Leveraging Technology:

Enabling a Collaborative Working Environment with Your Systems Department

Edward Corrado

Rider University Libraries

Katharine Treptow Farrell & Janet Lute

Princeton University Library

Supply Chain

Producer = Systems Librarian

Retailer = Systems Librarian and "traditional" Librarian

Consumer = "traditional" Librarian

Need For Collaboration

- Our work is increasingly computer-based

- Job responsibilities have become blurred

- Working together to understand Voyager's complexities

The Challenge

- Librarian as consumer of Systems services

- Management support for collaboration

To Make It Work

- Translating "Librarian Language" to "Systems Language" (and vice versa) can be difficult.

- Learn aspects of other's jobs

- Willingness to allow projects to unfold under the constraints of each other's primary duties

To Make It Work

- Try to be able to replicate problems to help systems staff know exactly what the problem you are having is
- Collaborate at all stages of a project
- Don't get defensive
  - Answer questions
  - Follow simple directions/guidelines
- Did you reboot?

To Make It Work

- Management must work to "avoid a polarizing "us vs. them" attitude in the ranks of technical staff and librarians.

- Don't complain – be direct, and …

- Ask questions!

Examples Of Making It Work

- Editing UNIX files via Samba (and other tools)
  - Installing Samba on your UNIX WebVoyáge/ Web server allows librarians to access and edit WebVoyáge (and other web server files) from Windows clients using the native Windows interface.
  - No need to know vi.
  - Samba is freely available under the GNU General Public License
  - No waiting for the systems person to get "free time" to get to your updates.

Examples Of Making It Work

- Public service librarians and systems administrators collaborating

  - EZproxy troubleshooting document
  - Student worker troubleshooting document
  - Scheduling calendars

- The small things help the most…

Examples Of Making It Work

- Access (and other) Voyager reports
  - Who runs what?
  - Work together to design custom reports
  - Planning: Don't ask for something at the last minute if you know you are going to need it
  - Scheduling reports

Conclusions

- Communication
  - Librarians need to being able to get there needs across to systems people
  - Systems people need to get their point across to librarians
- Learn a little bit about what each other does
- Work with each other - not against each other

References

- Gordon, Rachel Singer. (2003). *The Accidental Systems Librarian.* New Jersey: Information Today, Inc.

- Ross, John B. (1997). Defining the Divide: Causes of Friction between Librarians and Computer Support Staff. *The Journal of Academic Librarianship 23 (2),* 132-133.

- Voyager ad hoc report request form: http://libweb.princeton.edu/services/voyrept.php

- Remote access to databases using EasyPass : http://library.rider.edu/talbott/directory/rterrio/ez.pdf