Make the Investment!: Project management leads to success at institutions of any size

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Make the Investment!
Digital Project Management

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Outline

Liberal Arts College

Research University

Shared Elements of Success
Creating Opportunities for Digital Project Management at Small Institutions

Changing needs

Changing positions

Evolving services and collections

Images from left to right: Vassar College Art Historian using slide collection, Wheaton College Digital Lab, Emerson College’s Shared Shelf installation
The Rise of the Digital Initiatives Librarian

- New position, nebulous title.
- Project manager and stakeholder connector.
- Sole practitioner, but not a "solo shop".
- Diversity in projects, materials and partnerships.

Student workers collaborating on a manuscript digitization project at Wheaton College.
Small Institution Challenges

- New position, past expectations: Divorcing yourself from past positions and service models.

- Navigating potentially difficult working relationships.

- Big dreams → limited resources!

- Building, maintaining and growing relationships with the “service providers” that make a digital project possible. (i.e. Archives, Technical Services).

*Desk Set, 1957.*
University of Iowa Libraries

- Decentralized to centralized services.
- Digital work is work.
- Existing program, growing challenges.
Challenges

 One of many digital project managers.

 Project manager, not a department head.

 Being a team play vs. being a coach.

Image from Hans von Gersdorff’s *Feldtbüch der Wundartzney* (1530). University of Iowa Libraries John Martin Rare Book Room.
Shared work of project management

- Emphasize small “pm” not capital “PM”.

- Formalize a project planning process.

- Deputize sub-project managers, as needed.

Institutional Snapshots

4,134 students
1 library
20 staff members
1 year into Digital Initiatives program

32,150 students
7 libraries
174 staff members
1,011,644 files/year
≈32.5 TB/year
Principles for Success

- Maintain open lines of communication & transparency.

- Share in success and give credit!

- Be a "team player" and adopt "all hands on deck" mentality.
Tools for Success

- Develop a team.
- Leverage technology.
- Embrace systems thinking.
- Acknowledge human fallibility.

Thank you!

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Email us with questions & comments, or chat with us.