Reducing the noise

Improving Library staff communication, knowledge–sharing & engagement with common platforms

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Fig. 1. Comic of mail then vs now. *This is what I think of mail,* by poofytoo.tumblr.com (2011, July 24). Retrieved from http://poofytoo.com/post/7991895471/this-is-what-i-think-of-mail

Fig. 2. Comic of meetings. *If we can't solve it via email,* by someecards.com. Retrieved from http://www.someecards.com/workplace-cards/if-we-cant-solve-it-via-email
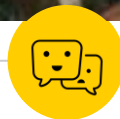
Fig. 3. Bear meme. *The service here is unbearable,* by quickmeme.com.
Retrieved from http://www.quickmeme.com/meme/3s6v5t

Hello!

I am **Heather Westerlund**

Associate Director of IT, Collections, & Innovation

I love libraries, technology, and improving the user experience and access to resources.

Reach me at heather.westerlund@mail.waldenu.edu
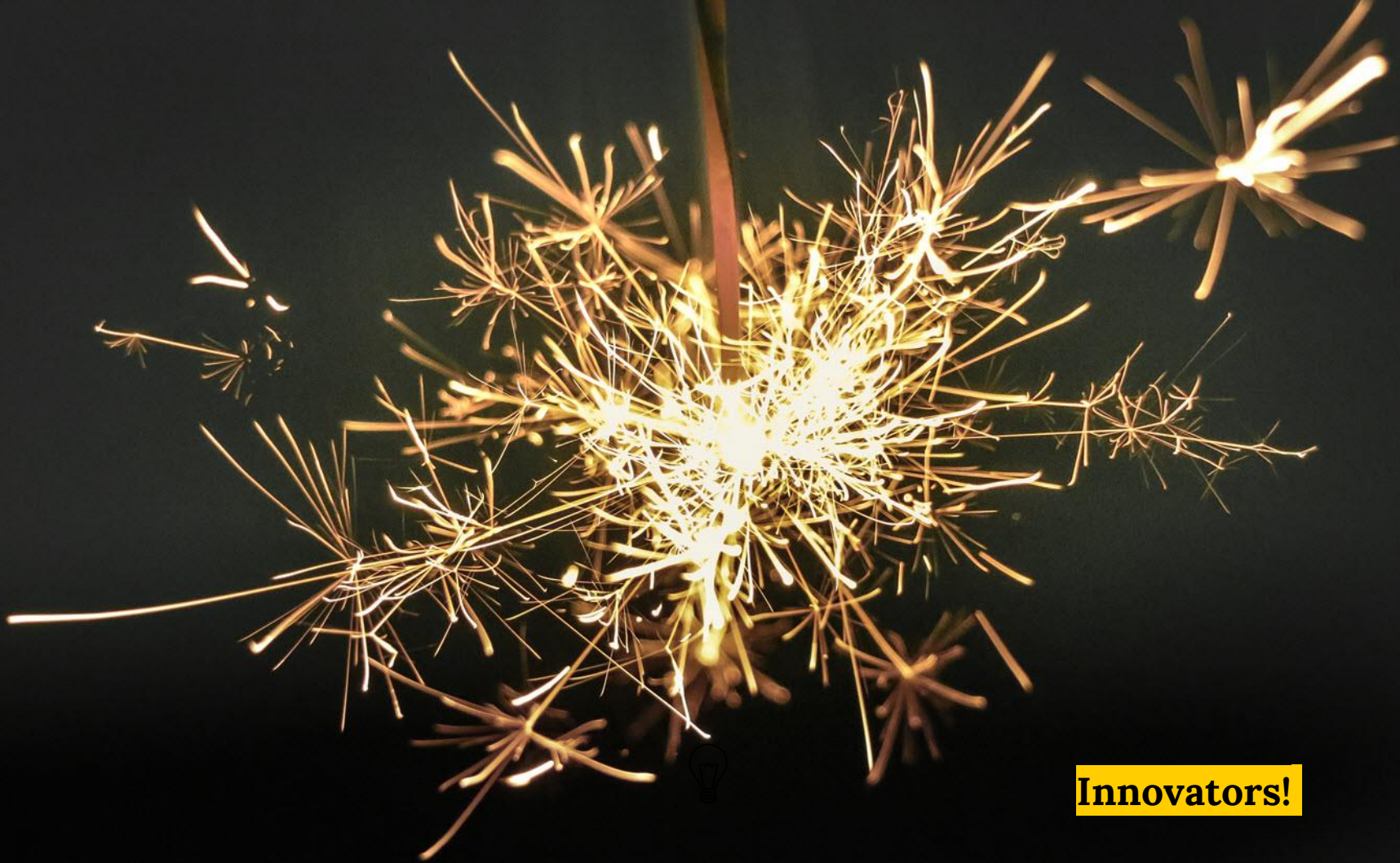
A little context...

Walden Global Days of Service 2012

Focus on social change

- PhD, Masters, & Undergrad in traditional and CBL environments

- 52,000+ enrolled students from 155 countries

- Working adults over the age of 30

Walden Library (awesome)

◉ 100% virtual

◉ ~25 (mostly) remote librarians

◉ 4 time zones, 7 days a week

Innovators!

Which is cool because...

pros (yay!)

- Highly regarded at our institution
- Better equiped to take on change & handle issues
- Drivers of technological change

...except for the risks

- Too many platforms
- Too many ways to communicate
- Staff fatique & frustration
- Impact on consistency & quality of services

The situation

Too many channels

Information-overload

No communication plan

Specifically...

- Too much email
- Lack of tools that facilitate collaboration
- Out-of-date internal documentation, hosted & unorganized in multiple systems
- Chat app not universally adopted or integrated

- Staff training inefficient and time-consuming
- Unpredictability of where/how to expect communication
- No budget for this issue

Today

Just as many channels for
communication & knowledge-sharing

But...

- Reduced # of platforms

- Embraced platforms that give staff more control over notifications

- Defined how channels are used

6 problems
6+ solutions

Problem 1

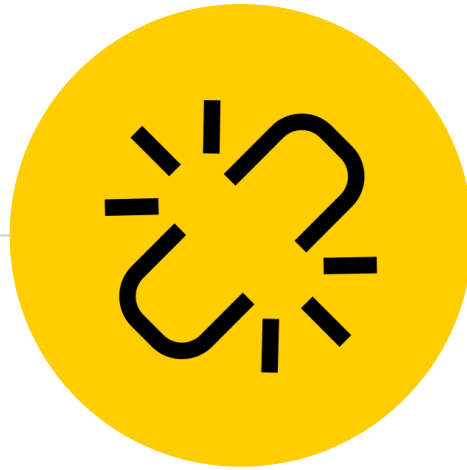Practicing a culture of open communication

Solution

Practice what we preach.

Leaders that staff trust.

Clear communication strategy.

Transparency.

IT that supports this.

Problem 2

Too many disconnected systems

Solution

Condense down to 2 primary application suites:

LibApps & O365
(previously Google Apps)

springshare
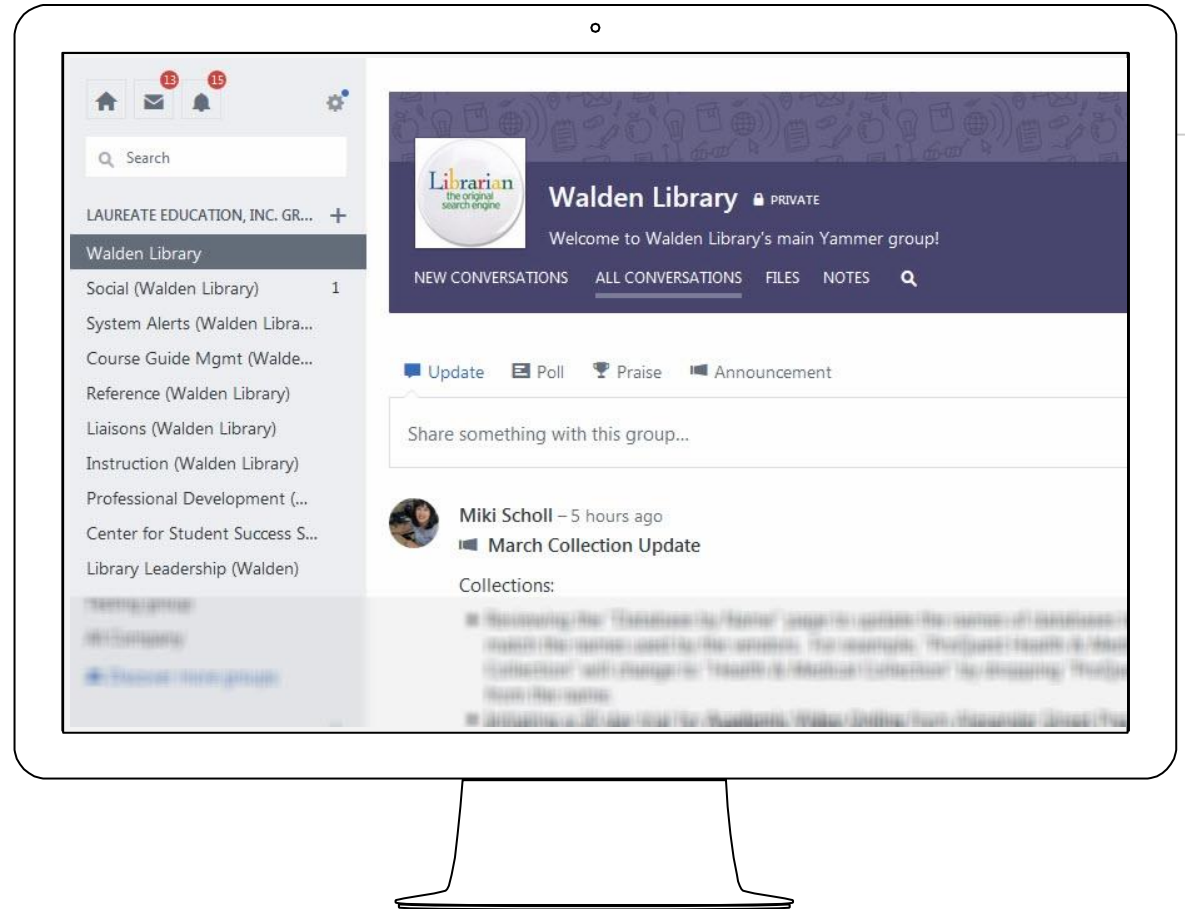
Office 365

Google apps

Problem 3

Overabundance of ineffective channels
& information overload

Solution

Yammer groups facilicate info & knowledge–sharing & discussion in key areas of the Library.

Adapting to staff preference & workflow.

Problem

Staff meetings via phone awkward & not inclusive

- ◉ Less participation
- ◉ Lack of visual cues

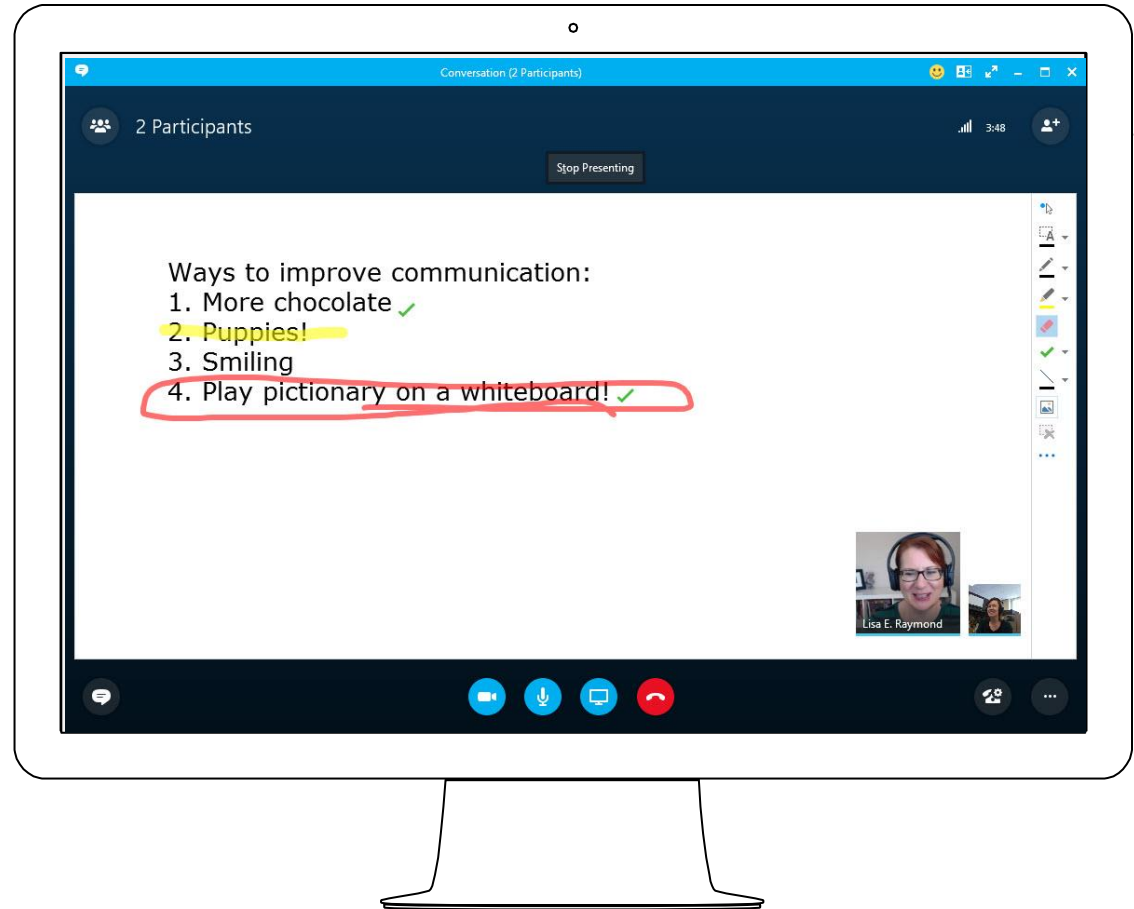Meetings with existing conferencing software cumbersome

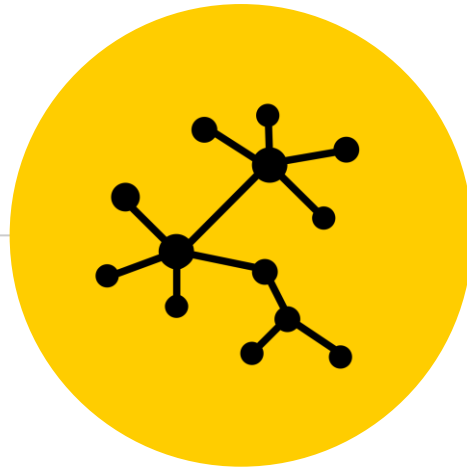Fig. 4. Communication meme.. *Can you hear me?,* by memegenerator.net. Retrieved from http://memegenerator.net/instance/66636031

Solution

Google Hangouts / Skype for Business:

- Video meetings help librarians feel more connected

- Chat makes quick questions easier

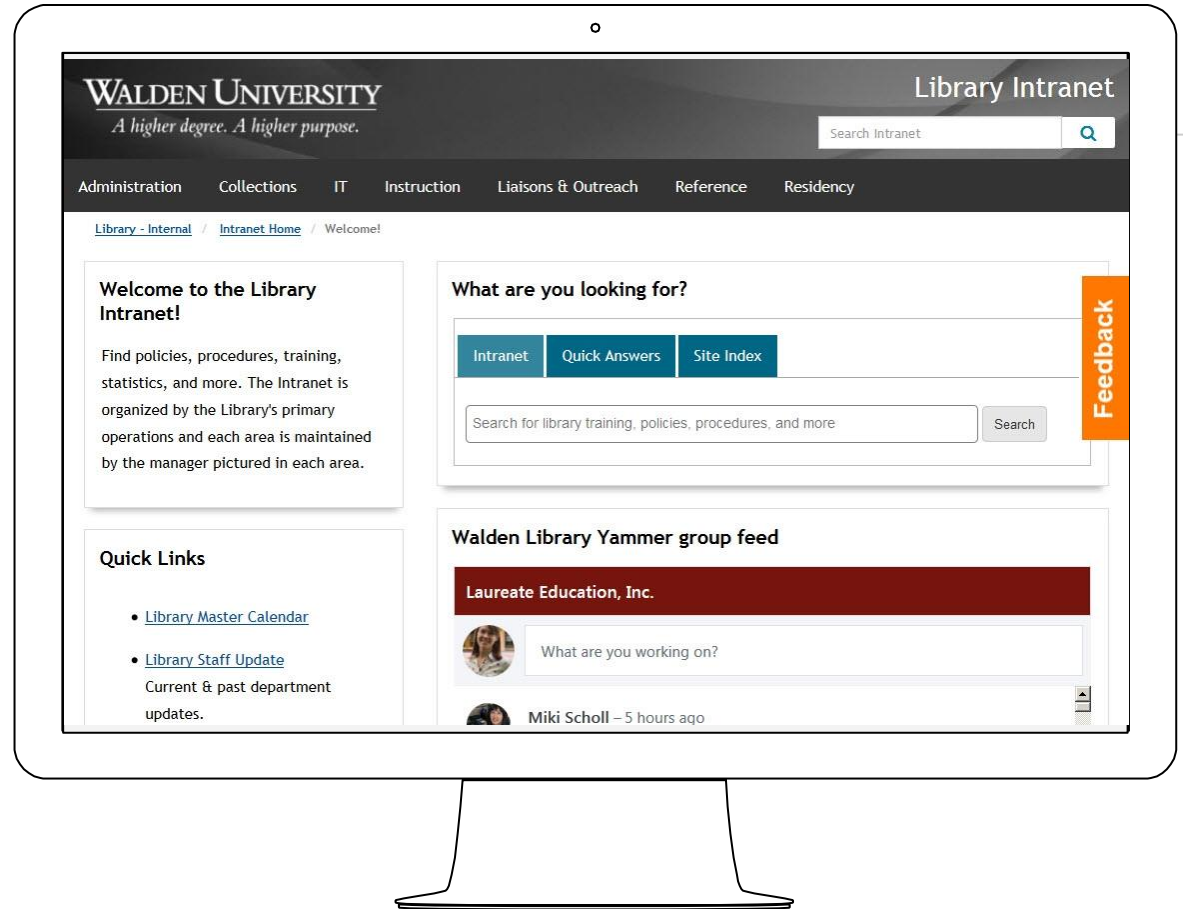- Ref desk chatter

- Preservation of meetings & chats

Conversation (2 Participants)

2 Participants   3:48

Stop Presenting

Ways to improve communication:
1. More chocolate ✓
2. Puppies!
3. Smiling
4. Play pictionary on a whiteboard! ✓

Lisa E. Raymond

Problem 4

Decentralized, disorganized internal documentation
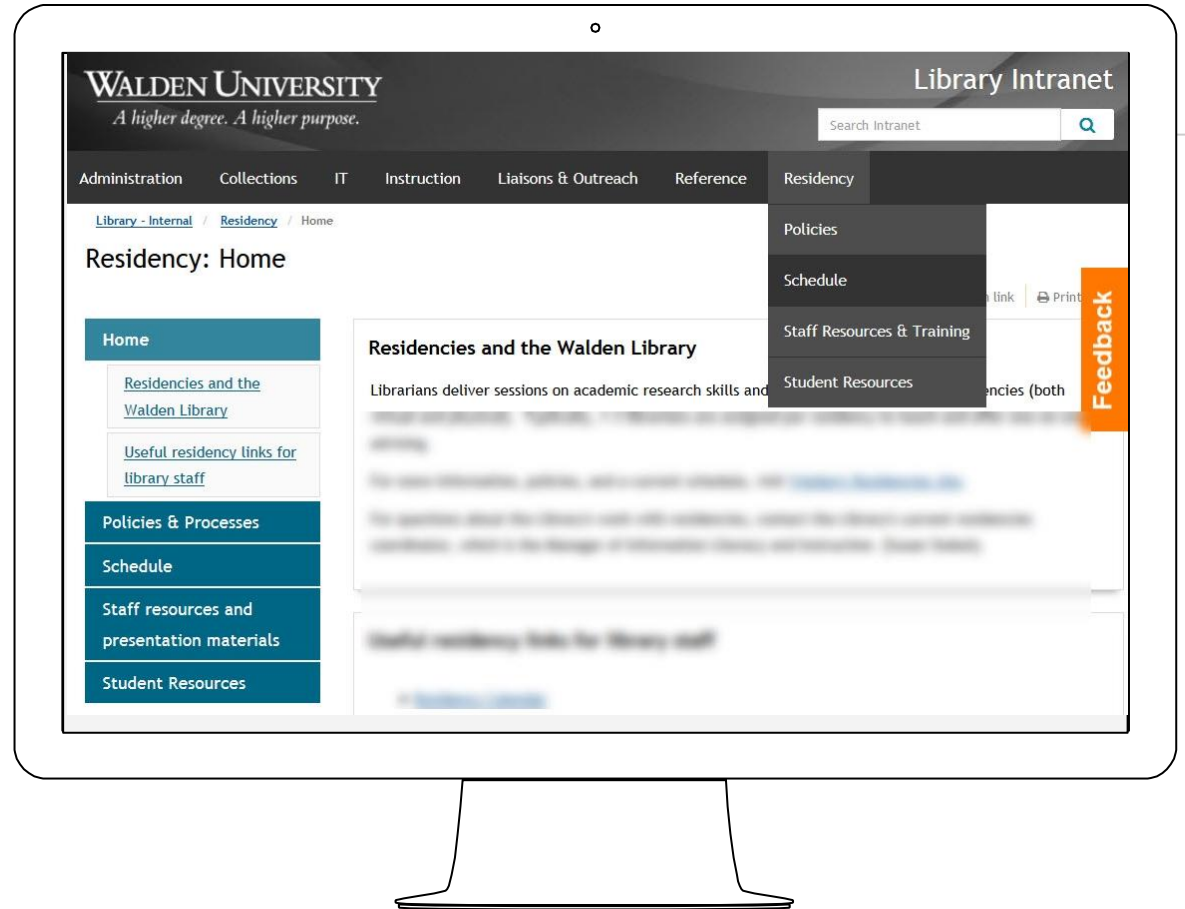
Solution

LibGuides Intranet

- Organized by functional area which is owned & maintained by a manager

- Main/sub nav pages are pathfinders (list of links) for scalability

WALDEN UNIVERSITY
A higher degree. A higher purpose.

Library Intranet

Search Intranet

Administration | Collections | IT | Instruction | Liaisons & Outreach | Reference | Residency

Library - Internal / Intranet Home / Welcome!

Welcome to the Library Intranet!

Find policies, procedures, training, statistics, and more. The Intranet is organized by the Library's primary operations and each area is maintained by the manager pictured in each area.

What are you looking for?

Intranet | Quick Answers | Site Index

Search for library training, policies, procedures, and more | Search

Feedback

Quick Links

- Library Master Calendar

- Library Staff Update
  Current & past department updates.

Walden Library Yammer group feed

Laureate Education, Inc.

What are you working on?

Miki Scholl – 5 hours ago

Other features

- Restricted
- Custom header
- Searchable
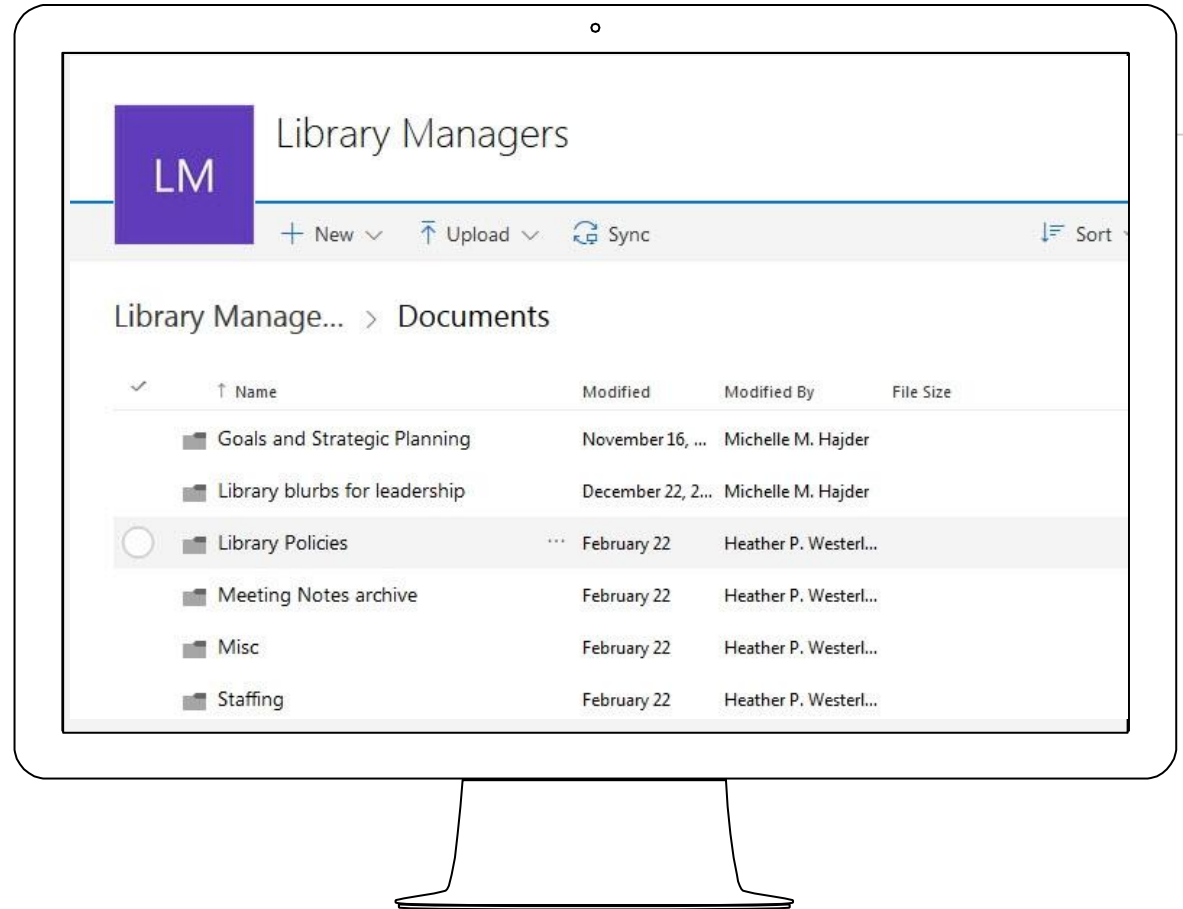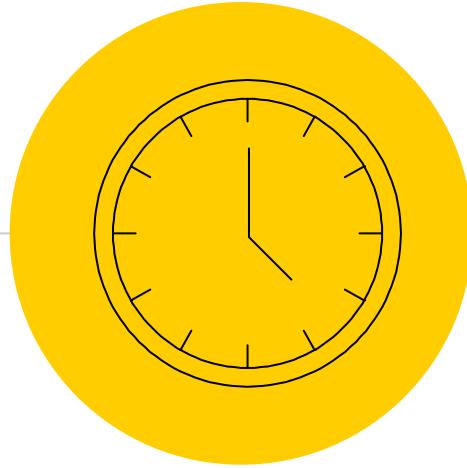- Site index
- Feedback tab
- Custom homepages

Solution

OneDrive & Groups

- Sharing & collaboration on projects
- Secure sharing among a defined group of people
- Docs linked in Intranet when appropriate

Problem 5

Staff training inefficient & time-consuming

💡 Solution

Asynchronous training with videos & tutorials

- ◉ No fancy software needed (Windows Movie Maker)

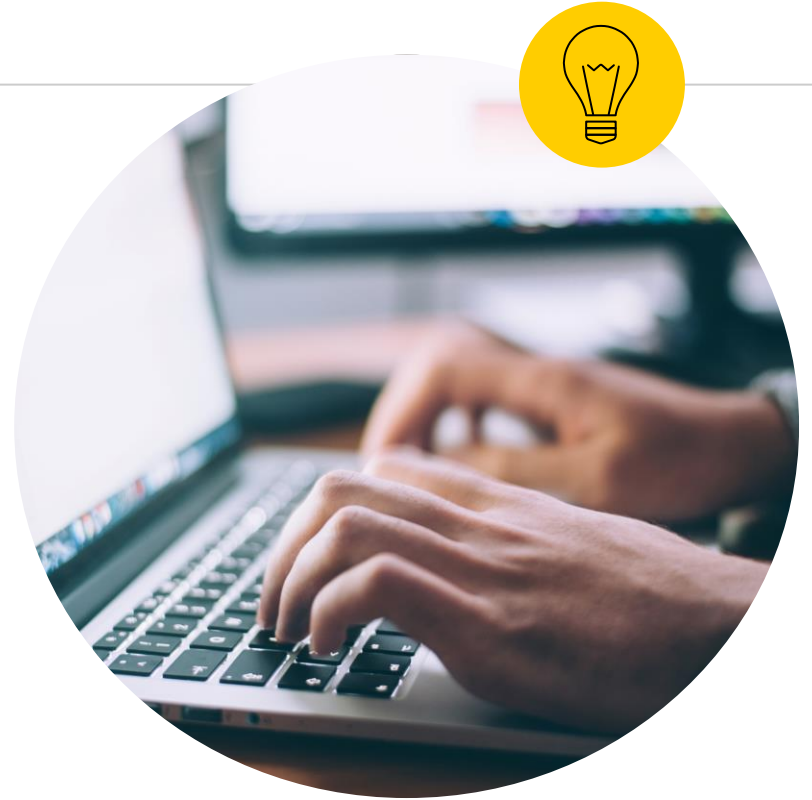- ◉ Hosted in O365 Videos, embedded in LibGuides Intranet

Problem 6

Soliciting & encouraging staff feedback
not effective or inclusive

Solution

Yammer: instant feedback and quick responses

- Anyone can weigh in via replies, polls, surveys

- Better for staff inclusion and engagement

- Still offer private & anonymous methods to provide feedback

Vastly different communication preferences

[face-to-face video meetings vs real-time discussion boards]

Tech Summary

O365

- **Yammer groups**
  [work & social, monthly manager announcements]

- **Skype**
  [meetings, staff chat, coffee talks, all-staff meetings, social events]

- **OneDrive & Groups**
  [doc storage, drafts, planning, & collaboration]

Tech Summary

O365

LibApps

- LibGuides Intranet
- LibAnswers
  [embedded FAQ]
- LibWizard
  [embedded feedback forms]
- LibCal
  [embedded webinar & dept planning calendars]
- LibStaffer
  [Ref sched pushed to Outlook]

Tech Summary

O365

LibApps

Cross-platform

Embed, Embed, Embed.

Lessons learned

- Some librarians feel less connected with asychronous training & discussion

→ More video meetings; social events

- Difficulty locating some documentation

→ Staff feedback; continual improvements

- Some info still gets lost in discussion feeds

→ Help staff set up notifications properly

Lessons learned

- Video meetings = more technical issues ⟶ Experience w/ platform; hardware improvements

- Challenges with librarians feeling comfortable sharing concerns ⟶ Anonymous feedback; 1-on-1 meetings w/ video (not recorded)

Future

- Single sign-on with LibApps

- Internal FAQ with LibAnswers

- Task automation (e.g. O365 Flow, IFTTT)

Continually looking for ways to improve internal communication, knowledge-sharing, & engagement.

If you build it to be ==easy==, they will come.

"

Field of Dreams, 1989 (....sort of)

Thanks!

Any **questions** ?

You can find me at:

- heather.westerlund@mail.waldenu.edu
- http://library.waldenu.edu

References

Images:

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