"Herding Cats" or Time Management Tips & Tricks for Access Services Librarians

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Introduction
• Complex and demanding
• Constant change
• Challenging
• Entertaining
• New awareness and understanding
• Decision-making
• Setting priorities
• Lack of time and resources
• Frustration, anxiety and stress
Why manage time?
Reasons to manage time:

- To be more productive
- To reduce stress and put you in control
- To make more time for yourself
Time-wasters
- Running unnecessary errands
- Looking for keys
- Interruptions – telephone, visitors and meetings
- Running out of supplies
- Locating items on cluttered desk or file cabinet
- Moving aimlessly from chore to chore
- Taking on too many tasks than can be handled
- Performing tasks better left to clerical assistants
- Failing to keep accurate and accessible records
• Procrastinating
• Performing non-librarian tasks
Meetings
• Weigh options of holding a meeting or an alternative
• Send agenda to each participant
• Keep large clock in room
• Keep meeting moving
• Read delivered materials before meeting
• Stay on course
Telephone calls
• Decide if you want to answer call
• Screen all calls
• Return all calls at one time
• Practice good phone manners
• Time calls and sign off with verbal cues
• Avoid playing phone tag
Snail mail
• Open mail and sort it over the waste can
• Throw out junk mail immediately
• Put requests in “action file” and lengthy article in the “to read” folder
• Shred any mail that has personal information
Dear [name],

I am pleased to share with you the Event Announcement: SAA Preserving Digital Archives (DAS), 15 Jul 2013.

The Archivists Round Table is pleased to co-sponsor “Preserving Digital Archives” with the Society of American Archivists.

Course Description:
What do you need to know to preserve born-digital materials successfully, once they've crossed the archives threshold? With an emphasis on modern records and technology, you'll learn about the concepts and competencies you need to construct and administer digital archives. You'll examine accepted digital archives models and implementations and emerging standards of practice, as well as preservation metadata, schemas, and their use in digital archives.

Upon completion of this course you'll be able to:
- Describe core concepts – best practices, vocabulary, and standards – related to preserving digital archives;
- Take the steps necessary to plan a digital preservation program;
- Discuss the basics of technical and preservation metadata, including relevant standards and tools; and,
- Identify a range of digital preservation systems and establish a set of criteria for evaluating them.

Who should attend? Archivists, records managers, and other information professionals who are or will be responsible for the preservation of born-digital materials.

Participants are expected to have an understanding of basic archival principles and practices and intermediate knowledge of computers and digital records management.

Attendees may bring a laptop to participate in the course if they choose to. A laptop is not required.

We recommend that course participants take advantage of SAA's online, on-demand Web seminar, “Thinking Digital,” before attending the course, as it provides an excellent foundation for the course. “Thinking Digital” is a DAS Web seminar that fulfills one of the Foundational level requirements for the DAS Certificate.

This course is one of the Tactical and Strategic Courses in the Digital Archives Specialist (DAS) Curriculum and Certificate Program. If you intend to pursue the Certificate, you'll need to pass the examination for this course. Please follow Option 1 to access exam information.

The DAS Core Competencies Addressed in this Course:
- #3: Formulate strategies and tactics for appraising, describing, managing, organizing, and preserving digital archives.
- #4: Integrate technologies, tools, software, and media within existing functions for appraising, capturing, preserving, and providing access to digital collections.

Best regards,

[Your Name]
• Put subject and desired action in subject line. Be clear and concise
• Do not copy people who don’t need to see
• Ask – is it better to talk to the person rather than send a lengthy email and correspond back several times
• Read listservs at home
• Clean out mail box regularly
• Check emails remotely when on vacation
• Check emails at specific times of the day
Calendars (paper & electronic)
• Purchase paper or electronic calendar
• Put meeting dates down as soon as you get them
• Block out times for important activities
• Check calendar several times a day
• Electronic calendar has entire staff schedules
• Use computer/phone calendars which provide verbal beep as a reminder
Peak production times
• Block out time early in day to get most important tasks done
• Take coffee breaks and lunch
• Talk a walk occasionally to clean out cobwebs
To-do list

TO-DO LIST – May 18, 2013

DEPARTMENTS

APPLIED

Review personal information
Update my Aces class page
Research materials on library homepage

LIBRARY INSTRUCTION

Check in Shakespeare

NON-ACCREDITED

Check Internet bookmarks
Check list of documents on my email account
Read my information
Clean off emails

PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

Do Survey ALC on e-books – possible article
Embry’s Technology IIGuide

SPECIAL TALENTS

Learn Word 2013 – do tutorial, read books, put 2010 on desktop, mount notes
Dine out with friends
Get diet plan
Set up email address
Work on web pages

FINANCES

Get credit card statements – Alliance/Thab
Breakdown credit cards

TIME MANAGEMENT

Set up site
Work out framework for discussion

FILM/VIDEO

Watch John Adams DVD
Write CorelStone 6 30% cover

HOME IMPROVEMENT

Fix bathroom floor
Get plumber

PHONE

Visit Home Improvement
Call for estimates

INVENTORY

Learn Aleg

INVENTORY DEVELOPMENT

Research materials on library homepage

OTHER

Read Aleg handbook on desktop

SCIENCE LAB

Check in Shakespeare

STUDY CENTER

Set up calendar

TECHNICAL

Learn Aleg

TO-DO LIST

Try out Shawn’s student training on Angel
Review Angel program, do survey
Check all procedures on Angel
Try out WODC
Book on summer retreat
Check on A3 evening handbook
Learn more about Angel
Visit www.angel.edu
Research Aleg
Read Aleg, List tips sheet
Grants issue for purchasing items for Aleg
Work with Betty, Carrie
Revise LinkedIn account

ACCOUNTS RECEIVABLE

Update my Aces chase page
Research materials on library homepage

PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

Read Aleg handbook on desktop

SPECIAL TALENTS

Surf the web on Angel

STUDENT AFFAIRS

Learn Angel

TIME MANAGEMENT

Set up site
Work out framework for discussion

UNIVERSITY OFFICE

Set up calendar

VITALS

Learn Angel

WEB DEVELOPMENT

Learn Angel
List items by “most important”, “somewhat important” and “when I get time”

Break diary into one-hour slots and put task in them

Maintain long-term to-do list

Use it daily
Interruptions
• Close office door and list hours
• Use verbal and non-verbal clues to discourage long interruptions
• Chat with staff at beginning to day to share information and problems before you get into your regular tasks
Filing materials
- Sort documents into logical piles
- Make master list of all files
- File items daily, weed at end of semester
- Don’t file routine memos
- Use double-sided sheets
- Put file back after use
- File current materials in front of file folder
- Five actions – toss it, refer it, act on it, read it, or file it
Office
• Let secretary know when you take second to last item
• Eliminate unnecessary forms
• Let fax recipients know when fax arrives
• Clean off desk on daily basis
• Keep supplies handy to eliminate unnecessary trips
• Use “In” and “Out” basket
Office hours
• Make sure you are “in” during office hours
• Close your door
• Work from home (or an outside office) when you need privacy
Leaving at the end of the day
• Set an alarm to go off at time you wish to leave
• Stop what you are doing and leave building
• Pick up at that point the next day
• Do not take work home unless you have an emergency task that has to be completed by morning
Technology
• Select the right equipment
• Learn how to use it and fix it if it breaks
• Learn basic computer troubleshooting skills
• Backup all files regularly and clean up hard drive
• Keep computer manuals handy
• Attend hardware/software training classes
• Install easy-to-use management systems on computers
Reading materials
• Select most important journals and skim them
• Copy or rip out articles and file them until you have time to read
• Read abstract before determining if you want to read rest of article
• Read articles while carpooling or waiting for computer file to download
Say No!
• Determine whether to take on another task
• Listen carefully what it being asked for you
• Don’t give visual cues that indicate agreement to doing task
• Be polite and pleasant
• Be honest in why you decline request
• Offer alternatives
Procrastination
• Do boring tasks as soon as possible
• Use a colleague if task is too difficult
• Estimate time to complete task and project finish time
• Most tasks do not go away
• Procrastinators say they won’t do it again, but they do
Perfection
Perfectionism:

- Can lead to wasting time on unimportant tasks or the redoing of already completed ones
- It is not always necessary
- Can obstruct effectiveness and impede the realization of goals
Management styles
• Recognize your preferred style for working
• Some prefer working in broad concepts leaving the staff to fill in the deals
• Others like to develop an idea fully before involving other staff members
• I personally use the participatory management model
Delegating
Find the right person for the job
Take time to adequately train workers
Clearly delineate limits of responsibility and explain expectations
Allow staff to make decisions affecting their own work
Allow differences in working style
Follow-up on progress made by staff
Finding fun at work
Find tasks that you enjoy doing
Try out other tasks
Don’t stay on the same committees
If work is not fun, look for another position
Multi-tasking
False belief that you can get more done by doing several different things at once

Need to focus on one task and do it well, rather than to moving from one task to another

There are some exceptional people who can multi-task
Stress
• Over-commitment, proliferation of information, workload, staff cutbacks, interruptions, organization politics, hiring and firing staff, reprimanding others, balancing work and personal life, dealing with management, performances reviews and budget issues

• If you don’t control stress, it can lead to the dreaded: burnout
Burnout
Burnout is when a person is so stressed that he/she quits their job or drops out of the job market.

Symptoms include excessive absenteeism or tardiness, poor job performance and a poor attitude.

Primary cause is overwork.

Way to prevent burnout. Just say NO!
Working with the boss
• When you talk to your boss, be prepared
• Be organized and to the point
• Bring solutions, not problems to the table
• Outline alternatives
• Obtain opinions or gain approval from the boss
• Reward: greater efficiency, time saved, reallocated to more pleasurable tasks and getting more accomplished
• Time managers know where they are going and why
• Things are done for good and proper reasons
• Little wasted motion and no lack of purposes
• Ultimate reward is success
Success will be visible to you and others embodied in an efficient well-run library and a librarian who has the time and patience to spend helping patrons
Bibliography


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