Polishing the Dimond: changing spaces for enhanced services to the UNH community

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Polishing the Diamond: Changing Spaces for Enhanced Services to the UNH Community

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University of New Hampshire

Why Talk About These Spaces

- Digital Scanning Lab
  - A new and rapidly expanding unit that filled an underused space
  - Outgrowing a renovation before the paint dries

- Government Information Department
  - Currently operating unit whose space was reduced for addition of new services
  - Public service department operating without a public service desk
Digital Scanning Lab

Problem:
- One small multi-use office on loan
- One librarian and one part-time staff moving to full-time, plus one grad assistant
- No room for scanning, processing, or students

Solution:
The preservation treatment room that never was, aka, the Technical Services Kitchen

An (almost) Empty Room

The Plan

Three workstations and three scanners
- Planetary
- Medium flatbed
- Large flatbed

Room for book trucks
Storage
Reuse furniture from other areas
Growing Pains

- No room for legs and arms
- Planetary scanner too heavy for table
- Planetary scanner won’t work with lights on
- Large flatbed too big for desk
- Too many book trucks
- One extra workstation – now up to four
- Double monitors better
The Digital Lab Today

- 4 Workstations
- 4 Scanners
- 6 Monitors
- 1 Book truck
- 4 Black Drapes
- Lots of Storage
Things to Remember

• Don’t stick to the plan if it isn’t working
• Don’t spend too much money on a temporary fix
• Electrical and telecom take time
• Working in a construction zone has its perks

Government Information Dept.

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Redesigning for & Living in Less Space

• That was then, this is now
• Highlights from planning and design process
• Lessons Learned or Reinforced
• Physical Space
  — Surprises and Changes
• New Public Service Model
  — What it is
  — Experience after one year
Then...

...Now

Then – Public Space
Now – Office/Workroom

Planning and Design

Planning and Design
Planning and Design

• Valuable to have someone who can work with spatial information and envision new spaces
• Need to sequence activities as well as inclusion of additional elements adds complexity to project. Being in the middle of the sequence is stressful since more dependent on other actions occurring first
• Leave time and money for telecom and electricians to add or move connections

Planning and Design

• Investing in some custom work can really make the most of a small space
• Clear, consistent, & agreed upon expectations about budget by all parties, even if all don’t deal with specifics
  • Budget was managed by Library Admin for the overall library piece of the Dimond Academic Commons project
  • No specific project budget figure at dept. level allowed for brainstorming about what was really needed
Working with the Architect

• Useful relationship as architect had skills and knowledge not available in the dept.
• Providing good, detailed information about department needs and desired outcomes early in process was critical
• Important to check that architectural plans match the reality of what is in the space

Lessons Learned or Reinforced

• Communication
  • Number 1 item
  • Early, often, in writing, variety of means
  • With project participants and others in library or on campus and users
  • Share available information and allow people to determine what level of detail they need or want to know
  • Clarity about lines of communication for decision-making
  • Listen and hear

Lessons Learned or Reinforced

• Clear and known areas of responsibility
  • Close number 2
  • Who is responsible for what; who can make the final decisions in specific areas; consistency in who is responsible is best
  • Timely decision-making
  • Understand what is sacred or a must have and what is open for discussion
Lessons Learned or Reinforced

- Remember that different participants will have different objectives or concerns that may complicate already complex situations
  - Perspectives differ or will shift during project: big picture – detail - minutiae
- Set reasonable expectations and deadlines
- Flexibility and patience are valuable
- Acknowledgment of individual and group contributions
  - In different venues, publicly and privately, with specificity

Some Personal Reactions

- Facilitator identified a sense of grief or loss
  - Can’t discount the emotional investment, either in the old or the new
- Particularly difficult to have to continue working in the midst of the changing space
- Appreciate support from colleagues while in midst of change
- Helpful to keep in mind that it’s the institution’s space, not the unit’s own space or personal space
- Relatively quiet scheduled desk time provided productive work time that is now missed by some

Physical Space – Surprises and Changes after the Redesign

- Offices & workroom now quasi-public spaces
- Lack of space to work with tangible materials with patrons
  - temporary solution August 2008
- Loss of line-of-sight to Map Room, with some security and service concerns resulting
  - door alert system to be installed Fall 2008
- Department office door
Elements of Public Service Model

- Advertised hours: Weekdays 8 a.m.– 4:30 p.m. or by appointment at other times
- On call (guaranteed availability)
  - M-W-F 9 - 11
  - T-Th 1 - 3
- As available (likely to be available but not guaranteed) aka “catch time”
- Telephone or email promoted as alternatives
  - Departmental & personal phone & email
- Redesigned web pages

Redesigned Public Service Model

- Uniqueness: providing reference services without a physical service desk
- Development
  - Move toward a more consultative model
- Awareness/Outreach – key
  - Library & campus publications; open house; part of Dimond Academic Commons advertising; emails; physical and digital signs; events; library webpage news rotator postings
Signage

Never Too Much Signage

Outreach/Awareness
One Year Later

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One Year Later

• Docs Department Perceptions
  – Generally successful
  – More to do
    • Continue to fine tune public service model and spaces to support it
    • Install Map Room door alert system
    • Major design of web site
    • Update and create new online subject guides
    • Expanded outreach efforts for government information services
    • Active involvement in FDLP changes and developments

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