is definitely a good idea to ask your community what items they find attractive and would like to borrow.

You can do this even before you have a location, e.g. through

your website or Facebook or at events where you are promoting your project. Many LoTs have gained the experience that people are glad to share their unused goods and are very happy to donate stuff.

But not everything is really suitable for a LoT, so it is necessary to set some criteria on which items you will accept and where to say no. Especially in the beginning when you might be happy with everything that fills the empty shelves, it is important to stay strong and say no to unnecessary goods.

Be careful though how you reject donations that are offered to you as people can feel like you are rejecting them and not their stuff. Saying "We do not want your kettle" could be understood as "We do not want you to be part of the project." Make your criteria for taking things transparent and ask the people to contact you before they bring stuff along. This can save a lot of time, effort and awkward situations for both sides.

Inside view of the container used as 'LoT London', England.



## CRITERIA FOR SUITABLE ITEMS THAT WERE USEFUL FOR LEILA WIEN

- 1** Ask yourself: how likely is it that this item will be borrowed? For example, that means 'no' for articles for everyday use like pots or cutlery. Of course you are walking a fine line here: a massive pot you only need once a year for Christmas dinner with 20 of your closest friends or a cutlery set for a garden party could be useful.
- 2** Complete and fully functional: the more careful you are regarding this point the more trouble you save yourself later - just think of the effort of getting rid of broken stuff again or worse: somebody gets hurt because of a missing part.
- 3** Size: sure, a portable workbench is a useful item but it also occupies a lot of space that you might not have or might have a better use for.
- 4** No books, DVDs, CDs etc.: because there are already better ways of sharing those things and as soon as you say yes to those things your shelves become full of them.
- 5** Easy and safe to handle (no need for hours studying a manual or special safety training). A welding machine or a chainsaw may be great to borrow for those who know how to handle them, but they are very dangerous machines. If you decide to keep them in stock, make sure that you only lend them to experts!
- 6** Easy to transport for one person without a car
- 7** Items that are not self-explanatory should come with a manual. If there isn't one, and you cannot find the manual online, ask the donor to explain how the items work and write it down.

You can find a list of the most commonly borrowed items in the appendix.

- 3.2 -

## MAINTENANCE AND REPAIR

Another point you should seriously consider is maintenance and repair. In Great Britain for example it is mandatory to test electric/electronic devices professionally once a year - find out if there are similar regulations in your country as well. Some items such as bicycles and power tools are great to have but need a lot of know-how and regular service. You either need to calculate the costs for service and repair in your budget or you need to have some helping hands. Almost certainly you can find some handy(wo)men in your community who would be happy to help with tips and tricks and to pass on their knowledge. In fact, to ask your members for help with repairs and maintenance is a good opportunity for skill sharing and involving your community. You can also ask in the local repair café for help and if there isn't one yet maybe you can initiate it.

## TIP!

If you need to test your electronic devices you can do online courses to be able to do this or pay a local charity shop / tester to do the tests for you!

- 3.3 -

## WAYS OF ACQUIRING ITEMS

### DONATIONS

As mentioned before it is pretty easy to get stuff through donations. As soon as the word is out that you are opening a LoT people will probably ask if you might need this or that. Library of Things London had a positive experience with picking things up as this gives you an opportunity to get to know your community better and shows good service.

Some LoTs ask for item donations as a precondition of membership. The experiences with this model are mixed: on the

one hand it makes your LoT inclusive and welcoming for people who might not have the financial means of becoming a member (if you have membership fees) plus your stock continuously grows. On the other hand, you will most likely be offered a lot of unsuitable things and if you reject them and people don't have anything else to offer, then you are rejecting them as members.

### WISH LIST

You'll often have people enquiring whether you have a certain item in stock. Great if you have it, but if not: write down everything people ask for on a wish list. This shows you which items people are interested in. Also keep a tally chart so you can see how popular the items are. When looking for something on your wish list you can be successful by browsing social network groups like "Freecycle", "Share&Care", "freeyourstuff". In Berlin the local recycling centre runs a website for people to give things away.

The wish list is not only about the items themselves but also about community outreach: when people are able to donate something that is explicitly required it feels like a pretty good contribution to the community. Make the wish list public so that people can see what you are looking for - maybe you are lucky and somebody is just looking for an opportunity to find a new home for his or her sanding machine. As well as publishing the wish list on your website you can also print it out and make it available on site (→ CHAPTER 8). Use your newsletter or social media channels to look for items on your wish list.

### BUSINESS COOPERATION

As getting high-quality items can be difficult through donations only, you can also think about collaborating with businesses. This is actually a win-win situation: your LoT gets professional equipment and the company can promote its brand as many people will become aware of it and are able to try out their products. The products may be "last season" or just released, but either way you can offer

the company a bit of market-research for them by asking your members how they found the product.

## PURCHASE

Of course simply buying certain items is also an option if you have the budget for it. It makes sense to consider a few things first though. If you have some spare money the first question is probably what to spend it on. One way is to check your wish list, pick out a few interesting items and let your community vote on what you should get. If the choice is hard to make you could consider sustainability as a criterion, e.g. you probably use gardening tools for more sustainable purposes than a candy floss maker.

The result of the vote also tells you in which order you should get the different items in case you have a limited budget. For example when the budget is 500€ and your community votes in favour of a beamer your budget is probably exhausted and the items at 2nd and 3rd place won't be bought. But if the sack barrow comes in first place you will still have money left for whatever is voted 2nd place and maybe even 3rd place. The next question is where to buy the things. Can you get it second-hand but in good quality? Where do you get the best warranty conditions? How fair and ecological is the company?



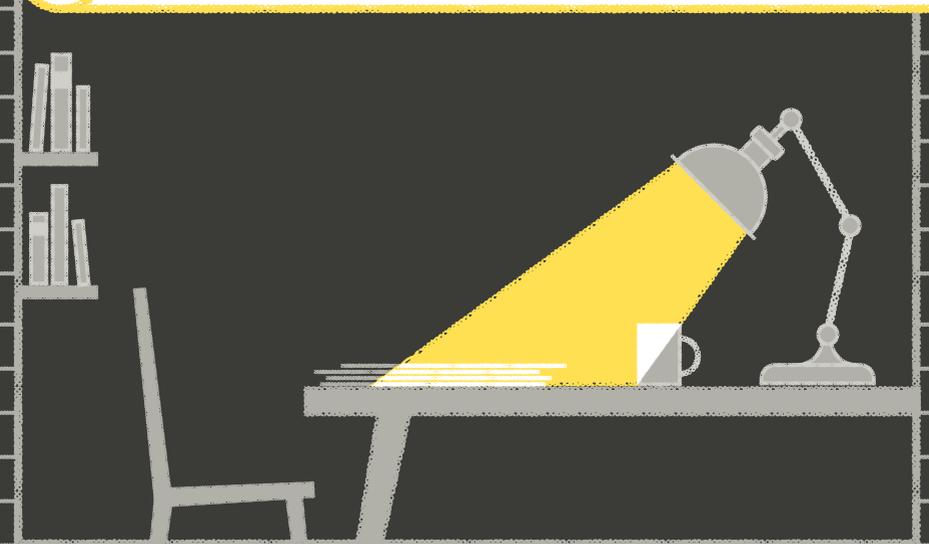
Community survey on items at the LoT ,SHARE', Frome, England.



Stand-up display at the LoT ,SHARE', Frome, England.

# PART TWO

## ADMINISTRATION



# 4

## WHICH LEGAL FRAME- WORK DOES A LIBRARY OF THINGS NEED?

**Finding your way through the jungle of paragraphs and legal documents can be tricky. But as you don't want to have to shut down your LoT after only a couple of weeks due to legal issues, it is of the utmost importance that you look carefully at what legal requirements are applicable in your country.**

- 4.1 -

### RESEARCH

This chapter is probably the one which depends the most on the country you live in. Nevertheless, we have collected some experiences of different LoTs with legal issues.

If there is a LoT in your country already, its team has probably already done a bunch of research on this topic, so we recommend you talk to them about their experiences and solutions!

When you tell people about your idea of opening a LoT, one of the most common questions will most likely be "But what if something gets broken?" Of course we all hope this doesn't happen, but as the items go through a lot of different hands it is inevitable that a breakage will happen sooner or later; in which case the two big issues are liability and insurance.

Another very important issue is the legal form of your organization (e.g. co-op, non-profit/charity, business, community group, etc.). The procedures, requirements, costs and potential types of organizations will vary from country to country. Most of this guide assumes that you will be using some form of a co-op, non-profit, charity or social enterprise as your model.

- 4.2 -

### INSURANCE

Insurance that is legally required and insurance that is simply recommended can vary greatly from country to country. The main problem with insuring a Library of

Things is often that there are only two sets of laws in existence: for individuals, and for businesses, the latter setting much more complex and expensive standards. While a LoT is too formal to be classified as just persons interacting on a private sharing level, the LoT in a lot of cases is also not a business and has no means of giving guarantees etc. In many countries it is possible to use a general liability insurance to insure against theft and loss when the items are IN the Library of Things, but you can't get insurance for when they are on the loan to somebody and therefore no longer in the building.

Many public libraries are self-insured through their municipality, or can get an additional rider on their existing policy for their Library of Things, if needed. There are also newer insurance services that focus on the sharing economy and on-demand economy. These might be more appropriate if, and when, a Library of Things helps facilitate rentals or sharing directly between their members in a peer-to-peer fashion.

## TIP

In the US, a number of LoTs have done well with Philadelphia Insurance as they often write policies for non-profits and more unique businesses.

- 4.3 -

## AGREEMENTS

You will want to have user agreements and terms and conditions that have been checked by a lawyer or legal expert to help ensure you have some protection if someone gets hurt using items from the LoT. The agreement should state the rights and duties of a member, especially the consequences if an item gets lost or destroyed. People tend to not read these agreements properly, so make sure that your members not only read them, but that they also clearly understand their responsibilities.

You can find sample agreement documents in the attachment and at [sharestarter.org/tools](https://sharestarter.org/tools).

## TIP

Some law firms do pro bono consultations as part of their CSR-programme.

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## SAFETY

Having proper procedures in handling, cleaning and maintaining items in the LoT is also an important part of enhancing safety and limiting liability. Check to make sure that you are following all the safety and maintenance procedures recommended by the manufacturer of the products you offer. Also, make sure you mark your room in accordance with security requirements (warning signs for stairs and slippery floors, emergency lamps at the exits...).

# 5

## HOW TO FINANCE A LIBRARY OF THINGS

**Oh dear... this little detail called funding. There are different models in use and your choice will have significant impact on how other things will have to be organized in your Library of Things. But don't worry, here are a few tips to guide you through!**

The two aspects of funding your LoT on the one hand, and organizing it legally on the other are tightly interwoven. These two, however, also depend on the goals you want to pursue with your LoT: Is it for profit or not? Will it be run by volunteers only or will you employ somebody? Do you want to collaborate with the city/state or not? Questions upon questions that you have to decide upon as a team, but you can have a look below at what the most common models currently in use in Libraries of Things throughout Europe are.

### MODEL 1: ASSOCIATION WITH MEMBER FEES

In Austria and Germany it is pretty easy to found an association. This is probably the reason why this organizational structure is quite popular for LoTs in those countries. Associations can have employees, but if they want to benefit from tax cuts for their donors and easier tax declarations they can't work for profit, so most work in running them is done voluntarily.

To become a member people have to pay a membership fee. The fee can be paid yearly or monthly and it is calculated in such a way that expenses are covered. It is really important to do this calculation correctly and include all costs so that

you do not have to change/increase it often. At the same time fees should be affordable for everybody who wants to use and be part of the LoT. Leila Wien has had good experiences with having normal and reduced fees and leaving the decision as to which fee to choose to those who want to become a member.

To have a yearly fee has some major advantages such as less hassle with collecting the money and better predictability of financial resources. It also indicates more commitment for the members and last but not least, it means more money because probably some members will pay for an entire year but will only come two or three times to actually borrow something.

## MODEL 2: SUPPORT FROM THE CITY OR STATE

Of course it depends on the country where you plan to open a LoT as to what kind of state or municipal support is available there. Here are two examples to give you an idea of what kind of support could also be available in your country:

**KNJIŽNICA REČI** in Ljubljana (Slovenia) uses a scheme where unemployed people are supported to find work again. They employ a (formerly unemployed) person whose salary is provided to 80% by the state and the other 20% has to be generated some other way.

**SHARE - A LIBRARY OF THINGS** is supported by the town council which runs a project called "ed:venture" where young people between 18-30 can get involved and set up their own projects. With its funds for apprenticeships, eight young people started to develop the LoT in Frome and with the support of this programme a very professional preparation could be done.

The disadvantage of this model is that you are dependent on politics. Majorities can change quickly and with them the availability of funds for social and environmental projects. Such funding also usually brings with it a lot of administrative work as applications and reports have to be written and professional documentation and supervision of the employees is required.

## MODEL 3: CROWDFUNDING

Crowdfunding is an interesting option for getting your LoT started, but it probably isn't a sustainable method for financing it in the longer term. It is a way of financing a project by using an online platform where a lot of donors contribute to raise the money. Typically, you set a certain goal as to how much money you need and limit the time to make donations (e.g. "10.000€ in 10 days"). In return for their donations people usually get some kind of reward or gift.

For the LoT this can be a membership for a year, a board game party with the board games in stock at your LoT or whatever you can think of. Just make sure that the rewards bring in more money than they cost. If you start a crowdfunding campaign you definitely need a concept for it: What do you need the money for (transparent information about that is also important for the potential donors)? How much money do you want to collect (is that amount realistic)? What rewards for your potential supporters are attractive? Where and when do you launch the campaign? How do you advertise for it? How do you supervise your campaign?

The downside of crowdfunding is that it can take a lot of time and energy to create the campaign materials (mostly text and film, maybe also leaflets and posters) and promote your campaign through all channels available (social media, local press, personal networks, canvassing, door knocking... whatever you can do).

The upside is that your LoT gains publicity and potential members even before it has opened, the campaign can galvanize your team and engage a greater community around it. You may also gain useful contacts, important feedback and great tips.

## MODEL 4: NON-PROFIT / SOCIAL ENTERPRISE

In the USA, UK and Canada, there are other non-profit and social enterprise organizational models that organizations can choose. These models don't require a specific fee structure and can use a combination of membership (typical), per-use fee, late fees and other methods listed both above and below.

## MODEL 5: BUSINESS OR HYBRID LIKE THE LONDON LOT

There are some for-profit LoTs and others that are a hybrid between a for-profit and non-profit (typically in the states). These types of business models usually have a more rigid fee structure, but still have a social and/or environmental mission. They often charge a subscription fee and may also charge a per-use fee for all or certain popular items.

## OTHER REVENUE SOURCES

In addition to the basic financial model of your LoT you can make use of the following ideas on how to generate income:

### CHARGE PER LEND

This can be a general rule or only be applied to items which naturally get slowly damaged through use (like bicycles) or which have higher maintenance costs for safety reasons (like electric/electronic devices). It can be difficult for people to judge if a tandem bike is more effort to maintain than a smoke machine and what that means for how much to donate for borrowing it. Therefore, it's a good idea to make recommendations about how much to give for which object.

### OVERDUE FINES

can be a revenue stream. You have to consider though if you really want to establish a system based on punishment rather than on trust and what effect this has on your reputation - it might make you seem more professional but maybe also less personal. Also, imagine the situation of collecting the fine: do you feel comfortable doing it?

### GRANTS

There is some really good news - Libraries of Things have high potential for getting grants. Why? Because there are so many possibilities: Environmental protection, climate protection, waste reduction, sharing initiatives, community and neighbourhood funds, etc. Some cities also have special grants for sustainable events (like your opening or anniversary party for example).

When writing an application for a certain grant make sure to stress the aspect that is crucial for the sponsors: e.g. concentrate on how much waste is avoided through a Library of Things when applying for waste reduction funds but stress the aspects of having an open space that enables interaction and networking in the neighbourhood when applying for funds from your municipality.

Another asset of grants is the publicity your LoT gets through them. It can be that the successful projects have the chance of presenting themselves in one way or the other. There might be a public event where the cheque is handed over and maybe this event even gets covered by the media. If you are participating in a contest there is most certainly promotion for it by the sponsor; you get to present yourself online and a lot of people will hear about your project even if you do not win.

## WORKSHOPS

With a big enough stock and a relevant skill base, institutional organisations could be potential customers (e.g. photography workshops for schools).

## MARKET RESEARCH FOR COMPANIES

If you collaborate with companies that provide you with items you can offer to do market research for them (→ CHAPTER 3).

## DONATIONS

Whenever you host events or present your project somewhere have a jar for donations ready. The jar should not be totally open but it should be easy to put money in. If the jar is transparent make sure you empty it every now and then throughout.

Furthermore, your website should contain your bank account details to make it easy for people to donate money.

# TIP!

If the jar is transparent put some money in it yourself before deploying it so that people don't feel like they are the only ones donating.

# 6 THE TEAM YOU WILL NEED

**What would a library of things look like if there were just hundreds of items, plenty of room and space? Closed. Because it's necessary to gather a group of people to run the LoT too. This chapter is going to deal with creating, developing and organizing a fully functioning team.**

- 6.1 -

## HOW TO FIND TEAM MEMBERS

—

Sometimes you've already got a team when the idea of opening a LoT comes to your mind. But if you want to open a LoT on your own, we would strongly recommend starting with building up a team first. Why? Because your LoT will need opening hours, there will be holidays and other obligations. As a rule of thumb, it's advisable to get at least three team members who are committed to your joint project. Almost all existing LoTs have experienced a constant fluctuation of team members. There are a lot of reasons for this phenomenon: Some people get a new job, do a term abroad or lose their dedication after a while (hopefully they won't, but you never know).

To a certain degree a bigger team is always better than a small team for the reasons mentioned above. Sometimes it's better to adjust the size of your team relative to the demand and opening hours of your LoT, because having a lot of team members means that you will face new challenges like organizing such a big team. But first of all: Which methods do you have of finding members for your team?

## FRIENDS

You remember the guy from the party last week, who wanted to become involved in a sustainable project? How about your girlfriend, who has just finished her master thesis about the sharing economy? You know a lot of people, and usually those people know a lot of other people too. So just ask around, talk with people about your plans of opening a LoT.

## STUDENTS

Unless they are doing three jobs at the same time just to finance their rent, students have usually got time on their hands. You just need to convince them about the idea of sharing things, tell them about the cool events (→ CHAPTER 10) you are going to host in your LoT and all the fun they will have (Pro TIP: Tell them about all the work later, when they are already convinced 😊).

## INITIATIVES

Sometimes it's hard to convince people of the idea of a LoT, so it makes sense to get in touch with people who are open-minded towards sustainable projects. Where to find them? Visit open lectures, attend discussion groups or other participatory events, maybe you'll even get the chance to introduce and present your idea. It's also worth looking at facebook groups which have a focus on sharing, there are plenty of them.

## ELDERLY / RETIREES

Many older people have time and skills they would love to share with younger generations, so be sure to reach out to senior citizen centres in the US (retirement homes in the UK) and other places, and to be very open to all age groups and other diverse communities.

## EXPERIENCES OF FROME

In the UK, there is a network of organisations called the Transition Towns. At Frome's LoT, they have strong links with their local transition town group, and it has been a good source of volunteers.



Team of 'Leila Bologna', Italy.

The Team behind the LoT 'SHARE', Frome, England.



The Team of the LoT 'Knjižnica Reči', Ljubljana, Slovenia.



### HOW TO ENLARGE AN EXISTING TEAM?

You have already got a LoT, plenty of items and a great team - but you plan to expand your opening hours? You got a new room, which needs to be arranged, furnished and styled? Then you will have to recruit new team members. Here are a few examples of how to enlarge your team.

#### PUBLIC EVENTS

As you will find out in a later chapter (→CHAPTER 9) it's beneficial to attend public events like exhibitions or street festivals with your LoT. Apart from increasing your publicity, you can also get in contact with lots of new people. Maybe they will be so excited about your idea, that they want to get more information or even spend some time helping at your LoT.

#### NEWSLETTER

You have a digital or physical newsletter? Perfect, just place a paragraph in it where you ask for people who are interested in getting involved with your LoT to get in touch.

#### VOLUNTEER DAYS

Another way is so-called volunteer days, on which people can visit your LoT during or around your opening hours to learn about how to run it properly. It's useful to build your volunteer day around a specific task like repairing your bikes or a workshop to fix broken headphones for example. Such volunteer days are an easy way for people to become more familiar with the everyday business of a LoT.

#### STAND-UP-DISPLAYS

Why make things difficult? Just place a stand-up-display in front of your LoT, so people can come in if they are interested.

### I HAVE GOT A TEAM - HOW DO I ORGANIZE IT?

Congratulations! You have got a team, but a team needs some form of organization for it to function properly.

#### HIERARCHY OR ANARCHY?

Depending on your personal views it will make sense to decide as a team if you either want to define a hierarchy or rely on a loose structure. Both models have their pros and cons, but primarily it's most important to exchange your views within the team. Are there people who are willing to shoulder more responsibility than others? Does anyone have a problem taking tasks from another person? Clarify these questions within your team, while encouraging participation and making your decisions transparent.



Create a team list with all the necessary contact information, so that you have an overview of all of your team members. If you have got multiple keys for your LoT, note which members have one.

#### SCOPE OF FUNCTIONS

Your LoT faces dozens of challenges, but nobody feels responsible for dealing with them? Maybe you should think of defining scopes of work. Ask your teammates which skills they have and in which areas they would like to improve themselves. Project management, public relations or website administration, there are a lot of different duties one can take responsibility for. Another way would be to handle work flexibly by building working groups for particular projects or tasks.

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PAID OR VOLUNTARILY WORK?

Another big question when it comes to the organization of a team is the monetary issue.

Are you going to be paid for your work in the LoT, and if yes, in what form – payment in cash or kind?

- 6.4 -

HOW DO I  
COMMUNICATE  
WITHIN A TEAM?

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It's essential for a team to communicate to be able to coordinate work, address problems and exchange ideas as well as needs. This subchapter is going to provide some ideas on different means of communication.

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SLOW: E-MAILS ARE STILL IN VOGUE

E-Mails have proven themselves to be the communication channel of choice in terms of reliability. Why? Mainly because everyone nowadays has got an e-mail account and these accounts are accessible via the internet from everywhere. Mails can also be organized, sorted and archived easily. Another benefit of using e-mails is being able to request send and receipt confirmations. But the biggest advantage of e-mails is that they are more binding than short messages or other methods of communication. You can add a note like „Please reply to this e-mail“ to your e-mails too.

TIP!

Set up an e-mail-distribution list, so that you can address all your team members by sending an e-mail to one single address like team@lot-yourcity.com.

---

FAST: INSTANT MESSAGING

You became ill, you missed your train or something else happened which stopped you from opening up the LoT that day? In these cases you can't rely on e-mail, because you have to reach your team mates fast, so that they can step in. Due to digitalization we are blessed with

having the possibility to use instant messaging. Via smartphone apps like WhatsApp, social networks like Facebook or programs like Skype we are able to communicate in real time.

It's advisable not to use more than one of these channels at once, so decide which of the available options you are going to use. Take into account that some people might not have a smartphone or don't have a Facebook account (and don't want to have one). Either way it's always advisable to exchange telephone numbers so that SMS can be used as an alternative.

---

USEFUL: CHAT SERVICES

There are tonnes of new online chat services like Slack or HipChat that have a combination of Web and Mobile apps that are often free for smaller teams or for non-profit projects.

---

STATIC: CALENDARS

For the alignment of appointments, deadlines or opening hours it's useful to set-up a calendar tool. There are tools like Google Calendar, which makes it possible to synchronize your personal calendar with the online-calendar of your LoT. Try other tools too like: Doodle, Elephanty, Sunrise, Fruux...

---

DYNAMIC: COLLABORATIVE TOOLS

Another thing we have thanks to the internet are collaborative tools, which enable you to read and edit documents, presentations and spreadsheets simultaneously with other people. Some tools you could use are:

→ **GOOGLE DOCS:** Widespread online-based tool, comes with a built-in chat function

→ **DROPBOX:** Common file-based tool, accessible offline too

→

→ **ETHERPAD OR TITANPAD:** Less common, useful for writing To-Do-lists or meeting-agendas, multi-colour highlighting for multiple users

→ **TRELLO:** enables you to share a To-Do-list with your team mates and to keep track of the progress, you can assign certain tasks to certain people, set deadlines for those tasks, attach documents, make comments, etc.

**PHYSICAL: GET TOGETHER**

Sometimes it's nicer to meet in person, so it's advisable to hold a regular jour fixe. Just find a cycle which is suitable for your team i.e. every month or every second week.

How do you organize a jour fixe: Fix a date and notify the whole team. Create an agenda with all the topics you have to deal with and ask your teammates for anything else they would like to add. Meet at a convenient place like a coffee house or your LoT if you've got a cozy room there. But consider that your meeting place shouldn't be too crowded. Then go through your agenda and let someone else, preferably with a laptop, take the minutes. After the jour fixe send out the minutes via e-mail to the whole team, so that people who weren't at the jour fixe receive the information/updates as well.

At Leila Wien it has proven to be a nice addition to begin the jour fixe with a personal update from all the participants. How do they feel? Are there any personal problems?

**TIP**

Create your agenda with a collaborative tool like EtherPad, this enables other team members to add their own points to the agenda.

# PART THREE

## OUTREACH



WE  
~  
ARE  
~  
OPEN

# 7

## TOOLS FOR ADMIN- ISTRATING YOUR LIBRARY OF THINGS

**Back in the good old days everything was organized with pen and paper. There were folders, ring binders and stuff like that. The Internet has changed things a lot: Now we have got software and plenty of it. But are there custom-made applications for managing your LoTs too? Of course there are and some of them will be introduced in this chapter.**

- 7.1 -

### WHY TOOLS CAN BOOST YOUR LOT

You have just opened your LoT and a few minutes later the first visitor pops in. His name is Lenny Lender and he wants the green drilling machine back that he once lent to your LoT. You have never heard of Lenny? You have never seen a green drilling machine before? In this case you will have to dig through hundreds of paper records or call all your team members just to verify this information. Unless of course you use digital administration software, which would mean you could call up the required information with just a few clicks.

That's the biggest advantage of using a computer compared to analogue/paper folders. But there are other benefits too: You can access your items database from everywhere (via the Internet) or make your items visible to the public on your website. Another upside is that your internet database cannot be destroyed or be stolen. In summary it can be said that administration tools provide you with much better and efficient processes and make the management of your LoT way more convenient.

# TIP

If you use your own internet database, make backups regularly and save them on USB-Sticks or CDs as an extra backup - just in case!

At Leila Wien we look back at a lot of experience with different administration systems. In the beginning we used written documentation in parallel with an excel sheet. This method doubled our efforts but increased the security. But it was clear that this model wouldn't work out with the growing number of new items, so we decided to develop an online backend for our administrative tasks. It has taken some time, but it was worth it, the backend optimized our working processes incredibly.

### WHICH TOOLS CAN BE USED?

This table gives you a short overview of the most common software used in LoTs all over the world, it makes no claims to being a complete list.

MS EXCEL & CO.	LEILA-DB	MYTURN
<b>FEATURES</b>		
→ Static Database	→ Lending	→ Lending
→ Excel functions like:	→ Subscription	→ Reminders
→ PivotTables	→ Fee administration	→ Reservation
→ Formulas	→ Membership	→ Subscription
→ Sorting/Filtering	→ Simple Newsletter	→ Payment
<b>AVAILABLE LANGUAGES</b>		
All Languages	German, English (Version 2.0)	Multiple

MS EXCEL & CO.	LEILA-DB	MYTURN
<b>PRICE</b>		
<b>Full Office:</b> 69\$ / year <b>Student:</b> 79\$ / 4 years  <b>TIP:</b> Look out for educational packages	<b>Free (Open Source)</b> - Voluntary donation can be made	Sliding scale based on use and type of organization, very flexible with non-profits and community groups.
<b>FRONTEND</b>		
No frontend	Simple, looks like backend without the administrative functions (can be styled via CSS)	Catalogue-style overview of all items. Members can log in and see loan history, update membership, etc. Link to LoT Frome: → <a href="https://share.myturn.com">SHARE.MYTURN.COM</a>
<b>BACKEND</b>		
Simple, multiple sheets for categories are advised, can be made password-protected	Plain design, has a simple menu, self-explanatory functions, password-protected	Mobile responsive dashboard and reports. Multiple administrative users, reports and more.
<b>WEBSITE INTEGRATION?</b>		
No	Via FTP/phpMyAdmin	Via iframe widget, e.g. → <a href="https://sharingdepot.ca/browse-our-inventory">SHARINGDEPOT.CA/BROWSE-OUR-INVENTORY</a>
<b>SETUP TIME</b>		
1-2 hours when using the attached template	You should plan 1 day for getting everything straight	1-2 minutes to sign up for a site, plus time to set configuration options

MS EXCEL & CO.	LEILA-DB	MYTURN
<b>TRAINING PERIOD</b>		
Short	Between 2-4 hours depending on IT-skills	1-4 hours depending on IT skills and functions needed.
<b>MAINTAINABILITY</b>		
Not given	Medium	High - myTurn handles all hosting and updates
<b>SCALABLE</b>		
<b>No</b> - Maximum of 65.000 rows=items per sheet; gets confusing	<b>Yes</b> - Unlimited items	<b>Yes</b> - Unlimited members, admins and items
<b>ADVANTAGES</b>		
Common software, easy to learn, tested software with almost no bugs, a lot of analysis tools (charts, statistical formulas)	Custom-designed for the needs of a LoT, programmed in common PHP-code which makes it extendable, reduced to main functions, Open-Source	Designed for LoTs, no need to install or maintain anything, affordable, especially for non-profits/charities/free shops, supported by commercial organizations

## DRAWBACKS

Limited in features, Offline unless combined with Dropbox for example, can only be used by 1 person at a time

Comes without a special design, lacks some useful features like a sort function, is designed for the specific membership model of Leila Wien

Can have subscription costs, is not yet (as of September 2016) open source, can't modify the system directly (only through configuration), language translations not complete (admin) and not all languages available (yet)

## CONCLUSION

Useful at the beginning of a LoT, but the more items and categories you get, the more you lose track of all your stuff

Makes the administration of your LoT way more convenient, but has got a few drawbacks and will need some time for adapting it to your LoTs needs.

It is only offered as a cloud based solution; however, with no software to install or maintain and a fairly complete set of features, it is the easiest way to get started with managing a LoT.

## USED BY:

Vienna (Formerly)

Berlin, Vienna

Frome, Dedeekelder, and 130+ other Tool, Kitchen and Library of Things

## CONTACT

→ [MICROSOFT.COM](https://www.microsoft.com)

Joachim Boltz

[myturn.com](https://myturn.com)

[JOACHIM.BOLTZ@GMX.AT](mailto:JOACHIM.BOLTZ@GMX.AT)

[GENE@MYTURN.COM](mailto:GENE@MYTURN.COM)

→ [GITHUB.COM/ACHIMBO/LEILA](https://github.com/ACHIMBO/LEILA)

## 8

## HOW TO GET YOUR LIBRARY OF THINGS INTO SHAPE

**When starting with your Library of Things you might have other things on your mind than how to design and structure your location. But it makes sense to consider some things right from the beginning to save you a lot of work later on. So this chapter comes as the icing on the cake and provides you with a lot of ideas on making sure your LoT has been well thought through.**

## EXTENDED LIVING ROOM

First of all, it is important that not just the visitors feel comfortable in the room but also the team. You will spend a lot of time there during shifts, events or meetings and it's much more fun if the place has a cosy atmosphere and you like to hang out there. This is also crucial to attracting new team members - you are much more likely to get the traction you need if you spend time there anyway because it is a nice place to hang out in.

## TIP

Make a list of furniture you need and talk to your local bulk waste collection or waste disposal site to see if they can collect those things and put them aside for you.



Inside view of the LoT 'De Deelkelder', Utrecht, Netherlands.

Inside view of the LoT 'SHARE', Frome, England.

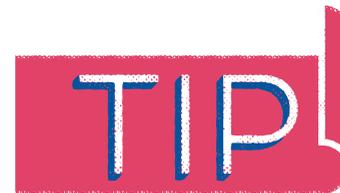


## DECORATION

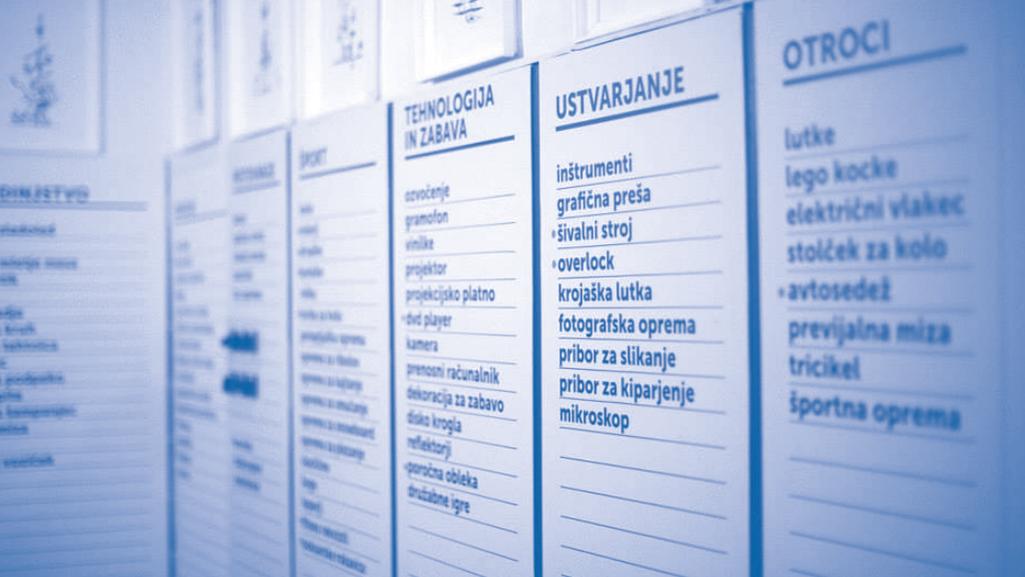
An easy but effective way of combining decoration and information is to print your wish list in large format and put it up where it can be seen easily. If you organise it by categories and simply mark items that you've already got with a sticky dot, it will be clear and shows you and your visitors the progress your inventory is making.

Unless your LoT is underground you probably have a shop window which is great for information sharing and adverts. Visibility from outside is crucial to gaining attention from passers-by. A shop window is relatively easy to decorate and very flexible in terms of what can be shown there. You can simply put your logo and opening hours there or use it for a general explanation of how the LoT works (so that people are not surprised that they can't buy anything in there). You can also use it for news, such as an item of the week, for items on your wish list or for announcing upcoming events. Just make sure people can still see what's actually going on inside.

For attracting passers-by, it's also useful to have a mobile chalk board so that you can draw something on there that people see when they walk past, or simply sit in front of your LoT on a lovely day and chat with the people who walk by.



If your location isn't that great you can ask in the neighbourhood if somebody would be willing to let you use his or her shop window.



Wish list plates at the LoT „Knjižnica Reci“, Ljubljana, Slovenia.

To bring even more structure to your shelves it can be useful to pack certain items. Despite the packaging, the item should be easy to find, so transparent plastic boxes or cardboard boxes with pictures of the items are advisable. In particular items that come with several pieces are easier to handle when they are wrapped.

Also keep seasonality in mind – if you have storage space ice skates and other winter items can go there in summer. Things that are more likely to get stolen (small, expensive and easy to sell) should be stored safely but visibly at the same time, i.e. in a locked cupboard with pictures of the items on it. It’s also highly recommendable to have a dedicated space for team members’ personal things as well as for broken items that are waiting for repair or disposal.

## SHELVES

Yes, supermarkets can be evil – but with regard to the presentation of items we can learn a thing or two from them. For example: which items are visible when you enter the room? Where do you put things that have a higher risk of being stolen? How do you know what’s in the next aisle?

The highest precept regarding the structure of the shelves of a LoT is clarity. Therefore, labelling the shelves clearly and legibly is important. Basically it is a good idea to structure your shelves in the same categories as in the catalogue on your homepage. If you have subcategories try to apply them on your shelves as well.

Another structure idea for your shelves is to organise the content according to its popularity. That means placing items high in demand where they are easy to spot and to reach (supermarkets call this the “bull’s-eye zone” where they place expensive brand-name products). You could also make an extra shelf with your “top twenty” products as a separate category, because there is a good chance that people have come for those things.

Self-made shelf system of the „LoT London“, England.





Shelf design of the LoT SHARE!, Frome, England.

EXTRAS

A nice idea from Knjižnica Reči is to attach little booklets to the items where members can write down what purpose they have borrowed the item for. With time you'll have a collection of stories about why each item has been borrowed. The booklet also provides space for adverts if you collaborate with companies. To encourage people to write down a few words about why they have borrowed the particular item you could put down a fake story so the booklet is not empty.

Another idea to make your LoT more personal is to ask donors of stuff if you can take pictures of them with the item. These photos can be exhibited in the room or attached to the items. The donors can also explain why they have donated the object and what they have done with it before. This could also help to remind people that they should treat the items carefully, because there is a different feeling of responsibility attached to borrowing "Karen's raclette grill" than "this old raclette thing".

# 9 HOW TO ENHANCE YOUR PUBLIC RELATIONS

**There are hundreds of ways to reach people: Expensive ones, tricky ones and ones that take a lot of effort. But there is one place to go if you want to reach everybody easily at the same time: the internet.**

## 1. GET A WEBSITE FOR YOUR LOT

Where do you go if you want to know something? You will go to google most of the time. So if someone searches for „Library of things in town XY“ your website should pop up, with all the information people who might be interested need, such as address, opening hours and so on. The sooner you get a website the better!

## 2. GET SOCIAL, GET NETWORKING

**THUMBS UP FOR FACEBOOK** A 30-second TV-commercial costs up to \$10.000, a newspaper will charge you several thousand dollars for a full-page ad, but a Facebook post is free. There is no easier way to reach a wide audience. You are only one like away from connecting with other projects. It's quite easy to start a Facebook page, the online instructions guide you through the whole process, but the big question is: What should I post? For example, you could introduce your team members, present the objects you have on offer or share the experiences of your members. Just be creative and if you still don't have many ideas, you can always share the posts of other similar

pages. The main point is to create content. If possible, you should use photos and/or videos as well as text, as these will make your posts much more attractive and interesting. Keep it short and simple and only write as much as you would personally want to read yourself.

**SHARING IS CARING** The concept of Facebook is all about interaction, so use the opportunity to talk with other people! What kind of items would they like to see in your library of things? Ask them, start a poll and react to what they say.

You are hosting an event (→ CHAPTER 10) in your library of things? Nice, create a Facebook event so that you can invite all your friends. Promote it via the other pages you have already connected with.

**ADVANCED FACEBOOK** Facebook is a powerful tool if you're into statistics. The Facebook-Stats will provide you with useful information like: Who visits my page and when? Learn about who your target groups are and then address your posts to them!

**TIP**

Best time for publishing on Facebook is between 1 PM and 4 PM on weekdays. Avoid weekends, as people are usually taking a break from the internet.

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#### TWEET OR RETWEET - THAT'S THE QUESTION

If Facebook isn't your social network of choice, then try

Twitter. One advantage of Twitter is that you have to keep your content short and simple due to the 140-character limit. But apart from that Twitter is as powerful as Facebook, you can share, like or simply post things. Although the texts are shorter you will have to invest much more time, because Twitter is driven by its real-time-factor. This is why Twitter is used a lot by journalists, politicians and other influencers, who could easily be addressed - you just need to add an @.

People are in favour of regularity, so with a certain amount of organisation you could meet the needs of your social media fans - create an editorial plan, introduce recurring features. Such a plan could look like this: Present one of your items every Wednesday - Share an event every Friday. You are not bound by these plans, but they can be useful tools for improving your social media activities.

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#### CHEEEESE! INSTAGRAM

Alongside Facebook and Twitter there are a lot of other social networks, which are worth looking at. Instagram is one of them, which is the go to platform for digital natives, who want to share their images. If you use Instagram in the right way, you will be able to build up a fan base quickly. But you will need a concept and an idea to achieve this. Simply posting pictures of your items isn't enough, so you will have to orchestrate your images. Is one of your members borrowing a snowboard? Perfect, ask him or her if they can take a selfie on the slope. Then you add a short text, throw in some hashtags like #SHARINGISCARING #SUSTAINABLE and you are done: Your first Instagram post!

### 3. LEAVE THE CONFINES OF YOUR LOT

There is a life outside of social networks; in PR this means getting out of your LoT and visiting events or festivals. In so doing you have to keep some things in mind.

**1. INFORMATION AND CLARIFICATION:** Inform yourself about the event: Who is going to host it, when and where? Which of your team members are available on the given date? Do you have to pay something and is it within your LoTs budget?

**2. PREPARATION:** Get information material together like a flyer, badges or stickers as giveaway's (→ **BASICS FOR AN EVENT**). Think about what the objective of attending an event is: Getting new members, presenting your items or spreading the idea of sharing?

**3. GET THERE AND BUILD-UP:** Find your space and then make it your place by styling it up. Bring a poster or banner to make your booth visible.

**4. TALK AND CONNECT:** Get in touch with people, show them your items, explain the idea of sharing to them and have a look around to get to know other initiatives – maybe you can do something together with them.

**5. FOLLOW-UP:** Take stock, was it a success or a failure – and what were the reasons? Celebrate the positive outcomes, such as new members and learn from your mistakes for the future.

#### BASICS FOR AN EVENT

Increase your visibility! it's advisable to get some flyers, badges or other promo material.

Here you can see some examples of different approaches you can maybe use for your LoT as well.

**YOUR IDENTITY** (LOGO, POSTERS, BANNERS, ETC.)

**PRINTED MATTER** (FOLDERS, FLYERS, FORMS FOR NEW MEMBERS, NEWSLETTER LIST, ETC.)

**GIVE-AWAYS** (STICKERS, BADGES, SHIRTS, BAGS, ETC.)

**BOX FOR DONATIONS**

**WISH LIST** (FOR ITEMS YOUR VISITORS WOULD LIKE TO SEE IN YOUR LOT)

**MEMBER COUNTER** (TO SHOW HOW MANY MEMBERS YOU HAVE ALREADY GOT)

**BALLPOINTS OR OTHER PENS**  
**GAFFER TAPE**

**AND MOST IMPORTANTLY:** Bring some of your stuff, if possible items that can be used on site (like sports equipment for example).

Info booth at a big Street Festival by 'Leila Wien', Austria.





# 10 HOW TO GET DIFFERENT ACTIVITIES INTO YOUR LOT

**The more people that visit and use a LoT the better. Especially in the early phase it can be challenging to get a lot of activity into your space. Here are a few tried and tested ideas of what you can do to make your LoT as lively as possible.**

## - 10.1 - EVENT TYPES

### SWAPS

A lot of things can be swapped and many LoTs have organized swaps (e.g. Leila Wien, Leila Berlin, Leihladen Innbruck). The most common one is a clothes-swap. In the experience of Leila Wien this attracts a larger number of people than many other events. Another advantage is that it needs relatively little preparation: Organize some tables and ideally also something to hang clothes on. You can assign different sections for types and sizes of clothes. This will make it easier for visitors to find what they need and more things will be taken. But many more things can be swapped: Seeds for plants, childrens' things, Christmas decorations, unwanted Christmas presents. Don't forget to plan a way to manage the things that are leftover. After a swap you will always have a bunch of things that are left, because people bring more than they take.

Top left: Wishbox at the outside of the LoT 'SHARE', Frome, England.  
Top right: Badges used at 'Leila Wien', Austria.

Center-left: Mobile board designed by the LoT 'SHARE', Frome, England.  
Center-right: Shirts sprayed with a Self-made stencil by 'Leila Wien', Austria.

Bottom left: Booklets to personalize the items made by LoT 'Knjižnica Reči', Ljubljana, Slovenia.  
Bottom right: Design of the entrance door at the LoT 'Knjižnica Reči' Ljubljana, Slovenia.



Clothes-swap at the LoT „SHARE“, Frome, England.

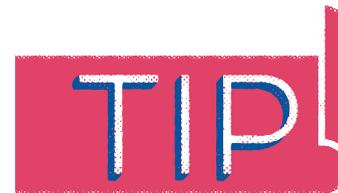
## VOLUNTEERS-DAY

A common challenge is how to acquire more volunteers. An idea tested at Leila Wien is the so-called Volunteers-Day. We regularly invite all our members to come along and get to know the basic operating cycles of our LoT. The programme of such a day can be a larger common task such as testing certain items, labelling items, taking pictures of items or even simple things like cooking together. While doing that, the work routines and the roles of the different team members can be explained. The key is to give members the chance to help out a little already and feel like part of a team.

## WORKSHOPS

A lot of different things can be achieved via workshops. Content related ones can attract new people to check out your space and at the same point convey important ideas. Another type of workshop is targeted towards skill sharing. A lot of the items that can be borrowed require certain skills. The more people that acquire those skills, the higher the chance is that those items will be lent out. Workshops are also a great opportunity to get to know each other better and tighten the community. Examples for skill share workshops in LoTs are: Knitting, upcycling, bike repair, DIY, cooking,...

Volunteers day at the LoT „Leila Wien“, Austria.



Try to get to know your members' skills. Chances are, a lot of them are able to offer something for an interesting workshop.

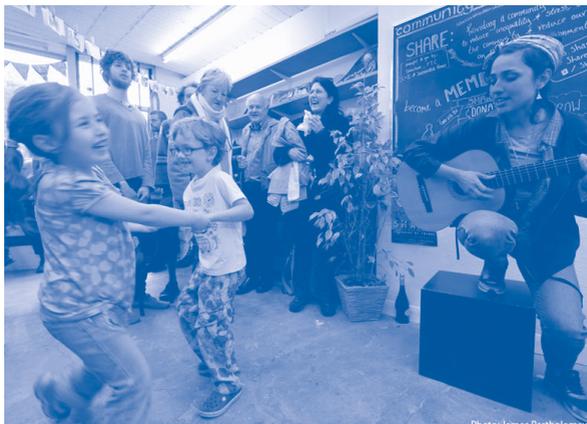


Sewing Workshop at the LoT 'SHARE', Frome, England.

## CELEBRATIONS

With all the workload and engagement we sometimes forget the most important thing that we have to do: to celebrate! You can use all kinds of excuses to have a nice celebration: Anniversaries, official holidays, reaching certain goals (e. g. 100 new members), team members birthdays or the change of seasons,...

A good idea is to involve your members in a fun way, like preparing the buffet together or playing interactive games. If you are in need of certain objects, money or new members - this is the perfect occasion to search for all of these.



Celebration at the LoT 'SHARE', Frome, England.

Photo: James Bartholomew

## OTHER ACTIVITIES

There are a number of other activities that can be organized within a LoT.

Of course they can also be combined with the activities stated above. For example you can host a movie night. Whether it is a documentary or a feature film - just make sure that you have a broadcast license.

Another fun idea that Knjižnica Reči has had: auctions! After a while you will certainly have some items in duplicate which you don't need. An auction is a fun way to get rid of them and make some money at the same time.

If you know some interesting people that can give a talk, you can ask them to do it at your LoT. This always attracts people to come to your place that might not have come otherwise. You can also have exhibitions: Artists always need space to present their work and your LoT needs more reasons to attract visitors. It can be a win-win to organize small exhibitions at your LoT.

Auction of surplus goods at the LoT 'Knjižnica Reči', Ljubljana, Slovenia.



## CO-OPERATIONS



There are many great possibilities to co-operate with other dedicated individuals and organizations and doing so has many advantages. Here are a few examples of

successful co-operations:

→ **LEILA BERLIN** has regular bread sales from a small vendor that makes his own organic bread. Once a week people swing by to get their bread and bring life to the LoT. They also often borrow or bring back an item at the same time.

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→ Repair Cafés exist in many cities and are a good match for a LoT. People can come by and get their devices fixed and you can also learn how to fix things. There is often also an opportunity to fix items from the LoT inventory.

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→ In many cities there are providers for alternative tours. They give travellers the chance to get to know different perspectives of cities. It can be fruitful to talk to the tour guides and get them to visit you or recommend your space to travellers.

# CONTACT

**ALLERLEIHLADEN GRAZ**  
POST@ALLERLEIHLADEN.AT

**DEDEELKELDER (NETHERLANDS)**  
INFO@DEDEELKELDER.NL

**KNJIŽNICA REČI (SLOWENIA)**  
INFO@KNJIZNICARECI.SI

**LEIHLADEN INNSBRUCK**  
INNSBRUCK@LEIHLADEN.AT

**LEILA BERLIN**  
HALLO@LEILA-BERLIN.DE

**LEILA BOCHUM**  
INFO@LEIHLADEN-BOCHUM.DE

**LEILA BOLOGNA**  
INFO@LEILA-BOLOGNA.IT

**LEILA HEIDELBERG**  
FACEBOOK.COM/LEILAHEIDELBERG

**LEILA LEIPZIG**  
KONTAKT@LEILA-LEIPZIG.DE

**LEILA WIEN**  
INFO@LEIHLADEN.AT

**LIBRARY OF THINGS LONDON**  
HELLO@LIBRARYOFTINGS.CO.UK

**SHARE - A LIBRARY OF THINGS FROME**  
SHARE@EDVENTUREFROME.ORG

**SHARING DEPOT TORONTO**  
CONTACT@SHARINGDEPOT.ORG

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**CONCEPT AND CONTENT**  
SIMON BÜCHLER, INA HAHN,  
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**PROOFREADING**  
ALEX BASKER

**GRAPHIC DESIGN, LAYOUT AND ILLUSTRATIONS**  
FELIX AUER

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