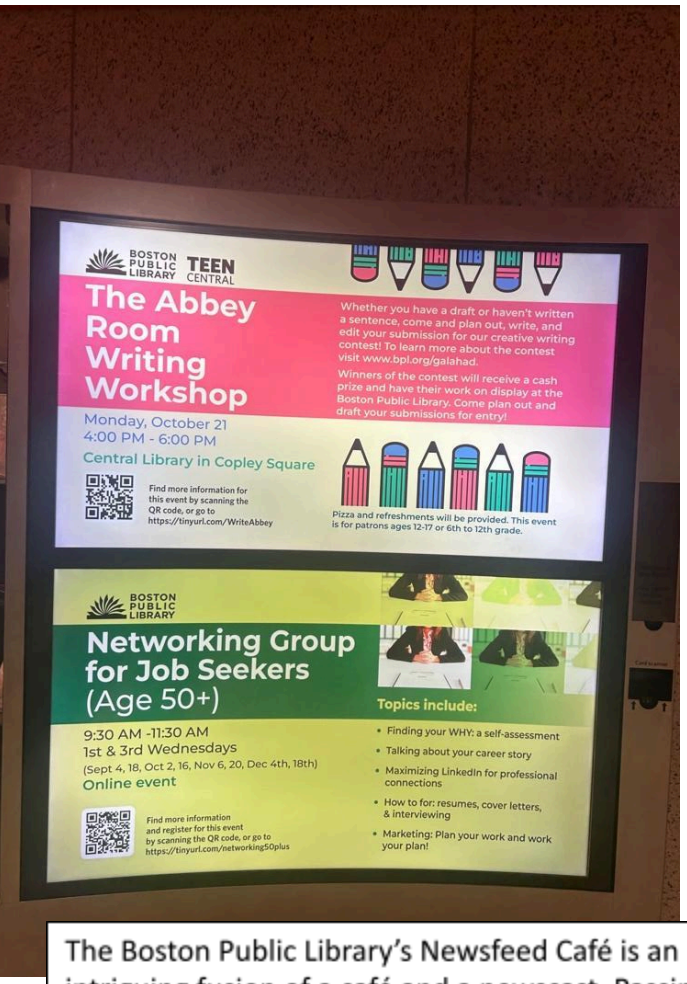




This is the first photo I took. I attempted to situate myself within the library by displaying the main object of my attention: my laptop with all the work I plan to do and all the music that will guide me through my work, and my headphones, which are the vehicle for the music into my ears. It is the most personally relevant first-person perspective in this gallery, yet it displays common tools used by people in the library, especially students. Student culture is very prevalent in Boston, and my own perspective as a student is one that is served by the availability of the library.

A bookshelf is perhaps the most basic building block of a library. I took this photo to represent the fundamental function of a library: providing the public with books of all sorts. The label in this photo displays the categorization system used by the library: by author's last name in alphabetical order, as well as by genre. This is a zoomed-in snapshot of the vast collection of books in the library, which is represented by the perspective showing further bookshelves down the hallway. The provision of knowledge written in books to the public is perhaps the most essential cornerstone to the institution of a library, and books are both products and producers of human culture worldwide.





This photo is the first glimpse of the library's function extending beyond providing a space for computer use or books for reading: providing events for different groups of people. The two advertisements showcase the range of needs that the library addresses, from a workshop for aspiring creative writers, and middle-aged people looking for jobs. This pair of advertisements starts to reveal the lesser-known aspect of libraries: providers of important community services for free.

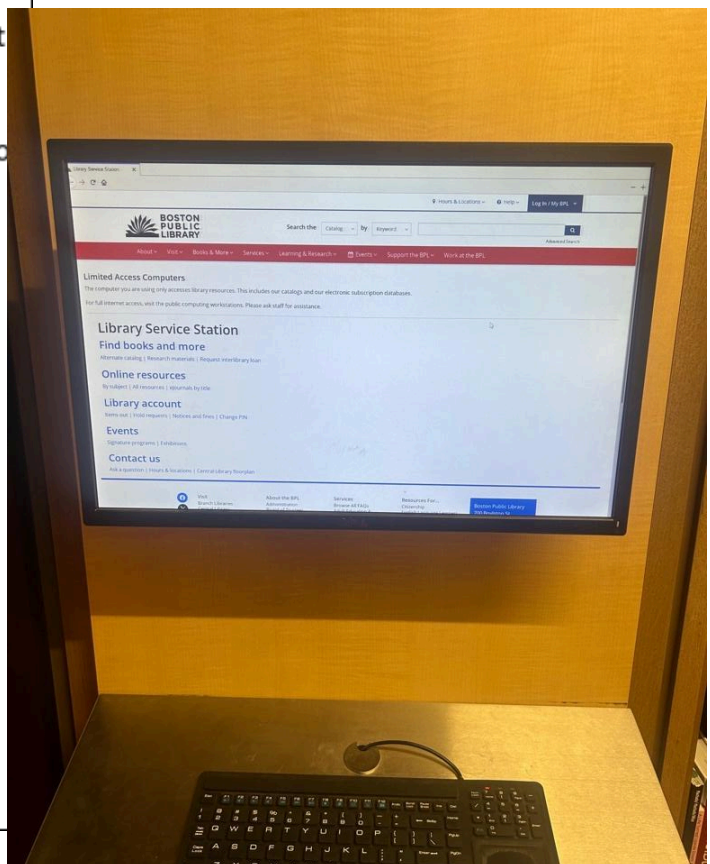
The Boston Public Library's Newsfeed Café is an intriguing fusion of a café and a newscast. Passing by the library, I have seen news reports and interviews happening in real time while people enjoy their food and coffee off-camera. This café is a unique feature of the BPL, a cosmopolitan fusion of media production and café culture, which is associated with both millennials and the corporate world. Having checked the prices of the food at the café, it is clear that it is not affordable for many people who use the library. The Newsfeed Café is a rare example of elitism within a public institution; it is even separated from the rest of the space with a glass door.





This photo, like the photo of the shelf of sci-fi books, displays more types of books offered by the library. Here, however, the categorization differs; the books are subdivided by foreign language rather than by genre. This shelf presents an exception to the library's usual system of organization, as its collection of books in other languages is understandably smaller than its vast collection of books in English. The availability of books in foreign languages showcases the library's inclusivity of people whose native language is not English, thus presenting itself as a space that is inclusive to foreigners and immigrants who may be interested in reading books in a language they understand.

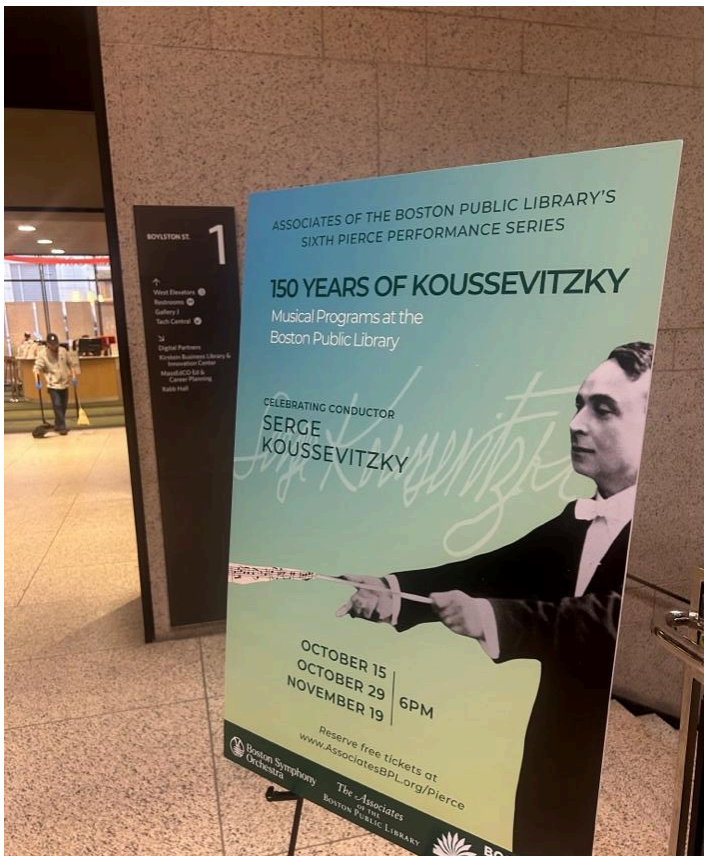
With this computer, the library provides a more modern way to allow people to discover books and resources that the library offers. Although many people have their own phones and computers, not everyone who uses the library does, and this computer could be valuable to those who do not have access to such technology, presumably due to age or income restrictions.





This bulletin board contains loads of information that may be useful for many different people, from college guidance to handyman services. I took this picture to represent the breadth of people that the library provides resources for, crossing boundaries of age, race, and gender. The library aims to be a public institution, and this characteristic is represented by the different services and opportunities advertised on the bulletin board.

This advertisement targets a new community of people: enjoyers of classical music. The library presents itself as an institution hosting live musical performances, which is not something that one would come to expect from a library. As if the BPL has not diversified its services enough beyond the bare-bones book provider that libraries are often perceived as, this photo offers another example of the library continuing to target groups of people with different interests.





This final image depicts the library's front desk with a message in large letters: "FREE TO ALL." This message encapsulates the common thread among the photos in this gallery – no matter a person's interests or background, the library can provide something for every person and address their needs. On one hand, this message is exemplified by the multitude of books, abundance of space, and variety of services the library provides. On the contrary, the elitism of other elements seems to contradict this statement, limiting certain areas of the library for people of a particular social class. Ultimately, the mantra of "free to all" is one that the Boston Public Library clearly attempts to strive towards, one that is much needed in a society so marred by inequality and injustice. Everything a library provides possess elements of the knowledge and culture of past and present, and a resource so rich truly deserves to be Free to All.