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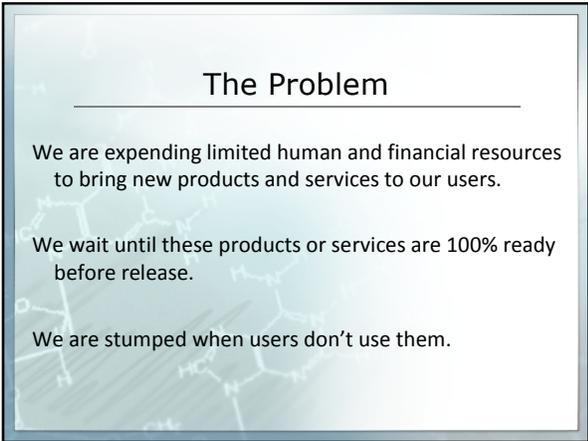
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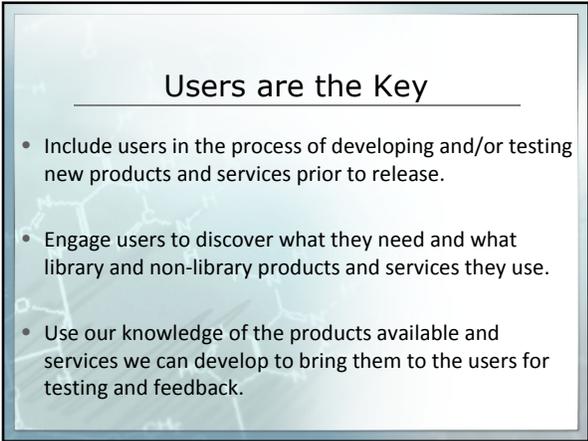
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Marketing

- Publicize the existence of new products and services.
- Demonstrate how they are useful.
- Be mindful of the masses that are virtual users. They may rarely step into the library. Are you reaching them?

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The Solution

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“Library Labs”

- Build on the Google Labs concept.
  - <http://labs.google.com>
- Creates an environment for users to experiment with new services.
- Encourages user feedback and uses it to shape development.
- Serves as an ingenious marketing platform.
- Introduces new services at any time.

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## Goals for the Lab

1. Showcase projects under development and under consideration.
2. Provide an easy way to gather, store and search user feedback.
3. Solicit suggestions for new services.
4. Provide a way to recruit for usability studies and focus groups.
5. Get the word out!

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## The Project Team

- Four librarians from various departments and branches from throughout the Vanderbilt University Libraries.
- Each member had a different skill set.
- We were all still doing our day jobs.
- First meeting was March 2006.

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## Developing the Lab

- Gathering and storing comments.
  - PHP and MySQL
  - JavaScript
- Adding and removing new projects to the lab.
  - Server-side includes (SSI)
- Page layout
  - XHTML
  - Table-free CSS design
- RSS feed

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## Feedback Mechanism

- Integrated comment box
  - No separate form
  - Low barrier for users
  - Built using script.aculo.us JavaScripts
    - <http://script.aculo.us>
      - Provide blind up/down effect for comment box
  - Spam filter
- Open form text box with user type selection for certain products and services featured in the lab.

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## Searching User Feedback

- Administrative page
  - Provides project leads and administrators with a web interface for keeping track of user feedback
  - Includes capability to search by keyword and project
  - Results contain more than comments
    - Project name, version number, user type, etc.
  - Printer-friendly option for report production

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## The Lab Goes Live

- Vanderbilt University's *Test Pilot*
  - <http://testpilot.library.vanderbilt.edu>
  - Launched July 2006.
  - Featured items:
    1. Ex Libris' Primo search and discovery tool
    2. Web redesign
    3. LibX toolbar
    4. Library blogs

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## Primo and *Test Pilot*

- Vanderbilt's Primo development project
  - Featured on *Test Pilot* lab site
  - Received over 100 comments from users and staff
  - Most of these comments resulted in changes to the final product.
    - Some comments (e.g. "This is cool!") confirmed the potential usefulness of the service.
    - Others (e.g. "This is terrible!") helped us remember that we have a long way to go to satisfy everyone.

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## The Lab moves (further) South

- The portability of the "library lab" framework was demonstrated when it was implemented at the University of Alabama Libraries.
- The University of Alabama's *Web Laboratory* went live in November 2007 and included some noteworthy enhancements to the original Vanderbilt site.
  - <http://www.lib.ua.edu/weblab/>

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## UA's *Web Laboratory*

- AJAX functionality was added to the comment box.
  - Made user comment submittal seamless
- Ratings field added
- Users able to volunteer for usability studies
- Featured items:
  - Web redesign
  - RefWorks
  - Library Search page

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## Conclusion

- Vanderbilt and Alabama's web labs have seen tremendous user input on select projects.
- User comments have proven valuable in shaping services at both institutions.
- Marketing for the labs and new services is still lacking.
- These "library labs" are part of a broader effort to address the needs and expectations of our users.

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## Credits

- Vanderbilt University
  - Molly Dahl
  - Jon Erickson
  - Jodie Gambill
- The University of Alabama
  - Will Jones

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