

Best Practices for Aligning IT with Library Business Needs: An Interactive Panel Discussion

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IT-Business Alignment in Libraries

- Matching appropriate technology solutions with outcomes-based needs
- Translating library needs to actionable technology services
- Working with stakeholders to ensure solution meets requirements
- Managing, tracking development, deployment of agreed-upon solutions
- Assessing how well solutions met the need

Importance

- Topic does not get much discussion within libraries
- Libraries rely on technology more than ever to advance mission
- Libraries' traditional hierarchy and divisions require additional effort and ongoing dialogue
- Seemingly obvious, but still pervasive problem
- Failure equals:
 - Squandered resources & opportunities
 - Loss of credibility of technology units & leadership
 - Delayed solutions for critical needs

Format of Session

- Perspective and examples from medium academic library: University of Notre Dame
- Perspective and examples from special library: J. Paul Getty Research Institute
- 10 minutes each, followed by reaction and followup questions from other presenter
- After both discussions, invite questions and examples from attendees
- Interactive, lively, help solve your problems

Need: Shared Planning Process

- Technology and library segments
- Dialogue: what does library want to accomplish, what can technology offer
- What are highest priorities? They can not all be highest
- Discuss, decision, plan, document, manage, assess
- Must take time out for this activity, away from daily work

Library Administrators & Managers

- Group of 22 dept. heads, 3 Associate Directors, Library Director
- All-day planning retreat June annually
- Depts share annual goals & projects
- Discuss, decision areas of greatest cross-dept collaboration, need
- Select 3-4 significant projects for year

Need: Open Communication

- Begin ongoing formal and informal dialogue between technology and non-technology areas across library
- Translating technical terms into understandable non-technical language
- Transparency on process of how to begin discussion
- Multiple levels: needs float upwards as well as from administration

R2 Report (2008)

- Focused on technical services process reengineering, automation
- Assessed strengths and weaknesses across divisions, suggested opportunities
- One complaint: staff didn't know where to initiate technology projects; ad hoc process with those they knew
- R2 suggested a need for more transparent process to offer, analyze, decision and implement technology needs

“On Ramp Committee”

- Four dept. heads and Associate Director of technology division
- One rotating representative from other two divisions (public services and collections/tech. Services)
- Web form for new technology project needs
- Bi-weekly meetings, meet with project stakeholders to discuss, decision
- Educative aspect: capacity, priority, capability, what is realistic
- Assessment: more needs are being met than before

Need: Computing – Library Partnership

- Don't underestimate value of University Librarian & CIO having strong relationship and shared values
- Very different cultures between IT and library; corporate vs. academic
- Understand where each adds value
- Cooperative and complementary roles, not competitive
- Shared mission in serving students, faculty, others

Shared Infrastructure

- OIT agreed to provide networked storage in support of library digital content growth
- Procurement: 1 time cost \$6k/TB, backed-up, NetApp file storage, OIT maintains, upgrades
- Library runs GoogleBox for campus search, OIT procures
- Enterprise Content Management: shared interest; library content stewardship & technology leadership, OIT academic needs exploration

Enterprise wiki

- Library uses Twiki, 2004-2009
- OIT pilots Confluence, 2008-2009
- Project did not have support from CIO as production service as top priority
- Production administration & support: library, Kaneb Center, OIT
- Library as publisher, expand scope of services

Need: Project Management

- Growth in number, complexity of technology projects within library
- Decision, prioritize, manage, track projects
- Document, communicate project status to stakeholders
- DotProject, Mantis: open source web-based tools for PM, software development/support
- Metrics for reporting, document what is accomplished by who, for who, timeframes

Challenges

- Communicate clearly in language stakeholders understand
- Active engagement of administration to possibilities of technology
- Educate on realities of complex technology projects
- Critical for library to have strategic plan jointly developed
- Stakeholders have to be willing to learn a about technology, technology needs to be willing to learn about library business goals

Reaction/Discussion