Collaborating Within the Library: Bringing History and Impact to the Forefront

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Introduction

In library literature, one can often encounter examples of collaborations, particularly with partners outside of the library. Collaboration is a common element of organizational life and can prove to be useful as new services evolve or there is a desire to promote existing resources or services. Groups of library colleagues can come together in various ways on short-term projects with results that can include articles and postings in various institutional news formats and websites, physical displays, presentations, and events. Projects at the Galter Library have brought together librarians from different library departments, service cores, and working groups, and provided them with opportunities to collaborate, utilizing their interests, skills, and expertise. The resulting projects accomplished through such collaborations involved various visualizations, displays, and presentations highlighting the impact of publications and library services over time.

Note: The department and working group names are listed as they were during the highlighted projects.

Collaborative Exibits

Places and Spaces Mapping Science Exhibit

Collaborators: Metrics and Impact Core, Digital Systems and Collection Services, Special Collections Working Group (SCWG)
Overview: The Galter Library created complementary exhibits, “Visualizing Science at Feinberg School of Medicine” & “Viewing the Galter Health Sciences Library of the 21st Century” for display alongside the traveling exhibit of Dr. Katy Börner (Indiana University) called “Places and Spaces Mapping Science Exhibit”. The 2015 exhibit demonstrated the power of maps to navigate and make sense of physical places and abstract topics.
Link: https://galter.northwestern.edu/aboutUs/places-space-mapping-science

Clinical Informationist Presentations

Benjamin Boshes Publication Analyses Display

Collaborators: Digital Initiatives Working Group (DIWG) members (representing: Impact and Evaluation Core, Clinical Informationist Services, Digital Systems and Collection Services)
Overview: Publication analyses were done on the works of alumni and long-time faculty member and former department chair, Dr. Benjamin Boshes (1907-1984), to show how historical works continue on today, informing research, providing context and guiding discovery. The findings were published in the Galter Library’s website and featured in the May 2017 Galter Library column of the Research Office newsletter, Breakthroughs.
Link: https://galter.northwestern.edu/diaw2017

Conclusion: Elements of Success

These projects revealed several elements essential for success, which should be considered in any collaborative effort:

• Make and regularly update a timeline, with realistic deadlines for project components
• Regularly meet in person to resolve any confusion or conflicts
• Designate tasks for each person
• Ensure the balancing of time available and the tasks to be accomplished
• Set and review progress at designated milestones
• Keep moving to reach desired goal
• Evaluate after completion
• Reuse and repurpose elements of the project, if appropriate