

Care and Feeding of a Library Staff *Keeping Staff Informed*

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Corey Seeman
University of Toledo
corey.seeman@utoledo.edu



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Is There a Communication *Gap*?

- People are intimidated by Technology
- People are intimidated by Techies
- We all learn differently (visual vs. verbal)
- People generally do not want to feel...

Well, stupid



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Or...is There a Communication *Disorder*?

- Lack of meaningful communication
- General Resistance to change
- Lack of direct contact
- Unaware of others
- Inability to see the other person (or POV)



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The Communication Challenge

- We need to determine...
 - *What* We Communicate
 - *How* We Communicate
 - *How effectively* We Communicate



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Determining *What* We Communicate

- Reports and Updates
- System Upgrades/Changes/Additions
- System Interruptions
- Overall Technological Issues
- Your Whereabouts!



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Determining *What* We Communicate Reports and Updates

- Provide Updates when they are *needed*
- Periodic Reports of Automation Activity
- Periodic Planning Reports
- Send out messages when you have to



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Determining *What* We Communicate System Upgrades/Changes/Additions

- Enhancements
 - Notify when it takes place
 - Notify what changes will be possible
- System Changes
- Create a comfortable environment for:
 - Implementing change
 - Reporting problems and bugs
 - Changing their minds



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Determining *What* We Communicate System Interruptions

- Expected Interruptions
 - Power outages & Server reboots
- Unexpected Interruptions
 - System bugs & crashes
 - Server crashes



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Determining *What* We Communicate Overall Technological Issues

- Warn staff about global changes
 - Move to Active Directory
 - New Public Computing Environment
- Warn public about changes
 - Server Alert Page
 - <http://library.utoledo.edu/info/serveralert.html>



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Determining *What* We Communicate Your Whereabouts?

- Let people know when you are gone
- Follow up on e-mail for simple problems
- Empower people to take appropriate steps if you are not available
- Helps explain delays in getting back to people



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Determining *How* We Communicate

- Use E-mail
- Informal Meetings
- Follow up conversations
- Monthly catch-up (short) meetings



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Determining *How* We Communicate Use E-mail

- Make sure that people can get their e-mail
- Setup e-mail groups
- Send messages to everyone...
- ...but don't send an e-mail about EVERYTHING
- Address issues quickly with updates
- Let people know if you do not know
- Copy yourself on all communication
- Do not use redundant communication



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Determining *How* We Communicate Informal Meetings

- Project kickoff meetings
- Follow up meetings
- Take informal notes/minutes
- Use e-mail to follow up



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Determining *How* We Communicate Follow up conversations

- Touch base with people individually
- Address different positions
- Allow staff interest to find a working group



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Determining *How* We Communicate Monthly catch-up meetings

- University of Toledo – Resource Management Department (Technical Services)
- Envisioning short monthly meetings to kick around new ideas & touch base
- Limit to one-half hour to stay focused
- Create an environment where everyone has input
- Do not let it derail a project



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Determining *How effectively* We Communicate

- Sometimes, less is more.
- Let staff read messages at their own pace
- Shift the burden of response to them
- Tone down the technical nature of the messages
- Consider the tone of the message.
- Create an open feedback system for problem reporting & changes



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Opportunities

- Perfecting Communication is a continual goal
- Effort *does* count
- This takes time



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Questions?

Corey Seeman

University of Toledo

Corey.seeman@utoledo.edu

419-530-2333

<http://library.utoledo.edu/userhomes/cseeman>



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