Interruption, Breaches and Outages...Oh My!

My View (from the University)...or “We’re all bozos on this bus”

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Cast of Characters

• C-Suite – Law School and President’s Office
• IT-Administration and Staff
• Faculty members and groups
• University leadership and staff – UTO and University Library
• Law Library Staff
Technology is a “Hot Potato/Political Football”

- Agendas, Strategic Directions, Personal knowledge base
- Insane pace of technological advancement
- Explosion of applications, platforms, databases – All tempting, all mostly very expensive, hard to implement. It represents a significant investment and costs are hard to accurately identify
- Institutional environment – University Technology Office
  - Security
  - Sustainability
  - Distance educational programming
- Bad News: Leads to more centralization of more of the technology we use and less local control over selection, implementation and usage
- Good News: No longer have to solve thorny technological problems, and institution might ‘invest’ in the application.
Law School controlled - “The App”

- Adoption of a so called ‘cutting edge’ application to be ‘first’ and to distinguish the law school in a useful way.
- “The App” – what can go wrong when something is mandated from the C-Suite, the purpose of the app clearly communicated from the C Suite to the vendor, maximum stakeholders are in the room, and an app designer is responsible for making it happen?
- $$$, tried to do too much, got too far away from the original vision for the app. Also, a space hog. No one in the room with authority to focus the discussion or the outcome.
- NB: Website ‘redesign’ frequently fails for the same reason
- Lesson: The road to hell is paved with good intentions. Now known as the “stalker app”
“Conflict Management System”

• Consolidation of five (and counting) clinics who have been acting independently

• C-Suite determined that the identification and selection of a uniform conflict management system was an administrative function. Managed in the law school exclusively.

• Therefore they did not involve any other interested/affected party in the discussion or selection. They just announced that this platform would be implemented for all clinics immediately and the clinics were to oversee the conversion of their existing files into the new system.

• What could go wrong?

• Lesson: Involve your stakeholders in the planning and implementation of any major new technology/platform. If you’re in and they’re not, figure out a way to get them the info and provide input.
University Library controlled - ILS

- From III to Alma/Primo
- 12 months from C-Suite decision to roll out. Whaaaaat??
- We enjoy benefits of an integrated (shared) system with Hayden, our University Library. We also enjoy benefits of 3 university shared systems (U of A, NAU, ASU)
- This is a product that focuses on management of electronic resources and the capabilities for managing print are meager compared to III.
- Only because we enjoy cordial relations with our counterparts at Hayden, did we invite ourselves into the planning/implementation process and the law folks were able to communicate and point out issues and problems that they were too busy to notice at the macro level
- Lesson: Use your powers of charm and persuasion to get a seat at the table and help out.
University controlled technology Issues

- **Sustainability**
  - Equipment we can select
  - No printers

- **Security**
  - Centralized functions the law school used to control and have choices about
  - No everything is managed centrally

- New accounting platform – being implemented on the heels of the new ILS, strain on existing staff. No one really knows what’s going on but will impact statistical gathering, payment, fund accounting and other back office library functions

- New strategic initiative: get distance learning up!

- Lesson: Determine what is under your control in terms of decision making and try to go with that.
Law Library controlled technology challenges

• Mostly have to do with collection development and maintenance as well as database integration, an IT challenge.
  • WC Cheetah/Intelliconnect
  • Westlaw Public Access/Bloomberg access – from dedicated ‘seats’ to IP controlled.
    • Ramifications for our license agreements. We do our best, sometimes we are not informed of changes
  • Making our electronic content fully available
    • Heinonline
    • Cassidy Records
    • Working / imposing upon Hayden University Library

• Next up: Faculty Scholarship and how to ‘catalog it’ and promote it
• Lesson: it’s hard to keep up but everyone has to do their part – Teamwork!
In this fast paced environment....

• Although we don’t have the measure of control we once enjoyed, we can still play to our strengths and make solid contributions to the tech products and platforms in our institutions:

• Information professionals =
  • understand how information is used by our patron groups, however defined,
  • critical and analytic thinkers,
  • Intellectually curious about the future, superlative research skills
  • Collaborative and inclusive
  • Tireless advocates for technology oversight and new applications we know would be useful for our patrons, improve services