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
If we can't solve it via email, IM, texting, faxing, or phone calls, let's resort to meeting in person.

someecards

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

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A little context...
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 Global Days of Service 2012
Walden Library (awesome)

- 100% virtual
- ~25 (mostly) remote librarians
- 4 time zones, 7 days a week
Which is cool because...

**pros (yay!)**
- Highly regarded at our institution
- Better equipped to take on change & handle issues
- Drivers of technological change

**...except for the risks**
- Too many platforms
- Too many ways to communicate
- Staff fatigue & 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- Out-of-date internal documentation, hosted & unorganized in multiple systems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)
Problem 3
Overabundance of ineffective channels & information overload
Solution

Yammer groups facilitate 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
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
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

- **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

- 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 asynchronous 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

- Challenges with librarians feeling comfortable sharing concerns

Experience w/ platform; hardware improvements

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:
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References

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