A Place for Informal Collaboration

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Open Repositories 2011, Austin Texas
What brought us together

- Open Ended Conference Call – Fall 2009
- Shared experience in a variety of areas
- Shared curiosity about a few new topics:
  - XForms, ESBs, and message-driven workflow
- Shared proclivity for architecture and abstraction
What We Wanted

Adam:
- The use of the ESB pattern
- Solutions for scaling problems in synchronous workflow
- Metadata editors using XForms

Bill:
- Identifier Practice – Handles
- Components and Architecture for repository ingest and management
- Metadata Editors for MODS and VRA Core

Scott:
- Image processing workflow
- Metadata editors
- Identifier Practice - Handles
- Mostly, just someone to talk to outside my office
We have so much in common
Our Project Goal

“Let’s define a unified system incorporating our common needs.”
No go.

- Different technological and organizational environments
- Conflicting local priorities
- Shifting local foci modulated collaborative resonance
- “Projects” require formal institutional collaboration
New Expectations Created New Habits

- Products only as natural byproducts of local work
- Share experience, not products
- Products are packages for experience (tutorials, sample code)
- Engagement strengthens bonds
- Which furthers engagement
Formal vs. Informal

- Partners agree on goals and define project
- Partners work in local context as part of normal work

- Disagree, redefine and define some more
- Local value comes first

- Finally, set to work.
- Partners share early results

- Local value comes afterwards (if at all)
- Then assess, abstract, and evolve
Wise investment

- Resources require institutional engagement
- High expectations are emotional investments
- Be patient: patience is healthy investment in relationship

No commitment (of resources)
Don't create a product; Explore a problem

- Formal inter-institutional work is schedule-driven and has specific deliverables

- Deliverables are sometimes defined without sufficient understanding or agreement on the Why or How

- Make a space for informal, organic collaboration
Extend your shop!

- Informal collaboration isn't restricted to a single project
- Connect people at your institution to other-institution partners
- Collaboration provides agile assessment
Many eyes reduce risk

- A tool is often described by what it can do, but many can be made to do almost anything

- What it can do is less important than what you should do with it

- Partners’ local evaluations bring invaluable perspective so you avoid costly mistakes
Tag Team!

- Local priorities can change
- Trust that absences are temporary as priorities cycle around
- Dormant explorations advance with partners or at least remain fresh
Communicate!

- Use multiple means

- Asynchronous means keep investment low (no pressure to respond instantly)

- Synchronous communication is expensive: treasure it
Develop partnerships naturally

- Identify like-minded partners with similar work to hand
- Identify where there is resonance
- Take it to the next level—synchronously
Keep your institution informed

- Keep work visible and announce progress
- Prepare the ground to request resources for a formal project
Some Concrete Results

UW: Fedora messaging improvements, turnkey message broker service

UVa: Come to Saturday presentation!

NU: Message-based ingest for Archon, Drupal, and (soon) Hydra; XForms VRA editor
Some Concrete Results: Shared

- Code4Lib Journal article: “XForms in Libraries”
- Software techniques
- Fedora messaging improvements for the community
- Tutorials
- This presentation
Email Thread Timeline

Oct ‘08 Handles
Jan ‘08 Content Models
Apr ‘09 Djatoka
May ‘09 OR2009
Jun ‘09 Great Cheese
Dec ‘09 ESB Workflow
Dec ‘09 Drupal / Fedora
Feb ‘10 Camel / ActiveMQ
Mar ‘10 LibDevConX
Apr ‘10 Blacklight for EAD
Jul ‘10 XForms for Libraries

Aug ’10 UVA ESB Phone Conference
Aug ’10 Handles as Fedora PIDs
Aug ’10 UVA Get Next PID Demo
Aug ’10 UVA ES Demo
Aug ’10 Drools Example
Sep ’10 UW ActiveMQ Failover
Oct ’10 ServiceMix
Oct ’10 Groovy
Nov ’10 Stub Service Assembly
Jan ’11 Service Mix JBI
Jan ’11 Camel
Enjoy informal collaboration

It's voluntary by definition

It's open-ended and self-defining

These are the people you look forward to seeing at conferences (like this one)