Orienting Access Services Staff to Library Service points

Rob Withers – Miami University
Circulation staff have many roles:

- Inventory control
- Security
- Billing
- Conflict mediation
- Greeter
- Receptionist
Challenges

• Many circ staff hired from outside the library
• Non-standard schedules
Background: About the Miami Univ. Libraries

- Central facility (24/7 operations)
- 3 On-campus branches
- 2 Regional campus branches
- 1 Off-site storage facility
Background: My Tortured Past

• Circulation
• Acquisitions
• Technical Services / Systems
• Web Development / Instruction / Reference
• Assistant to the Dean
• Access Services again!
Traditional orientation for Circ Staff

• Introduction to every single staff member
• Walkthrough of main facility
• Tour of other on-campus circ points
Traditional Follow-ups to Orientation

New staff sent to tour off-campus facilities:
• Regional campuses
• Off-site storage facility
Catalysts for change

• “The Center for Digital Scholarship – what’s that???”
• “What’s so special about Special Collections?”
• “How does the library decide what books to buy?”
• UPS Guy “I need a signature for a delivery to [name]”
First Attempt at Department Orientation

• Dep’t w/ new outreach / instruction librarian
• Used to explaining department to outsiders
• Scenario – based explanations
• Success!
Second Attempt at Department Orientation

• Dep’t w/o public services mission
• Not used to explaining department to outsiders
• Heavy use of jargon
• Presentation organized by position, not scenarios
• Migraine!
Change #1: Circ Staff Survey

• In 1 paragraph, what does dept/svc. point do?
• How have you interacted in past?
• What questions do you have?
Change #2: Questions for Presenter

• In 1 paragraph, explain your department to my mother.
• How have you interacted w/ circ staff in past?
• What do you wish people outside your dept knew?
Service Points to Date

- Archives
- Center for Digital Scholarship
- Center for Information Management
- Preservation
- Special Collections
- Technical Services
- Writing Center
Pending Service Points

• Collection Development
• Office of Research for Undergraduates
• New Student Center
Results

• Positive feedback
• Staff use of library facilities
• Staff who move on to other jobs staying in library
Questions?!?
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