

MIT Libraries, Session Two Notes
Monday, November 24, 2008

Job Satisfaction:

- The learning of different disciplines in technology
- The book as a physical object
- World perspective
- Integration of technology
- Opportunity to tell MIT's story
- Working with patrons
- Dynamic environment; always learning
- Making an object whole
- Research on MIT's anniversary
- Diversity
- Involvement with branch libraries, particularly in music
- Chance to shape the future
- User-interaction
- Job evolving
- Video conferencing
- Science literacy
- Chemistry
- Rare book collections
- Undergraduate students – their curiosities

Example of Departments Represented:

- Preservation, finance, administrative, cataloguing, AMPS, images, circulation, project coordination, music library, engineering library, processing, humanities

Forces and Trends:

- Libraries are divisionally separated
- It is a challenging task to “make it simple”
- Greater focus on delivering information quicker (e.g. interactive video)
- International focus – be open to cultural issues
 - Bring education back to the U.S.
- Jobs are siloed
- Technical service is public service
- People want information with minimal human interaction
- Institutional collaboration

- Collaboration between departments
- Collaboration between universities
- More research being done online
 - Google (want to be the same as Google)
- People expect information to be immediately here “on my desktop now”
- User needs within public services have to be balanced with resources
- Content can be anywhere (iPhone, etc.)
- One search point desired
- Research trending towards conformity...and limited to e-resources
- Economic downturn
- Digitization of special collection
 - Organize at meta-level
- Integrated front end
- Intellectual property rights → licensing
- Change in GIR – General Institute Requirements
- Tasks – there’s a blurred line between them
 - More flexibility
- Need to differentiate content (also blurred)
- Notion that if you don’t find it, it doesn’t exist
- Constrained resources
- Emergence of special collections
- Increasing complexity → there are multiple mediums

Trends in relation to...

Technology:

- Exponential increase in content tracking
- Behind the curve on technology
- Array of free services infers more library services
- Expectation is that we will react to new trends
- Proliferation of media types (some aren’t even named)
- Users are at different levels of experience
- Emerging and changing standards (tech and info.)
- Some classrooms and staff aren’t ready for new media
- Use materials as teaching tools outside the classroom
- Currency of formats
- Re-contextualization

Students:

- Information from portable devices to global information
- Access information at any time (GIR lectures) – on demand
- Expectation of “instant learning curve” of the entire Library website
- Smarter search engines (robust/comprehensive)
- More centralized source of information that is simple to use
- Need to access MIT resources from remote locations (globally) 24/7

Faculty:

- International focus – faculty will be spending more time abroad and will be there for longer periods of time. That will require uninterrupted access, ability to reach back to graduate students. Because invisible to faculty, need to market library services, staff and resources as gateway, even from abroad
- Data – faculty want to reuse data created by others. Libraries will have to store, preserve, make accessible, and deal with permissions and rights of various kinds of data. This is especially an issue in the sciences, where data is not simply numbers. Move toward an ICPSR (a social sciences data consortium) model
- Intellectual property rights/author rights – movements are toward open access publishing. Libraries may control publishing (e.g. SPARC)? Help faculty with scholarly publishing, copyright management
- Constrained resources – faculty request expensive databases, and continue to desire books and other physical materials. Meanwhile, there’s not enough money for these large purchases. Moving away from supporting the processing of the materials. Also, different faculty groups have different resources; in fee-for-service units, whom do we serve?

Library:

- Libraries are currently physically distributed and discipline specific
- Trend toward more inter-discipline and more electronic access suggests physical locations/separation is not as important – can be detrimental to cross-disciplines
- Multiple cert. desks – duplication or replication
- Tension between specialist and those who can span disciplines

Desired Future State:

- Libraries will provide progressive and responsive service in order to anticipate the communities’ needs and to understand preferred

methods and environments through the utilization of expertise and multifaceted outreach.

- To provide seamless and comprehensive services that meet user expectations. The Libraries will foster a sense of community where users seek out librarians for help. We will continue to conserve digital and physical materials and preserve them in perpetuity. The Libraries will continue to be a place, providing “just-in-time” versus “just-in-case” services.
- To further develop partnerships with MIT faculty, students and staff to create, aggregate, and deliver content in support of education research, and outreach. To provide integrated services in support of this goal.
- Libraries are an enabling hub, a metaphorical “Google” to emergent and existing information, delivering services arranged around searching, preserving, and retrieving information resources. The Libraries have sufficient money to buy, or obtain quickly, material the community needs. The community is aware of resources available, as well as the value that library instruction provides in the complex world of information. Staff move quickly to new tasks, collaborate across the system, and are willing to learn new things (and are rewarded for learning new things)!

Session Feedback:

- Small “language” barrier