The Accidental Media Services Librarian

Cristina Caminita

General Services Librarian

Baton Rouge Community College
In this session

- Review BRCC’s experience including Media Services in the circulation department
- Review a case study to show how the circulation department is handling student laptop checkout
- Review current professional literature for guidance and best practices regarding cataloging and circulating A/V equipment
BRCC Magnolia Library
Circulation- brief overview
Circulation duties & responsibilities – before media services inclusion

- Circulation
- ILL
- LALINC
- ILB
- Reserves
- Public Documents submission to state
- Student worker supervision

- Shelving & shelf reading
- Laminating services
- Faxing services
- SGA Scantron giveaway
- Student laptop & calculator checkout services
- Newspaper delivery to college administrative offices
Circulation Staff

- 1 General Services Librarian/Instructor
- 1 - 3 library clerks (part time, 20 hours)
- 6 – 12 student workers
  - Majority are Federal Work Study students
  - 1 International Student
  - 1 student hire with Institutional support funds
Circ Stats for 2008 – 2009

- 15,852 general queries fielded
- 238,496 – gate count total (and this is not the actual gate count; it is halved)
- 3,496 book checkouts
- 1,316 DVD checkouts
- 1,231 laptop checkouts
- 2,567 headphones checkouts
- 359 calculator checkouts
- 9,144 reserve checkouts
Circulation After Media Services Inclusion – The Lay of the Land

- Strengths
- Weaknesses
- Opportunities
- Threats
Circulation Duties After Inclusion of Media Services

- Circulation – check in/checkout, fines, fine disputes, etc.
- Creation of policies and procedures for department
- ILL
- LALINC
- ILB
- Reserves
- Public Documents submission to state
- Student worker supervision, scheduling, and timesheets
- Create policies and procedures re: media circulation, inventory, maintenance, etc.

- Shelving & shelf reading
- Laminating services
- Faxing services
- SGA Scantron giveaway
- Student laptop & calculator checkout services
- Newspaper delivery to college administrative offices
- Manage Media Inventory
- Collaborate with Open Lab to handle Student Laptop issues
- Property Control of certain items
Strengths – Relatively Easy Transition

- Circulation and Media Services had been working closely together for the past two years:
  - Circulation ensured check in/checkout of equipment
  - Media Services maintained the inventory
  - Circulation and Media Services collaborated on recovering long overdue items (at times with the help of campus Police)
Strengths – Relatively Easy Transition

- Circulation was familiar with the inventory of items
- Circulation was aware of many of the issues involving media equipment
- Media Services staff wrapped up as many loose ends as possible before transferring to another department on campus
Weaknesses – Resources Very, Very Limited

- Staffing – professional and paraprofessional shortage
- Practices in place, but documentation scarce
- Change not only at the department level, but at the institution level (i.e., getting faculty and staff to follow the new media policies and procedures)
Weaknesses – Resources Very, Very Limited

- Scarcity of equipment
  - 3 old laptops with no wireless cards for faculty use
  - 18 older laptops (with wireless, thankfully) to be used by an 8,000+ strong student population

- Budget issues
  - What budget is allocated for which items?
Opportunities – Greater Efficiency of Services

- One department handling media circulation and requests instead of coordinating between two departments
- Re-catalog all media items for more specific and detailed Workflows reports
- Set up the Reserve module in Workflows
- Closer collaboration with the Open Lab staff to maintain inventory and recovery of student laptops and calculators
Opportunities – Greater Efficiency of Services

- One department to initiate handling of media equipment issues
- Revision and creation of policies and procedures to reflect current practices
- Ease of revising procedures in the constantly changing environment (can make decisions without waiting for agreement from other department)

\[
\text{Efficiency} = \frac{\text{Weighted sum of outputs}}{\text{Weighted sum of inputs}}
\]
Threats – No boundaries

- Users may think circulation is there not only to check in and check out equipment, but to train them to use the equipment, trouble shoot the equipment, and fix the equipment.
- Danger of taking on more responsibilities than you can shoulder.
Threats – Assumed Responsibility

- For equipment stored in the library but not “owned” by the library
- Ex: Nomad media carts owned & operated by IT, Stop Motion camera set owned by E-Tech department, expensive JVC HD cameras owned by Film department
Circulation – the process of including media services
1. Re-catalog all media equipment in Workflows

- All equipment was cataloged with item type “mediaequipment”
- Worked well when BRCC was a small school. BRCC is no longer a small school 😊
- Circulation map was wonky
- Accurate stats were kind of impossible
- Made running inventory/shelf lists for media equipment reports REALLY interesting
1. Re-catalog all media equipment in Workflows

- Create new item types
  - Laptop
  - Laptop cord
  - Calculator
  - Digital Camera
  - Etc.

- Catalog each piece in hand appropriately

- Time-consuming, but worth it
2. Set up the Reserve module

- Created MEDIA Reserve desk in Workflows
- Enables you to set multiple loan periods and to suspend loans for periods of time
- Gives you nice, detailed statistics in Reserve reports
3. Clean out all old, superseded, and broken equipment from storage

- Become friends with the Property Control manager if you have items with State ID tags
- Become familiar with forms required to surplus or dispose of property
- Each institution should have property control policies and procedures available to employees
- You may need to delete some items from the catalog – make sure to be aware and keep track
4. Create a Master Inventory of what’s left

- I know it seems redundant, since you have everything cataloged in WorkFlows.
- Remember: if you work with other departments to take care of media equipment, non-library staff don’t understand Workflows and they don’t really care to learn how to read a Workflows report. They like to review info in easy-to-read formats. It’s all about ease of use and giving your colleagues what they want/need. Hence, the inventory spreadsheet.
4. Create a Master Inventory of what’s left

- Simple inventory in Excel created from all items left in storage after the initial cull

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item Type</th>
<th>Item ID</th>
<th>Notes</th>
<th>Location Verified (Yes / No)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3M Overhead Projector</td>
<td>37571000204995</td>
<td>portable</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3M Overhead Projector</td>
<td>37571000210242</td>
<td>portable</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35mm Camera</td>
<td>37671000196472</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belkin Laser Pointer</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boom Box</td>
<td>37571000196548</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boom Box</td>
<td>37571000196837</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Portable Slide Projector</td>
<td>37571000196530</td>
<td>Kodak brand</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carousel for Slide Projector</td>
<td>37571000196325</td>
<td>on shelf with extra bulbs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carousel for Slide Projector</td>
<td>37571000196720</td>
<td>bundled with Portable Slide Projector 37571000196530</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cassette Duplicator</td>
<td>37571000196585</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CD - Cassette Player</td>
<td>37571000196513</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clickers</td>
<td>37571000421789</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clickers</td>
<td>37571000421797</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clickers</td>
<td>37571000421763</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clickers</td>
<td>37571000421805</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clickers</td>
<td>37571000422714</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clickers</td>
<td>37571000421832</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clickers</td>
<td>37571000421921</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clickers</td>
<td>37571000421947</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clickers</td>
<td>37571000421771</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clickers</td>
<td>37571000421755</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clickers</td>
<td>37571000421730</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clickers</td>
<td>37571000421748</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clickers</td>
<td>37571000421722</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5. Create procedure for inventorying equipment

- Can be as simple as assigning student workers each month to verify the inventory in storage on your inventory spreadsheet
- Helps you keep track who has what equipment without having to run reports in Workflows
6. Organize your media equipment storage space

- Use labels on shelves
- Shelve like things with like
- Treat your Media storage rooms like your library stacks – arrange and describe
- Maintain this order as much as you can
7. Limit access to your storage areas

- Keeps media equipment safe from loss, theft, damage
- When something happens, you know who did it, or can easily find out
- Keeps your storage area tidy
8. Assign/agree to responsibilities

- For example, the library stores and checks out the laptops and calculators purchased with Open Lab funds, but Open Lab is actually responsible for maintaining the laptop & calculator inventory and for monitoring equipment health.
- It is important to set some boundaries so that you do not fall victim to “project creep” or “scope creep”
9. Create necessary forms and documentation

- Document
- Document
- DOCUMENT!!!!
- It will save you time and energy in the future if you fully document your steps
- It will also create a built-in business succession plan for your department
Case Study – Student Laptop Circulation
Brief history of laptop checkout

- Started in 2003 with 10 laptops
- Laptops were purchased with Student Technology funds exclusively for student use
- 24 hour circulation period
- Fines were at first $10 per hour for each hour overdue; fines capped at $200.00
As laptop checkouts increased over the years, the policies for laptop checkout changed according to user needs and the library’s resources.

For example, fines were dropped from a $200.00 cap to a $125.00 cap on overdue laptops; then a further drop to $48.00 cap this fall.

Laptops circulated for 24 hours until the start of the Fall 2009 semester; laptops now circulate for 48 hours. Students like this loan period.

Students were required to sign a media release form agreeing to general policies and procedures.
Brief history of laptop checkout

- Increased checkouts resulted in certain control losses, such as:
  - Faculty checking out laptops purchased exclusively for student use
  - Students filing increased numbers of fine disputes, claiming they were not aware of due dates or overdue fines (even though they signed off on the release form)
  - Laptop/laptop cord mismatch
  - Viruses and pornography on returned laptops
  - Students returning damaged laptops
  - Students never returning laptops – long overdues
Brief history of laptop checkout

- Deep Freeze installed on laptops to deal with viruses, students saving their work to the hard drives, clearing the cache, etc.
- Tighter inventory controls needed
- Increased collaboration with Campus Police needed to recover long overdue laptops
- And other areas of improvement that included . . .
1. Re-catalog all laptops and laptop power cords in Workflows

- This was completed in Summer 2008 to make it easier to set up the Reserve module
- Made our data collection on laptop checkouts improve overnight
2. Enter laptops and laptop cords into the Reserve Module

- Set up a MEDIA desk in Reserves
- Placed all available copies of laptops and laptop cords ON RESERVE
- Resulted in better data collection on checkouts
3. All damaged laptops and cords were reported to Property Control

- Items were either sent to surplus or disposed of by the Property Control Manager
- Make sure you understand how property control works . . .
4. Master inventory of available laptops was created

- And then shared with Open Lab, who are responsible for maintaining the inventory and monitoring the health of the student laptops
- Make sure you gather meaningful metadata on your inventory
- Discuss what information is needed to recover a laptop, service a laptop, dispose of a laptop, etc. For example: serial numbers, item IDs, state tags, service numbers, etc
5. Create a procedure for maintaining equipment inventory

- Workflows does this, for the most part, by logging checkouts
- To monitor long overdue laptops, a Long Overdue Laptop report was created to run daily
- Emailed automatically to the Circ manager and to the Open Lab staff member responsible for monitoring long overdue laptops
6. Create a procedure for recovering laptops

- Assign/agree to responsibilities
- Will you file police reports?
- How do you collect payment for laptops that are never returned?
- Are there insurance issues involved?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Overdue Type</th>
<th>Action To Be Taken</th>
<th>Responsibility</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Laptop is overdue between 1 and 23 hours</td>
<td>Student is charged $2.00 for each hour overdue</td>
<td>1. Automatically charged to student’s library user account</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laptop is 24 hours overdue</td>
<td>Student is charged the $48.00 maximum overdue fine</td>
<td>1. Circulation manager contacts student by email address on file.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2. Open Lab staff member monitors the overdue laptop report</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laptop is 48 hours overdue</td>
<td>Student is charged the $1,000 laptop replacement fee</td>
<td>1. Circulation manager places hold on the student’s BANNER account.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2. Open Lab staff member continues to monitor the overdue laptop report.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laptop is more than 48 hours overdue</td>
<td>See above</td>
<td>1. Open Lab staff member contacts BRCC police to file loss/theft report.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2. Circulation manager places bar on student library account</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laptop becomes “Long Overdue” (72 hours or more overdue)</td>
<td>See above</td>
<td>1. BRCC police and IT investigate and locate laptop.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2. Open Lab staff member designates on the Student Tech laptop inventory that laptop is long overdue and a police report has been filed (include police report number).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3. Open Lab staff member reports laptop to BRCC Property Control if the laptop has a State Property Control Tag.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
7. Create necessary forms and other documentation

- Added laptop checkout contract
  - Students must sign a new contract for each semester they are enrolled
- Laptop service form: in process of being created to prevent confusion re: what laptops have been serviced, which ones need service, what kind of problems plague a laptop, etc.

---

**BRCC Magnolia Library**

**Laptop Computer Checkout Contract**

- In order to check out a laptop, I must present a current BRCC ID that ensures I am an enrolled student.
- I understand that the checkout loan period for a laptop is 48 hours.
- I understand that I cannot renew or check out a new laptop immediately after returning one. I must wait at least 24 hours before I can check out another laptop.
- I understand that I am required to sign a Media Release Form each and every time I check out a laptop. The Media Release Form records when my laptop is due and states what the overdue fines are for laptops that are returned late to the library.
- I understand that I will receive a checkout receipt each and every time I check out a laptop that states the day and time my laptop is due.
- I understand that the overdue fine for a laptop is $2.00 per hour. Even if I am only 15 minutes late returning a laptop, I will be charged $2.00 for the full hour.
- I understand that if I return a laptop 24 hours late, I will be charged a maximum fine of $48.00 dollars.
- I understand that if I keep a laptop 48 hours past its due date I will be charged the replacement cost of the laptop until I return it. I understand that a hold will be placed on my BRCC account, and that I will not be able to schedule classes, view my grades, or request transcripts until I have returned the laptop and paid any accrued fines. I also understand that a police report may be filed with BRCC Police to recover the laptop.
- I understand that the replacement cost of a laptop is $1,000.
- I understand that I, not anyone else, am responsible for the laptop at all times. I am responsible for replacement or repair in case of any damage or theft. This includes normal wear and tear.

(Please write legibly)

Student Name: ___________________ B Number: ___________________

Email Address: ___________________ Contact Number: ___________________

Alternate Contact Number: ___________________

I agree to the above listed terms and understand that this signed contract will be checked each time I check out a laptop from the BRCC Magnolia Library.

Student Signature: ___________________ Date: ___________________

I have received a copy of the BRCC Library General Student Laptop Checkout Policy (initial here).
So, how’s it all working out? The Good Stuff

- Students are happy with the 48-hour loan period
- Fine Disputes are down and fine cancellations are down due to the laptop checkout contract
- Recovery of laptops has become easier with the establishment of the recovery procedures
- Haven’t hit a major pitfall yet *crosses fingers*
- Credit goes to INCREASED COOPERATION and COMMUNICATION
So how’s it all working out? The Not So Good Stuff

- Deep Freeze is great protection for the laptops, but it causes problems when Windows wants to install updates . . . Which can happen daily sometimes

- The laptops are OLD and SLOW. However, the library has written a grant to purchase new student laptops and has a student worker in the SGA lobbying for laptop purchases
Always room for improvement

- Even more increased communication between Open Lab staff and Circulation regarding laptop repair service
  - Draft “laptop service” form to document issues, who looked at a laptop, if the issues needs to be escalated to IT, etc.
Always room for improvement

- Laptop Service Request form draft

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Laptop Service Request</th>
<th>Laptop #</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Date/Time</td>
<td>Describe the Problem</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
What do the experts say about some common laptop circulation problems?

- “A large inventory of expensive equipment requires well thought-out policies and inventory control measures.”
- “[…]we have found that the longer an item is checked out, the more susceptible it is to damage.”
- “We also found it wise to include the [state property tag] equipment ID number and serial number in each item record. A laptop was stolen last year, and the library was unable to provide the police with the serial number because it was not in the item record.”
What do the experts say about some common laptop circulation problems?

- “The Media Circulation Desk area was not designed for a large staff or circulating equipment.”
- “Security became an issue […] when the library had a circulating laptop stolen for the first time. The theft occurred when the Media Circulation Desk was very busy and staff were distracted. In the same year, the library found it was missing a digital camera from where it was stored in a room behind the desk. To help combat theft, a daily inventory was instituted.”
What do the experts say about some common laptop circulation problems?

• “Patrons don’t read the form. If staff make occasional errors, patrons are even worse for their inattention to detail. Even though they only have to fill it out once a semester, patrons still do not read the laptop agreement form even though some will stand there and look at it. Occasionally, someone will read it, but that is a rarity.”
What do the experts say about some common laptop circulation problems?

- “Microsoft updates take forever! Not only did troubleshooting raise issues, but the regular updates and machine maintenance itself was a problem we had to tackle.”
Questions? Sharing?

- There are things BRCC Library still finds challenging
  - Recovering long, long, *long* overdue laptops, and collections on these overdue laptops
  - Getting faculty & staff to use the correct email address to request equipment at least 24 hours before the equipment is needed
Questions? Sharing?

- Still streamlining the entire laptop service request issue – will probably take a while of storming and norming before something sticks
- Still working with IT to address the Windows update issue efficiently
- Still working on getting out word that we desperately need more laptops – but also balancing that need with our current staffing situation
Suggested Reading & References


THANK YOU!

Cristina Caminita
Baton Rouge Community College
225.216.8557
caminitac@mybrcc.edu