

Roving Technical Support



**WHEN YOUR WHOLE LIBRARY IS THE
INFORMATION COMMONS**

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Collaboration



This service came about through collaboration between Access Services and Library Systems.

It arose through numerous “brainstorming sessions” with Evgeny Bisk, Systems Team Leader.

You **MUST** cultivate good relationships with your Systems Folk.

Roving Tech Background



1. Increasing demands for technology
2. Facilities challenges
3. Changes in technology landscape
4. Staffing challenges

Increasing Demands for Technology



- 162 public computers (stationary)
- 30 laptops in our lending program
- 7 public printers – 2 commercial grade copier/printers
- Increasing demand for productivity software
- There are always lines for computers, no one wants to get up and ask for help or they will lose their computer
- As electronic resources increase, printing demand increases
- High volume of printing [*e.g.* on main two printers, in 7 weeks of “normal” use - 311,000 pages]

Facilities Challenges



- Our building is far too small for our needs
- We don't have enough computers, but we also don't have enough study spaces
- We cannot add more computers on the first floor
- We have computers on every floor of the library
- We are moving to circulating laptops so that we don't have to permanently take more seating for computers
- For computers and printers – if you build it, they will come...but we don't have any more room to “build”

Changes in Technology Landscape



- At any given point of time, between 50 and 60% of people in the library are using a laptop
- Wireless Connectivity
- CALEA [Communications Assistance Law Enforcement Act] – users must login to the network
- Changes in software make it challenging for users to keep up with how to do infrequent tasks [*e.g.* formulas in Excel, format a chart in PowerPoint]

Staffing Challenges



- Small Library Systems staff [2] – high level
- Library open 144 hours per week
- Need front line troubleshooting
- Because of old facilities, Information Desk must be staffed for security purposes
- Building Monitors – underpaid, “lower class” citizens, difficulties in retention of responsible personnel
- Budget constraints

Goals



- Find ways to offer front-line technical support to users at any computer in the library without the user having to leave the computer to receive support
- Be proactive and address computer problems before users encounter them
- Help must be available when the library is open even if Systems staff are not in the building
- Free Systems staff to work on high level issues
- Do this without new staff lines

Building Monitors Duties



- **Staff Information Desk**
 - Directional questions
 - If our 3M gates go off, calling people back to check their bags
 - Calling Public Safety if needed
- **Roving the Building**
 - Policy Enforcement
 - Security
 - Problems with the building
- **Substitute at any desk**
- **Always carry walkie-talkies**

Monitors - Challenges



- Were the lowest paid and lowest ranked library employees
- Asking for a tremendous amount of flexibility and responsibility [security, substitutions, policy enforcement]
- Information Desk is open whenever the library is open – they open and close the library – challenging hours (7 AM – 2:30 AM)

Monitors as Roving Tech



- Already roving the building
- Have walkie-talkies – communication structure for roving
- The Information Desk is already staffed and did not have enough to do
- Adding a “technology” component got them re-classed and their salaries adjusted
- More responsible people apply for Monitor positions now and we have better retention

Roving Tech Model



- Building Monitors become Roving Tech Support
- Use web-based chat on all public computers and library laptops
- Question comes to Information Desk – command central
- Roving Tech dispatched via walkie-talkie to appropriate computer to help / instruct
- Software automatically alerts Information Desk for printing problems
- Roving Tech reports significant problem to Library Systems
- Students can bring laptops to Information Desk for other technical help [wireless connectivity problems]

Web-based Chat



- Seamless for user
- Help button on desktop gets user to chat immediately [no login, no directions]
- Information Desk knows where users with problems are and gets someone to them ASAP
- All computers are numbered
- PCPIN Chat: <http://www.pcpin.com>
 - Open Source – PHP, MySQL, Apache, best if using a Linux or UNIX operating System
 - Each computer has an account named with the computer number. When the question shows up at the Information Desk, they know where the person is and radio to send help to that computer.

Printer Monitoring



- Very high printing volume
- 7 public printers
- What's Up Gold: <http://www.whatsupgold.com>
 - Easy to create custom monitors
 - Web interface installed at Information Desk – audible notifications
 - Paper jams, paper tray is 33% full, toner is 5% full, printer offline
 - When Information Desk sees notification of a printer issue, radio Roving Tech before it becomes a problem for the user

Monitoring Computer Availability



- Not enough computers
- Computers spread out across library
- Labstats:
<http://www.computerlabsolutions.com/labstats>
 - Tells which computers are logged in and which are not in use
 - Configured to look like a map of each floor
 - Real time
 - Projected to computer on the Information Desk at front door
 - Projected to screen on Circulation Desk
 - Collects good usage statistics

Training



- Library Systems provides training for Roving Tech on basic troubleshooting and whenever there is something new [new printers, etc.]
- Roving Tech utilizes campus OIT training for upper level training in Productivity Software (new Microsoft Suite, etc.)
- **MUST** have good training and be dedicated to training new people

Problem Reporting



- Must have clear procedures for reporting problems to Library Systems
- Helpdesk tickets
- Procedures about when you do and do not put “Out of Order” signs up

Questions?



We are happy to discuss this further

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