FACULTY MEMBERS’ PERCEPTIONS OF TECHNOLOGY-ORIENTED SUPPORT BY LIAISON LIBRARIANS AT THE U OF A

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OVERVIEW

• Introduction
• Brief review of related literature
• Theoretical framework
• Methodology
• Findings & discussion
• Directions for future research
• Questions
INTRODUCTION

• Motivations for this study

• Research questions

→ Why do faculty members believe or not believe that these library technology sessions are valuable for their professional growth as a researcher in the current information environment?

→ How do faculty members perceive the quality of these sessions?
REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

- Making it work: faculty & librarian relationships
- Technological developments in academic libraries
- Evolving roles of academic librarians
- Information literacy
Diffusion of innovations theory

Diffusion is a process whereby an innovation is communicated through certain channels over time among the members of a social system.

Four main elements in the diffusion of innovations:

- Innovation
- Communication channels
- Time
- Social system

Rogers, 2003
METHODOLOGY

• Pilot study
• Purposive sampling method
• Definitions
• Six participants
• One-on-one interviews: March – April 2012
• Phenomenological approach
• Semi-structured interviews
• My biases
• Transcription & coding
FINDINGS & DISCUSSION

1) Library technology’s role in research & teaching

2) Liaison librarians as technological support

3) Promotion of library technology sessions

4) Library technology session attendance

5) Content & quality of library technology sessions
FINDINGS & DISCUSSION

LIBRARY TECHNOLOGY’S ROLE IN RESEARCH & TEACHING

• “integral”; “A central role”; “very dependent on the online access”
• RefWorks: 1 regular user
• EndNote: 1 regular user

→ SATISFACTION & FAMILIARITY

→ CHARACTERISTIC OF INNOVATIONS: RELATIVE ADVANTAGE
Findings & Discussion

Library technology’s role in research & teaching

• Majority of participants do not use citation management tools (cmt)

“I don’t use RefWorks. I use a more traditional way. [...] If I have the chance to learn quickly, I should do that. [...] It’s a little bit difficult to upgrade into a new system because it’s a tremendous effort to update my record, [but with] my personal system, it’s easier for me to track and easier for me to find something.”
Library technology’s role in research & teaching

• Too difficult to use

“some of them [Citation Management Tools] are so hard to learn, I just kind of ignore them.”

→ Characteristic of innovations: Complexity
Liaison librarians as technological support

• 5/6 PARTICIPANTS: REGULAR CONTACT WITH LIAISON LIBRARIAN

• 4/6 PARTICIPANTS: HAVE CONTACTED OR WOULD CONTACT LIAISON LIBRARIAN FOR LIBRARY TECH SUPPORT

“When technology fails me, that’s when I go to [my liaison librarian]. [...] My second line of defense to get what I need is the actual person and that’s when I go to [my liaison librarian].”
Liaison librarians as technological support

• Respectful of librarian’s time

“IT WOULDN’T BE OUR PERCEPTION TO SAY HEY, APPROACH A LIBRARIAN TO GET HELP FOR TECHNICAL PROBLEMS. [...] I DIDN’T APPROACH [MY LIAISON LIBRARIAN] FOR THAT KIND OF QUESTION, I THOUGHT IT WOULD BE TOO MUCH TROUBLE FOR [HER/HIM]. THAT’S GETTING A LITTLE MORE COMPLICATED, IS HOW MUCH TIME A LIBRARIAN COULD HAVE FOR A STUDENT OR SINGLE STAFF.”

• Technological tools not formally supported by UofA library system

Findings & Discussion

Promotion of library technology sessions

- **Group messages not the best form of advertisement**

  “Some faculty probably just see something forwarded that’s not exclusive to them and probably just trash it […].”

→ **Communication channels: Interpersonal**
Findings & Discussion

Promotion of Library Technology Sessions

- Librarian-in-residence or Embedded librarian permits face-to-face contact

→ Communication channels: Interpersonal
Promotion of library technology sessions

- **Liaison librarians passively wait for assistance requests**

  “It [embedded librarianship] will be beyond just passively waiting for the request. It will be reaching out to offer your expertise, offer your sources of information and even become part of the team [...].”

  “Well, the fight from [the librarian’s] point of view is passivity. And that’s why I think having a librarian-in-residence is great [...] because they can get over the passivity because you often run into [her/him] [...].”
Findings & Discussion

Promotion of Library Technology Sessions

- **Embedded librarianship will increase engagement between faculty & librarians**

  “[The liaison librarian] comes to a conference room as an onsite librarian and then [s/he] has a lot of interaction with my student groups. [...] I believe we can be more proactive, [...] I would say more engagement between the two sides. [...] not just teaching but of course research and also even project proposal writing [...]”
Promotion of library technology sessions

- Young faculty should be the target population for marketing of sessions

“[O]lder faculty who have done [research & teaching] in a very rigid way, looking at the books of the original fundamental individuals in the area and saying you should never stray from that. And they’re so narrow-minded in their approach. It’s not the session, it’s the professor. […] I think the target will always be the younger faculty. The older ones […] will never be changed.”
Findings & Discussion

Library Technology Session Attendance

- 4/6 participants attended with their students
- 2/6 participants attended on their own

“Lifelong learning skills”

“I feel really anxious about being left behind by technology.”
Library technology session attendance

- **Already possess good enough skills**

  "I think I have enough [knowledge about library technology] to survive."

- **Lack of time to attend**

  "I notice there are some workshops available, maybe I’m too busy. [...] Should I go or not go for this kind of workshop, at the last minute, ah, too much work, maybe not."
Findings & Discussion

Content & Quality of Library Technology Sessions

- **Successful session: “teach beyond the mechanics”**

  “People always tell you what to put in what box and what to click. [...] They [the students] need to learn what to click when first. But I would like to raise a little bit the level of...what would it be...the cognitive level at which they do it from just merely clicking on some random words to insightfully finding a body of work.”
Content & Quality of Library Technology Sessions

Who should be responsible for teaching information use skills — faculty or librarians?

“[We need to] teach beyond the mechanics... I mean, how do you build a literature search? And I think for pretty much in any field you have to do a literature search. So I don’t know where that falls. You can say [...] part of students’ academic training [...] . On the other hand, it’s related to libraries and books and references, right?”
Content & Quality of Library Technology Sessions

- Session success: open-ended sessions

Current sessions are “too rigid”; “too general”; attendees are “overwhelmed with irrelevant information”

→ Characteristic of innovations: compatibility
DIRECTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

• Faculty members’ opinions of teaching information use skills & strategies

• Librarians’ views of embedded librarianship
QUESTIONS

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