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

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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.

The Solution

Develop a plan for replacing checkout equipment.

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 (ITS)
• Instructional Technologies and Infrastructure Services (ITIS)
Tasks

- Find a template for the plan.
- ITIS 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.

The Result

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Categories</th>
<th>Replacement Cycle</th>
<th>FY 07 Purchase QTY</th>
<th>FY07 $</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Data projectors</td>
<td>5 years</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>$ 000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Digital cameras</td>
<td>5 years</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>$ 000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Digital Video Cameras</td>
<td>5 years</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>$ 000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overhead projectors</td>
<td>5 years</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>$ 000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maranz Audio Recorder</td>
<td>5 years</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>$ 000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Micro Track Recorder</td>
<td>5 years</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>$ 000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PA Speakers</td>
<td>5 years</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>$ 000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multiple VCR</td>
<td>5 years</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>$ 000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slide Projector</td>
<td>5 years</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>$ 000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Filmstrip Viewer</td>
<td>5 years</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>$ 000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VHS Camcorders</td>
<td>5 years</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>$ 000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>$ 000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Supply Items

- Cassette recorders
- Microphones
- VHS Players
- Headphones
- Batteries: $ 1,000
- DVD Players: $ 200
- Graphing calculators
- Camcorder batteries
- Tripods
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.

Do circulation statistics justify 15 data projectors?

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.

Do patrons want to check-out portable GPS units?