Laptops, Cameras, iPods: Developing and Implementing an Equipment Plan

Problem Statement

Background:
The Library at St. Cloud State University (located 70 miles northwest of Minneapolis/St. Paul) functions under Learning Resources & Technology Services (LR&TS), an organization that also includes academic computing and technology support as well as technology-related instructional services. The Circulation Department maintains equipment for check-out to SCSU faculty, staff, and students. Equipment items include: Digital cameras; digital recorders; digital video cameras; headphones; laptops; overhead projectors; PA systems; tape players; tripods; and VHS camcorders.

Problem:
We needed a way to make the best use of our limited resources, and the Dean of LR&TS wanted more predictable equipment purchasing. The laptops for check-out were already on a 3-year replacement cycle. Expenditures for other equipment, however, were unpredictable. Why did we buy 4 more digital cameras when we already had 14? Did we really need 2 more data projectors when we purchased 2 last year? New technologies were also purchased haphazardly.

Equipment Plan Development

Goals:
- Create predictable equipment expenditures.
- Avoid inventory creep.
- Support the research needs of SCSU faculty, staff and students.
- Provide new technologies for patrons.

Personnel:
- Access Services Coordinator
- Audio-Visual Library Technician
- Information Technology Services
- Instructional Technologies and Infrastructure Services

Tasks

Find a template for the plan.
Instructional Technologies and Infrastructure Services shared their plan for classroom equipment expenditures.

Determine which items need to go through the normal equipment process.
Laptops are on a 3-year replacement cycle already so they are not included in the equipment plan.
Supply items are also not included.

Decide the replacement cycle for each item.
Set goal quantities for each item.

Review plan with LR&TS Equipment Committee & Dean.
To determine the replacement cycle, we considered warranties and repair histories.

**Challenges & Successes**

- Created predictable equipment expenditures.

  Next year’s expenditures should be equal or less.

- Avoided inventory creep.

  Several items were removed from inventory.

- Supported the research needs of SCSU faculty, staff and students

- Did not achieve the goal of having a budget line for new technologies.

**What’s Next?**

- Incorporate circulation statistics.

- Implement regular assessment.

- What do patrons like or dislike about the equipment?

- What equipment do they want available for checkout?

- Determine how to budget for the piloting new technologies.

- Verify that goal quantities are correct.