Picking the Best Project in a World Full of Great Ideas

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OLA Super Conference 2016

Faculty & Student Engagement

- Coordinate campus, student & faculty projects:

  - Personal Librarian
  - Undergraduate Research Awards
  - Liaison librarian services
  - Undergraduate Journal Forum

- Liaise with divisions & other U of T partners

- Market library/librarians to faculty & students

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What we'll cover

- Why is this important?
- Where we get ideas
- What makes one **GREAT**
- Will it work at your library?
- Planning, testing, scaling up
- Keeping the library community informed
- Changing, sunsetting, retiring projects
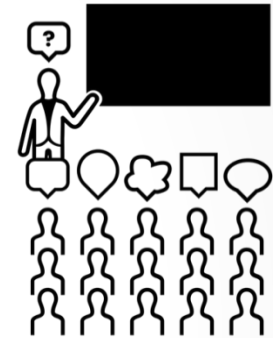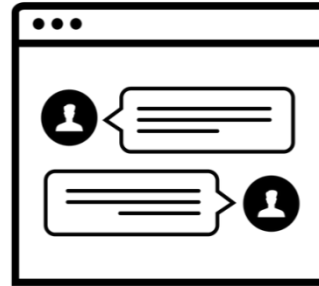- STORYTIME!

Why is this important?

- Don't want to waste time
- Help to advance institution's mission
- Keep the library relevant

Efficiency is important in an age of declining resources

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Where do ideas come from?

- Listservs
- Conferences
- Websites
- Retail…

Good ideas come from anywhere!

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What makes an idea great?

- It's *strategic*
- Fills a *need* *(not yours!)*
- Interests *many people*
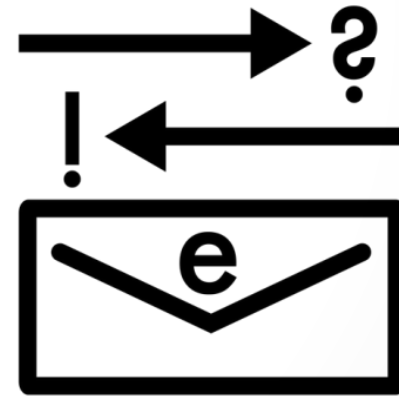- Something *only the library can do*
- 3 years of *staying power*

Will it work at your library?

Easy to assess	Harder (enviro scan)
✓Aligns with institution's culture?	**?** Do internal library stakeholders like it?
✓Scalable	**?** Do our campus partners like it?
✓Aligns with academic priorities	**?** Is it already being done on campus?
	? Can we do the work required?

Discover best & worst practices

Learn from others' triumphs
and mistakes

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If it passes the tests....

Project Management Lifecycle

Select & Budget

Plan & Staff

Track

Report Costs

Analyze & Forecast
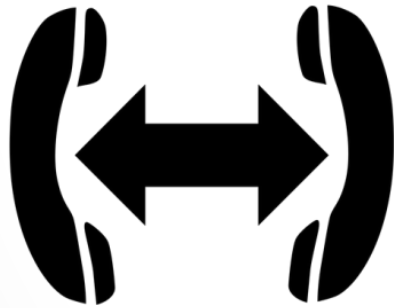
The importance of pilots

Sharing experiences

Harder	Easier
• Conferences • Articles • Posters	• Web pages with links to documents • Unpublished papers • Preliminary data analysis • Progress updates • Listserv postings

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Great ideas aren't great forever

- Rethink regularly
  - Stop / Start / Continue
- Rethink when
  - Scale is achieved
  - Results don't justify the effort
  - Something major has changed

"Fall in love with the problem, not the solution"
~Kaaren Hanson, Intuit

Story: Personal Librarian
Ongoing since 2012

1. Great idea? – – – – →

- ❑ Aligns with strategy?
- ❑ Fills a need?
- ❑ Easy to sell?
- ❑ Library-centric?

3. Pilot stage

- ❑ Volunteers
- ❑ One writer
- ❑ Nothing to do except reply

2. Can it work at U of T?

- ❑ Fit with U of T culture?
- ❑ Fit with academic priorities?
- ❑ Support from campus partners?
- ❑ Already done on campus?
- ❑ Can we do the work required?
- ❑ What is the work?

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Story: Student Journal Forum
Just finished

1. Great idea? — — — ➔

☐ Aligns with strategy?

☐ Fills a need?

☐ Easy to sell?

☐ Library-centric?

2. Can it work at U of T?

☐ Fit with U of T culture?

☐ Fit with academic priorities?

☐ Already done on campus?

☐ Worked at other peer institutions?

☐ Will have value in 3 years?

3. Pilot stage

☐ Held day-long forum, with potential to continue annually

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Story: Undergrad Library Research Prize
In the middle of…

1. Great idea? ‑ ‑ ‑ ‑ →

- ❑ Aligns with strategy?
- ❑ Fills a need?
- ❑ Easy to sell?
- ❑ Library-centric?

2. Can it work at U of T?

- ❑ Fit with U of T culture?
- ❑ Fit with academic priorities?
- ❑ Already done on campus?
- ❑ Worked at other peer institutions?
- ❑ Will have value in 3 years?

3. Pilot stage

Watch this space!

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Story: Mandatory 1ˢᵗ year info lit course

Didn't work…

1. Great idea? – – – –>

- ☐ Aligns with strategy?
- ☐ Fills a need?
- ☐ Easy to sell?
- ☐ Library-centric?

2. Can it work at U of T?

- ☐ Fit with U of T culture?
- ☐ Fit with academic priorities?
- ☐ Already done on campus?
- ☐ Worked at other peer institutions?
- ☐ Will have value in 3 years?

3. Pilot stage

~~Watch this space!~~

Remember…

- Suggestions are just suggestions
- Everyone will have an opinion
- Cross-department teams are useful
- Statistics don't always tell the full story

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