



Chapter 15

Overcoming Barriers in the Planning of a Virtual Library: Recognising Organisational and Cultural Change Agents

Ardis Hanson, MLS

The Louis de la Parte Florida Mental Health Institute
University of South Florida, USA

INTRODUCTION

The University of South Florida (USF) Libraries consist of five separate entities, two located at regional campuses in St. Petersburg and Sarasota and three libraries located on the main campus in Tampa. These libraries operate in a collegial, cooperative way yet each operates independently of the others. This arrangement allows the individual missions of each of the Libraries to be met while ensuring collaboration and cooperation. The many initiatives within and among the USF Libraries depend upon a reliable and advanced networked infrastructure and on staff, facility and financial decisions focussed on true programmatic cooperation. This paper addresses the interaction between the USF Libraries in defining and realising institutional commitment to its virtual library plan.

The USF Virtual Libraries Planning Committee first convened in September 1995. At that meeting, the committee was charged with the task of preparing a proposal for a university-wide virtual library. The committee was comprised of eight librarians, seven representing the USF Libraries and the eighth from Florida Gulf Coast University who provided an “outsider” view of the process. The three USF campuses serve a variety of clientele, ranging from a large undergraduate and graduate research library, an undergraduate and graduate regional campus

library, a unique undergraduate college regional campus library, an academic health sciences library, and a mental health research facility library. Because of the significant geographic distance between several of the participating libraries, weekly conference calls were conducted to communicate individual and group progress relating to the project. Information was distributed to the group via electronic mail.

In order to improve the process of developing the plan, a number of factors were examined. The first was the commitment to recognise problems involved in the process and to undertake actions to either prevent them or address them. The USF librarians had a strong commitment to the success of this project despite the legacies of past library relationships. Project outcome is shown to depend upon the behaviour and resources available during the development process and these depend upon the level of commitment (Lytinen & Hirschheim, 1987). Additional factors included the possibility of budgetary constraints, top-management's technological non-sophistication, and the reluctance to draw up a very detailed operating plan — the idea being to recommend a series of actions to implement in the creation of the virtual library. Finally, barriers on systems implementation included hesitation in accepting a system (Kiely, 1990), lack of standard formats (Ewusi-Mensah & Przasnyski, 1991), and unrealistic priorities and expectations (Konsyuki & McFarlan, 1990) from the parties involved. These barriers are particularly true in the design of a virtual library where resource and technical standards are still under development.

THE ASSIGNMENTS

As the process of developing the plan began, the Virtual Library Planning Committee (VLPC) distributed four assignments. The first assignment, a shared literature review, was an on-going process throughout the ten-month project. The literature review included a search for relevant workshops or conferences and the monitoring of a variety of listservs. Most of the library literature dealt with technical matters; little addressed the social or organisational ramifications within an interpersonal context.

The second assignment was the design of a survey instrument and the selection of peer institutions to receive the survey. The survey examined specific details on electronic collections and services, the status of cataloguing electronic resources, hardware available, staffing, and fiscal support. The group worked via electronic mail on the design of the survey. The survey was sent to fifteen peer institutions with a total of eight responses. The USF Libraries were included in the survey.

The third assignment was the use of focus groups to determine the needs of an ethnically diverse, urban population. User groups surveyed included USF teaching and research faculty and staff, USF libraries faculty and staff, graduate and

9 more pages are available in the full version of this document, which may be purchased using the "Add to Cart" button on the publisher's webpage: www.igi-global.com/chapter/overcoming-barriers-planning-virtual-library/6681

Related Content

Application of Big Data in College Student Education Management Based on Data Warehouse Technology and Integrated Learning

Junping Zhou and Xueyuan Li (2024). *International Journal of e-Collaboration* (pp. 1-20).

www.irma-international.org/article/application-of-big-data-in-college-student-education-management-based-on-data-warehouse-technology-and-integrated-learning/346368

Web Technologies and Reasoning Communities

Charlynn Miller and Philip Smith (2011). *Technologies for Supporting Reasoning Communities and Collaborative Decision Making: Cooperative Approaches* (pp. 397-411).

www.irma-international.org/chapter/web-technologies-reasoning-communities/48258

Is M-Learning a Challenge?: Students Attitudes Toward the Sustainable Learning and Performance

Syed Far Abid Hossain, Xu Shan and Mohammad Nurunnabi (2019). *International Journal of e-Collaboration* (pp. 21-37).

www.irma-international.org/article/is-m-learning-a-challenge/234415

Risk Management in Distributed IT Projects: Integrating Strategic, Tactical, and Operational Levels

Rafael Prikladnicki, Roberto Evaristo, Jorge Luis Nicolas Audy and Marcelo Hideki Yamaguti (2006). *International Journal of e-Collaboration* (pp. 1-18).

www.irma-international.org/article/risk-management-distributed-projects/1948

Clothing Style Recognition and Design by Using Feature Representation and Collaboration Learning

Yinghui Fan (2023). *International Journal of e-Collaboration* (pp. 1-14).

www.irma-international.org/article/clothing-style-recognition-and-design-by-using-feature-representation-and-collaboration-learning/316870