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# Analyzing Workflows and Improving Communication Across Departments: A Simple Project Using Rapid Contextual Design

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Liaison librarians at Pepperdine (staff whose responsibilities include reference, instruction, and collection development) meet annually to discuss the use of resources by patrons and requests received to purchase additional ones. They examine cost per use, overall costs, and trends in usage to help determine cancellation and acquisition decisions. Whitt outlined other cancellation considerations, which included the following questions: Is a multi-year license nearing expiration? What percentage of the package is little-to-no use titles? Would there be any savings in a title-by-title subscription for high use titles? Are the resources/articles available in another form? Will the library be able to maintain resources at probable subscription increases?

Parang then gave examples of big deal cancellations at Pepperdine and how the library did their best to maintain patron access to titles afterward. The first big deal cancellation was Wiley in 2011. It was the most expensive package at the time and nearing the end of the license period. Pepperdine had perpetual access to all the paid materials after cancellation, many titles in the package were available in other databases with an embargo, and they pursued article level tokens.

Another batch of noteworthy cancellations were Cambridge University Press, Brill, and University of Chicago Press, due to budget cuts for the next fiscal year. Although the prices had remained steady, statistics showed that only a few titles in the packages were heavily used, and overall usage had not increased over time. Therefore, Pepperdine got individual subscriptions to the high use titles and relied on ILL for the lower use titles.

Finally, Whitt noted a couple of situations where cancellations proved unnecessary. For the Pepperdine subscription to the American Chemical Society package, the publisher was able to coordinate with the library to change the pricing tiers. Similarly, although Pepperdine itself was not able to obtain an institutional discount for the Sage package, their local consortium was able to negotiate a discount to select subject collections, which allowed Pepperdine to pick and choose which collections were worth keeping.

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Presenters: Jharina Pascual, Electronic Resources Acquisitions Librarian, University of California, Irvine and Sarah Wallbank, Electronic Resources and Serials Cataloging/Metadata Librarian, University of California, Irvine

This was the first NASIG session I took in this summer. For this session, two electronic resource librarians shared their reasons and approach to an in-depth review of interdepartmental workflows. They employed a specific user experience research method known as rapid contextual design. The book *Rapid Contextual Design: A How-To Guide to Key Techniques for User-Centered Design*, typically used in the field of digital product management, was consulted to inform their evaluation and analysis of their own workflows. The pair used an assessment to uncover key issues within and between departments. They discovered their biggest issue was communication. Their methods for sharing between departments were so ineffective that they were not being used. Communication was not taking place outside the immediate employees responsible for tasks, resulting in confusion and inefficient outcomes. To remedy this, based on the assessment results, they created new procedures including tools for sharing information between departments. This has had major benefits, and in addition to increasing efficiency, the librarians were excited that these improved workflows had built a new sense of community among employees. On top of relaying their own re-designed workflow outcomes, the speakers' slides were extremely helpful, utilizing diagrams for visualizing your own analysis of local library workflows. The single most important takeaway from this session, though, was not the methodology itself, but the quote that "implementing small changes to address small, simple things" had the biggest impact on intra-technical services communication.