From traditional library organization to functional structure

How does it benefit library users?

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Abstract

In 2010, MIT Libraries underwent a reorganization that changed the way subject librarians cooperated to meet information needs across the Institute. Interdisciplinary "communities of practice" replaced a more traditional reporting structure that was previously organized around (and confined by) the geographic layout of our campus libraries. With the benefit of two years' worth of hindsight, this presentation highlights a few examples of how a more agile organizational model has resulted in new opportunities-- and new challenges-- for serving our communities and for developing liaison librarian competencies.
Outline

• Why we reorganized
• Liaison librarian role
• Users – where are they in all this?
• Benefits & challenges
About MIT

• The community
  – 11K students, 60% graduate, 40% undergraduate
  – 1K faculty
  – 9K staff/researchers
  – Highly decentralized departments
  – Strong, common value system (e.g. meritocracy)
  – 70% in engineering and science

• Libraries:
  – ~170 FTE
  – ~14 FTE liaison librarians – about 27 people with liaison roles.
  – ~$20M budget
“The strategic directions to be pursued by the MIT Libraries between 2005 and 2010 are simple to state and complex to execute. In particular, success in advancing these strategic directions will be difficult to accomplish with our current organizational structure. It will be necessary to consider what organizational changes will be required to embrace the opportunities and confront the challenges presented by this strategic plan.”
The old way
The Libraries were organized into traditional, hierarchical silos

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Shared Services

- Acquisitions/Licensing, Cataloging, Human Resources, Facilities/Maint, ILBorrowing, etc.
- Harvard Depository, Library Storage Annex, Moving Services, Preservation/Bk Repair
- Desktop Support, Systems Administration, LANs, Analysis, Programming
Changes in research
Changes in research
Catalysts for Change:
Survey: Students and faculty use many libraries

- Over 88% of users access resources & services from outside the library
- 65% visit 2 or more libraries; 40% 3 or more
Catalysts for Change:
Information resources are increasingly digital

Expenditures - Print vs Electronic

- 2003
- 2012

- Print
- Electronic
Catalysts for Change:
Survey: Print is still critical to many disciplines and gets significant use

Order of schools within each clump:
• Freshmen and Undesignated Sophomores
• School of Architecture and Planning
• School of Science
• School of Humanities, Arts & Social Science
• Sloan School of Management
• School of Engineering
Catalysts for Change: Space studies and surveys: Library Space is important to students.

One visual way to look at the observation data: Represents total number of people recorded over all observations.

Hayden 3-D Video: http://tinyurl.com/62qk326
Catalysts for Change:
Space studies and surveys: Library Space is important to students

64% of survey respondents visit a library at least weekly*

*4308/6640 total responses
And at the same time, coincidentally...

- Financial crisis
  - ~15% budget reduction over FY10 and FY11
Fast Forward

• June 2008 – Strategic planning process begins for 2010-2015
• April 2009 – finalized new strategic plan
• July 2009 – budget cuts begin, Part 1
• September 2009 – High level org chart with key leadership roles
• July 2010 – Transition to new structure, Part 2
• Early 2012 – Part 3 complete
• And onward – evolutionary change
New Organization

RESEARCH & INSTRUCTIONAL SERVICES

Liaisons for Departments, Labs and Centers

Instruction and Reference Services

Specialized Content Services

User Experience
Changing Roles – Liaison Librarians
Changing Roles – Liaison Librarians

http://www.flickr.com/photos/thefangmonster/352439602/#/
SCHOOLS AND DEPARTMENTS

School of Engineering
Aeronautics and Astronautics (Course 16)
Biological Engineering (Course 20)
Chemical Engineering (Course 10)
Civil and Environmental Engineering (Course 1)
Electrical Engineering and Computer Science (Course 6)
Engineering Systems Division (ESD)
Materials Science and Engineering (Course 3)
Mechanical Engineering (Course 2)
Nuclear Science and Engineering (Course 22)

School of Architecture and Planning
Architecture (Course 4)
Media Arts and Sciences (MAS)
Urban Studies and Planning (Course 11)

Sloan School of Management
Management (Course 15)

School of Humanities, Arts, and Social Sciences
Anthropology (Course 21A)
Comparative Media Studies (CMS)
Economics (Course 14)
Foreign Languages and Literatures (Course 21F)
History (Course 21H)
Humanities (Course 21)
Linguistics and Philosophy (Course 24)
Literature (Course 21L)
Music and Theater Arts (Course 21M)
Political Science (Course 17)
Science, Technology, and Society (STS)
Writing and Humanistic Studies (Course 21W)
INTERDISCIPLINARY CENTERS, LABS, & PROGRAMS

Center for Biomedical Engineering
Center for Collective Intelligence
Center for Computational Engineering
Center for Computational Research and Management Science
Center for Energy and Environmental Policy Research
Center for Environmental Health Sciences
Center for Global Change Science
Center for International Studies
Center for Materials Science and Engineering
Center for Real Estate
Center for Transportation and Logistics
Computer Science and Artificial Intelligence Laboratory
Deshpande Center for Technological Innovation
Division of Comparative Medicine
Francis Bitter Magnet Laboratory
Haystack Observatory
Institute for Medical Engineering and Science
Institute for Soldier Nanotechnologies
Institute for Work and Employment Research
Joint Program on the Science and Policy of Global Change
Knight Science Journalism Fellows Program
Koch Institute for Integrative Cancer Research
Laboratory for Financial Engineering
Laboratory for Information and Decision Systems
Laboratory for Manufacturing and Productivity
Laboratory for Nuclear Science
Lean Advancement Initiative
Legatum Center for Development and Entrepreneurship
Lincoln Laboratory
Martin (1958) Trust Center for MIT Entrepreneurship
Materials Processing Center
McGovern Institute for Brain Research
Media Laboratory
Microsystems Technology Laboratories
Middle East Program at MIT
MIT Catalyst Clinical Research Center
MIT Center for Digital Business
MIT Energy Initiative
MIT Kavli Institute for Astrophysics and Space Research
MIT Portugal Program
MIT Professional Education
MIT Program in Art, Culture, and Technology
MIT Sea Grant College Program
Nuclear Reactor Laboratory
Operations Research Center
Picower Institute for Learning and Memory
Plasma Science and Fusion Center
Research Laboratory of Electronics
Simons Center for the Social Brain
Singapore–MIT Alliance
Singapore–MIT Alliance for Research and Technology
Sociotechnical Systems Research Center
Spectroscopy Laboratory
Technology and Development Program
Transportation@MIT
Women's and Gender Studies Program
Multiple liaison models in use...

• One liaison to one department - Liaison handles all aspects of liaison work (e.g. chemistry)
• Liaison to one department without collection duties (e.g. materials science vs. biological engineering - a selector vs. group of selectors)
• Liaison group supports a program, center, or lab (e.g. ESD supported by engineering & business librarians)
• Multidisciplinary area support – a group of liaisons collaborate to support a broad-based area of research and teaching (e.g. energy, environment, life sciences)
• ...

A lot of commonality across DLCs...

- Need easily accessible information
- Overloaded with information
- All a part of MIT – common Open Access Policy, common institutional priorities
- Common (mostly!) values of openness, sharing with the world
- Multidisciplinary approaches
Common support structures for DLCs

• Department (LDLC) level goals
  – Increase community’s awareness of their librarian (assessed by Libraries survey results)
• Characteristics of a successful liaison program
  – Example: Liaisons are continuously trying to build relationships in their DLCS (faculty, students, staff, postdocs,...)
• Forum to share and learn from colleagues (CoPs, LDLC meetings)
• A path for advocacy
• Expertise on staff
  – Scholarly publishing and licensing, Research data management, GIS, Images, Video, Instruction, Collections
• $$ (e.g. pizzas for instructional sessions; postcards for outreach,...)
What’s working?

• Service!
  – All user groups from faculty to admin staff
  – People new to the Institute
  – Communication intensive courses

• Focus on Libraries strategic initiatives
  – Scholarly communication

• One library approach
  – each physical location has similar service model

• Better focus on institutional priorities
  – MOOCS

• User experience group
  – web and physical space studies

• Assessment team
  – survey results

• Multidisciplinary groups
  – deliberately study cross-departmental initiatives, patterns, and needs
Challenges

• Reorganization was supposed to be invisible for users
  – No more head of Libraries => who to contact?
• More work done in offices
  – Less face-to-face interaction with users
• Difficult for liaisons to know everything in order to respond to the opportunity of the moment
• Split responsibilities – 14 FTE = 27 liaisons
  – E.g. 75% LDLC (includes management duties); 25% CSM
• Time!
  – Collaboration between liaisons great but getting together is a scheduling challenge
How do (will) we know we’ve made an impact?

• Survey – impact of instruction
• Knowledge and participation in open access
• Learning outcomes in classes
Were you aware of the following Library Services prior to this survey?

- Barton, the Libraries' catalog: 89.2%
- Vera, e-journals and databases: 79.3%
- Google Scholar to access library subscriptions: 61.3%
- Assistance from your departmental librarian liason: 54.8%

- Undergraduates for whom a librarian has not visited one of their classes
- Undergraduates for whom a librarian has visited one of their classes
Awareness of the MIT Faculty Open Access Policy? (n=295)

- Yes: 72%
- No: 20%
- I don't recall: 8%
Questions?

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