Best Practices for Turning Your “Day Job” into a Presentation or Article  
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Olga Casey’s Notes  
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- This is a presentation about Best practices for turning our regular catalogers’ and technical services’ projects into Best practices conference presentations and journal articles or book chapters. Libraries are organizations based more on cooperation and partnership than competition, so if something is important and/or beneficial for us, then it will be to other librarians as well.

- In technical services we all are constantly working on many projects, so why not to document everything and share it with our colleagues? The key is to document everything as we work, make notes (what worked, what didn’t) for each project, this allows us to analyze our work in progress, make useful conclusions, and easily render our experience in a presentable form.

- All 3 of us – Erin Boyd, Ruth Elder, and me, we work in Technical Services at 3 different campuses of Troy University: Troy, Montgomery, and Dothan. It was 3 separate Universities until they merged in 2005. Since then the libraries have been sharing an online catalog and electronic resources. In this multi-campus environment it is very important to maintain consistency of policies and procedures. Development of an up-to-date Technical Services manual was crucial for this. An online manual was the best choice because of many updates have been needed and for the ease of sharing information across the three campuses.

- So, the first project on which we started to work together and then turned into a poster session was In-house wiki as a tech. serv. Manual. The title of the poster was: “Cataloger Communication and Collaboration: Dealing with a Multi-Campus Library System”. As multi-campus meetings and online discussions are additional methods we use to promote collaboration and attain consistency, we also included in the poster information and photos about our face2face collaborative cataloging meetings, joint training, and other forms of communication; also examples of successful solutions that we found to be worth sharing (like using Macros and Local Constant Data in OCLC Connections,), and a bibliography on multi-campus collaboration and using wikis in the libraries.

- Presentation “Best Practices for Collaboration in Technical Services and How It Can Filter Out to the Rest of the Library” included also problems and issues which our libraries Technical services were facing after merging the campuses and detailed history of the Troy U. libraries technical services wiki, how wiki has helped to solve our problems, how this good
experience infiltrated to other departments of the library, and suggestions for the future use of wiki in different library operations.

- In June 2011 Cataloguing and Classification Quarterly called for papers: Cataloging Collaborations and Partnerships for a special issue devoted to an exploration of how units or organizations have partnered or collaborated with others to address the changing needs of their customers. We submitted and published the article: “Collaboration at the Troy University Libraries” that included the following parts:
  - History of the Troy University Libraries Tech. Services
  - Face-to-Face Collaborative Cataloging Meetings
  - History of the Troy University Libraries Technical Services Wiki
  - Literature Review on multi-campus collaboration, Web 2.0 technologies and using wikis in different areas of librarianship, especially at Tech. services;
  - Description of how we use our technical services wiki;
  - How the other library departments use wiki
  - Other ways wikis can be implemented and important points to consider when implementing
  - Suggestions for future research.

- So, our project (In-house wiki) resulted in 1 poster session presented at 2 state conferences (Alabama and Ohio), 1 presentation presented with minimal changes at 2 conferences (Alabama and ALA Annual), and an article –in CCQ journal, a respectable international forum.

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**Ruth Elder’s Notes**

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- Another project which turned into a presentation was our work on cleaning up discrepancies in our OPAC.

- When the merger happened, there was no concerted effort made to resolve the different ways items were being labeled in the ILS.

- Therefore, the same type of item could receive three different item types in Sirsi.

- You can imagine what a headache this caused our dean when it came time to do the yearly statistics.

- This slide shows an example of an Excel document we used to gather the data.

- The presentation talked about our process in gathering the data and our plan for making the needed changes.

- I want to emphasize you do not need to be done with a project in order to do a presentation on it.
- This is a multi-faceted, ongoing clean-up project that will take quite some time to complete.

- Once we are nearer completion, we plan to turn this project into an article which will explain all the hows of the project as well as the results and lessons learned. I am sure all of you have various clean-up projects that you are in the midst of or contemplating that could easily be turned into a presentation or publication.

- As Olga said, make sure that you document as you go. This documentation will be the basis for the presentation or publication.

- This book chapter was not as much a project as it was a reality story.

- Olga, Erin, and I all started at Troy University in 2009. We are the only catalogers on our respective campuses. We came out of very different backgrounds, and brought to our jobs different experience and skill sets.

- For us, collaboration was not just a good concept, it was essential.

- In this publication, I recorded the things we did (and are continuing to do) to increase the quality, consistency, and uniformity of the cataloging on the 3 campuses.

- Although, our particular situation is unique, the principles of mentoring are universal. Look around and see how you are mentoring or sharing your knowledge or cross-training your colleagues and you may have a publication as well.

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**Erin Boyd’s Notes**

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- As you can see from all of the presentations today, it is about examining your current projects.

- For us, the most dynamic aspect of our ability to turn our work into professional development opportunities has been the consistent use of our in-house Technical Services wiki.

- Every project we start, a section is immediately created on the wiki to document our steps and procedures. (See screenshot)

- One of our most recent and continuous projects is the implementation of Resource Description & Access or RDA. When we began our work towards implementing RDA, we immediately turned to the wiki.

- After attending numerous webinars and training sessions, we began compiling our questions to determine where exactly we wanted to start.

- We needed to decide training and implementation dates, the types of training materials, and how to train all cataloging staff across our three Alabama campuses.
- Consistency is, and always will be the key.

- We began documenting everything to figure out the best way to stay consistent. Documentation is essential.

- Through our work with developing standards at Troy University, we were able to share our experience at a round table session at ACRL.

- All three of us prepared the discussion, and Ruth attended on our behalf.

- The information that we shared was that it is important to stay informed on the progress of RDA development; realize that this change is not the first and won’t be the last major cataloging rules change; that the best way we can make this transition happen is to create clear, transparent, and easily accessible instructions to not make our (or our staff’s) work harder; and of course, documentation.

- Ultimately, we shared that we are developing the “Troy way” to help diminish uncertainty and increase consistency.

- I know many, if not all of your libraries are going through this change now and are trying to determine all of these things, too.

- It is these types of projects other librarians are looking for in their process to develop specific guidelines for their department.

- Librarians are continually finding new ways to develop new local standards or revise local standards & ways to train staff.

- These are things all of you are working on, too, so you can turn any project into a professional development opportunity. For example: “how-to,” “what we did,” or “in case you didn’t know” articles or presentations.

- Take a look at your current work project to see if it is an area that needs further development or to show a new spin on workflow. - It is ideas like these that your colleagues are searching for.

Thank you.