LIBRARY PUBLIC SERVICES

... A conversation about library workers & patrons, services and people!

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Today’s Agenda

- Introduction
- The Philosophy of Public Services
- Access
- Customer Service
- Optional Topics (as time permits)
Introduction

- Who I am
- Why I’m here
- Why You’re Here
- Content, format, & scope
Philosophy of Public Services

What is “Public Services” exactly?

- It WAS about the stuff and getting it to people.

- NOW it’s about **people** and getting them the stuff (items or services) they need.
And, it’s about the Mission!

- Mission and goals
- Governing body
- Community culture!
Sample Mission Statement

The mission of The New York Public Library is to inspire lifelong learning, advance knowledge, and strengthen our communities.
Mission/Goal –
To provide patrons with equal, fair, & maximum access to Library materials and services
Public Services

- Access
- Customer Service
Public Services

Access

Policy & Procedure

Collection Management
Policy & Procedure

- ILS
- Users Registration & Records
- Circulation
- Cash Management
ILS

- Circulation Control
- Library Management System
- Integrated Library System
• Systems that supply users with the materials they want

• Not only books

• Now users are given a wider variety & greater amount of materials
Circulation Control

- Examples of Circulation Control
  - Circulation routines
  - Records maintained
  - Personnel employed and trained

- Purpose
  - To make information efficiently available to borrowers OR
  - To explain why requested items cannot be immediately supplied.
Management Systems (LMS/ILS)

- Allows staff:
  - to determine location of material
  - to administer circulation policy fairly

- Each system is unique but contain many of the same features
Ease of use
Reliability
Identifies key elements – bib/patron
Track/record overdue material
Easy/accurate retrieval of requested materials upon check-in
Easy retrieval of statistics
Cost effective
Software functions separated into discrete modules

- Acquisitions
- Cataloging
- Circulation
- Serials
- OPAC
What does a Library System Do?

- Identifies delinquent borrowers with overdue materials/fines
  - Displays reasons for delinquency
- Alerts staff to lost or stolen id cards
- Indicates reserve (hold) on item at check-in
- Displays all items currently checked out to borrower
- Allows users to view/implement library transactions
What else?

- Allows placement and notification of reserves (holds)
- Displays fees for overdue materials
- Prints notices (for recall, etc)
- Automatically prints overdue and fee statements
- Indicates if an item is checked out
- Indicates if item is otherwise unavailable
  - Bindery, lost, cataloging, display, etc
- Records statistical information.
These systems are flexible and can be tailored to a certain degree!
User Registration & Records
Borrower Registration

- Identify persons who have right to borrow materials (and in some cases right to use library)
- To give borrower special form of ID to manage their materials
- Obtain statistical information on library users
How do libraries do this?

- **Academic libraries** –
  - users put into system in advance,
  - input on a regular basis.
  - little or no patron participation in initial input of user information
    - exceptions - faculty, other non-student users...

- **What do you do at your library?**
Library staff at Desk must:

- Be familiar with registration procedures
- Be prepared to answer questions about services and resources.
- Do you offer documentation about services @ registration?
Check Out Materials

The lending of materials for a certain amount of time.

- Loan policy may depend on:
  - size of collection
  - special collection
  - amount of items patron has borrowed
  - clientele served
Check Out

- Academic library –
  - Different borrowing privileges for different users:
    - Students
    - Faculty
    - Staff
    - Community users
    - SUNY

Are there differences in your library?
Check Out

Did you know?

Libraries with smaller collections or those with high circulation rates tend to have shorter loan periods in order to make materials more available.
Check Out

- Patron Self-Checkout Station

Does your library have these?
Check In Materials

Materials are returned to library from which they were borrowed

- Record of loan is cancelled
- Borrower’s responsibility ends
Check In

Procedures:
- Staff inspect materials for wear and damage
- If badly damaged, fee may be charged
- Spine labels replaced
- Books with torn pages put aside for repair
  - mending slip
  - update circulation system
Renewals

- Extension of loan (POLICY dictates)
- Can be done:
  - In person
  - With a phone call
  - Via email
  - Online through their account
Holds

- Also called ‘reserve requests’ –
  - Notice put on item so that it can be put aside when it is returned

- Different from recalling material

- Libraries have policy for recalling items on hold.
InterLibrary Loan

- Resource Sharing
- Lending and borrowing of materials from other libraries (or institutions)
- New projects – IDS
- FMCC Illiad

Do you ILL?
Problem - materials no longer available to other borrowers.
Policies regarding action taken on overdues:
- Notification via calls, email, etc
- Suspended privileges
- Fines

What does your library do?
Cash Management
Fines

- Fines levied and billing performed to encourage borrowers to return materials on time.
- Some use fines to raise revenue
- Others for community charities
- Others try programs – San Francisco
Fines

- Trend in recent years to lower or eliminate fines.

- LACK of confirming evidence in literature, but most library staff believe some form of fines is an effective means for convincing borrowers to return books on time.

NO CONSENSUS on this issue in profession!

What does your library do?
Fines

- Libraries should inform borrowers about fines **before** any materials are loaned.

- Some print them on the card inserted in book pocket, on pocket itself or library handbook.

- Signage
Fines

- Few libraries have complete freedom to set policies
- Usually confirm to desires of governing bodies.
  - Public – BOT
  - Colleges – Administration
  - Special - Organization
  - School - District
Fines

- Fine rates differ for different types of loans – short-term (special materials) often higher than long-term. Higher for videos vs. books.

- Different for children or young adult borrowers
Fines

- Purpose of fines is not to punish or make money, but as incentive to encourage timely return of materials.
Fees

- Fees collected for damaged or lost books

- Libraries charge:
  - cost to replace or repair materials
  - plus a fee or service charge

- Cost vary depending on materials
Fees

- Some library charge other fees – rental collections; reserves; popular materials.
Collection of Fines/Fees

- Important since it involves accountability in handling money.

- Often collected at the loan desk

- Require cash register/cash box for making change; ledger for recording transactions; and accurate accounting procedures.
Collection of Fines/Fees

- Attention to Detail!

- A fine is a poor customer relations device & miscalculation will only aggravate the situation.

- Automated systems automatically calculate fines.
Collection of Fines/Fees

- Circ staff often encounter borrowers who contest their fines or various fees.

- Most common argument – items were returned on time, library records are wrong.

- If materials are found on shelf, fines generally waived.
Collection of Fines/Fees

Flexibility in collecting fines will do much to preserve good public relations while obtaining the return of overdue materials.
Collection of Fines/Fees

- In some libraries, the fines are not collected by library
- Fines don’t always revert to library
Conclusion, Cash Management

- Important for staff to remember library philosophy behind the charges.

- Staff should be willing and able to negotiate a reduction in fines if they perceive a legitimate reason for doing so.

- Good customer relations!

How does your library manage your cash?
Now on to Collection Management....