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The Addlestone Improvement Project: Challenges, solutions, and experiences during renovation

Abstract

Brandon Lewter, Interlibrary Loan and Reference Librarian at College of Charleston reports on the challenges and experiences of a large library renovation project undertaken by the Addlestone Library at the College of Charleston.

Keywords

library renovation, Addlestone Library



FEATURED ARTICLE

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By Brandon Lewter

Introduction

In the 1990s as Kathleen Lance and Andrew Dorfman helped prepare for the renovation of their library, the Dayton Memorial Library (DML) of Regis University, they conducted a literature search with the hope of finding examples to guide them on how to prepare and conduct library business during their renovation (Lance & Dorfman, 1999). They found there is not much literature on the subject, and even today, several years later, the scarce literature out there is not easily adaptable to every unique situation and library. Some experiences Lance and Dorfman encountered at DML mirror what was encountered at College of Charleston's Marlene and Nathan Addlestone Library (Addlestone), but in many ways, their situation was completely different.

There are multitudes of reasons libraries undergo renovation. Libraries may need to accommodate for growing collections and patron populations, which require more shelving, studying, and meeting space. Libraries also renovate to adapt to changes in user needs, such as collection types and new, relevant technologies. The DML, for example, underwent renovation "to meet the technological, space and environmental demands of the 1990s" (Lance & Dorfman, 1999). Academic libraries in particular might renovate to meet accreditation standards. Some libraries many renovate to update regular wear and tear, repair damage from floods and fires, or simply to change the ambiance. Ultimately, libraries need to attract and keep patrons and be places suited towards "scholarship, engagement, spirituality, and other positive emotions, as well as subjects'

desire to use those spaces more than they currently use their existing library" (Jackson, 2011).

The College of Charleston Libraries are not exempt to these challenges. Since 1770, the College of Charleston has grown immensely by population and physical size. As a result of this growth, several buildings have served as the libraries over the years. As the libraries outgrew their facilities, the buildings were repurposed.

Today the College has a multi-library system consisting of Addlestone Library, the main library that serves a majority of the College's faculty, students, and staff, and four other libraries with specialized collections and services. Since opening in 2005, Addlestone has an average of over one million visitors a year, and since that time, the College's enrollments have more than doubled in size, making a growing need to renovate the now not-so-new Addlestone Library more apparent (Addlestone Library, 2014).

The renovation of Addlestone Library began in the middle of the 2014 spring semester. Library administration decided to brand the renovation as the Addlestone Improvement Project (A.I.P.). Several factors prompted the A.I.P., including the need to update technology and meet the changing needs for study, meeting, and collection spaces. Perhaps even more pressing was the newly formed partnership between the College of Charleston Libraries and the South Carolina Historical Society (SCHS), which necessitated the need to move a majority of the SCHS's collection of exceptional

rare materials, including books, letters, maps, journals, drawing, and photographs, to the Addlestone Library (Barnett, Breard, Claire, Lewter, & Minor, 2014).

The Addlestone Improvement Project

The A.I.P. required over a year of fundraising, planning, and organization. The planned improvements included:

- *Adding 200 seats for students, including 140 general seats, 3 small group study rooms, and 50 seats in a new flexible lecture/ learning space*
- *Giving students easy access to power outlets for their laptops, phones, and numerous other mobile devices*
- *Consolidating the entire book collection (A –Z) on the second floor into mobile shelving*
- *Expanding the Special Collections Reading Room to provide more seats for students and researchers, as well as accommodating more reference books*
- *Increasing the capacity for the library's unique manuscript and rare book collections*
- *Adding a high-tech lecture room on the third floor*
- *Building a new Starbucks Coffee Shop (Barnett, Breard, Claire, Lewter, & Minor, 2014)*

To achieve these goals, the A.I.P. required cordoning off the second and third floors of the library to everyone except essential personnel, which included library administrators, campus safety officers, and the construction crew. If a patron needed library materials, even those owned by the College, their only recourse was borrowing from another institution via Interlibrary Loan or PASCAL (Partnership Among South Carolina Academic Libraries), a state consortium for lending and borrowing library materials. In order to maintain the service level Addlestone's patrons were

accustomed to, the project required diligent planning, foresight, and adaptability.

Challenge One: Marketing and Communication

In addition to figuring out the logistics of physical space, collection storage, and services, a great deal of marketing and communication, early and often, was necessary to prepare for the project. The library needed to consider many factors in order to keep faculty, students, staff, and affiliate patrons happy. In order to do so, the marketing campaign included sending emails, distributing flyers (see Image A), and creating a communications blog maintained by two newly formed committees: The Communications Team and The Addlestone Improvement Team. Both of these committees had virtually the same members, but were used at different times throughout the A.I.P. In addition to the aforementioned marketing strategies, the Communications Team created signage to alert patrons of the upcoming project and the improvements it would bring. The communication blog (<http://blogs.cofc.edu/addlestone-improvement/>), powered by WordPress, not only provided useful information on preparations before the A.I.P., but it also served to provide information and updates with text and pictures throughout the project.

Specifically, the communication blog was broken in to eight sections. The home page gave a general overview of the project, a list of major improvements, information on the partnership with the SCHS, information for faculty on how to set up reserves for summer sessions, links to Interlibrary Loan and

PASCAL¹, contact information for the communication team, and a schedule of when specific sections of the library would be inaccessible. The following page, titled The Project, gave a more detailed description of the project. Other pages included a more specific project timeline, FAQs, information specifically for faculty, instructions on using Interlibrary Loan and PASCAL to access collections, floor plans and concept images, and finally, a page to provide frequent updates with text and pictures.

The next phase in preparing for the project was figuring out how to change catalog records to indicate what items were and were not available. Many ideas were proposed on how to do this, but in the end, each catalog record page featured a statement: "Please note that during the period from March-August, 2014, Addlestone Library will be undergoing a major improvement project. After March 1st, the print journal collection will be unavailable. After May 3rd, the print book collection (except browsing and reserve books) will be unavailable. Please make use of our electronic holdings or use PASCAL for books and Interlibrary Loan for journal articles during this period. Check the Addlestone Improvement Blog for more details. Resources at SCHS, MRL, Avery, and North Campus are unaffected." The PASCAL, Interlibrary Loan, and Addlestone Improvement Blog text were hyperlinked to their respective webpages.

Challenge Two: Collections, Furniture, and Departments: Where Do They Go?

The library administration clearly understood the need to maintain compliance with guidelines set by Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges.

¹ PASCAL Delivers is a rapid book-delivery service provided by the Partnership Among South Carolina Academic Libraries which enables students, faculty

The specific area of concern is from section 2.9 of the *Resource Manual for the Principles of Accreditation: Foundations for Quality Enhancement*, which states:

"The institution, through ownership or formal arrangements or agreements, provides and supports student and faculty access and user privileges to adequate library collections and services and to other learning/information resources consistent with the degrees offered. Collections, resources, and services are sufficient to support all its educational, research, and public service programs." (Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges, 2012)

Addlestone's administration knew they must continue to offer as many learning resources and services as possible during the project.

Because the project was taking place on only the second and third floors of Addlestone, the need for space was not as critical when compared to the situation faced at DML. Faculty and staff of that institution considered "remain[ing] in the library building with the construction taking place around [them]" (Lance & Dorfman, 1999). This was determined not to be feasible at DML, but Addlestone had the accommodations to proceed in this manner. Some of the departments on the second and third floors had to be moved to offices on the first floor, but the inconvenience posed by this situation is minimal compared to having to move to another building entirely.

Collections and Furniture

Most academic libraries have high expenditures necessary to remain operational, of which the

and staff across the state to request and receive books from academic libraries in South Carolina (Schneider & Johnston, 2015).

collection and furniture in the library are a large part (Ellis-Newman & Robinson, 1998). Fortunately in Addlestone there was room on the first floor, and with careful planning and placement on the second and third floors, there was room to store these materials safely. For example, the bound periodicals were boxed up and stored in the rotunda on the first floor. Books being moved to compact mobile shelving were boxed up according to call number and stored around the rotunda on the second floor. Books already on compact mobile shelving units were able to stay on the shelves and were protected with tightly wrapped plastic. Reference materials were not an issue because most of Addlestone's are online, but what remained of the physical reference collection was already stored on the first floor.

Furniture, like tables and chairs, were kept as close as possible to their planned locations by carefully stacking in any available space. When deemed necessary, these items were covered with a heavy plastic sheet to protect them from dust and debris caused by construction. The static shelving units, which were being replaced by compact mobile shelving units, were systematically dismantled and thrown down a trash shoot into a large bin to be hauled away for recycling or donation.

To cope with faculty collection needs during the A.I.P., the Communication Team issued advanced notices to put collection materials on reserve at the circulation desk. This resulted in stacks of labeled boxes organized by patron name and call number. Some faculty members, like those at DML, "established mini reserve collections in their own or departmental offices" (Lance & Dorfman, 1999). Student patrons were given advanced notice to check out materials they knew they would need during the project, and the due dates were extended until the end of the project. However, of course, no amount of foresight could satiate

the library materials needed for the entirety of the project, and the Interlibrary Loan (ILL) Department was prepared to handle that demand.

Interlibrary Loan and Reference

As an access service and a member of the Reference Department, the ILL Department was already located on the first floor, negating the need to move. Before Addlestone lost access to its collection, the ILL staff was unsure how the loss would affect the volume of borrowing requests they received. They did not see a preemptive need to increase staffing because the lending specialist, who would have no items to lend, could help with the borrowing side of ILL. This also meant that the ILL Department would need to provide access to all library materials needed during the A.I.P. ILL staff prepared by making sure they had enough shipping materials on-hand to return borrowed items and developing a way to track requests for inaccessible items the library owned. The latter was done to keep track of these requests for collection development purposes. In the future, these statistics could influence deaccessioning decisions, as well as budgeting decisions for departments' annual book purchasing funds. In addition, interlibrary loan staff sent out messages to relevant listservs to notify their constituents of the impending closure and inability to lend. Preparations were also made with OCLC so that potential borrowing libraries would not see Addlestone Library, OCLC symbol SBM, as a potential lender.

The Reference Department handled research consultations and instruction as they usually do during the summer—the only difference was that they only had one classroom to share for instruction. At the Information Desk (Addlestone's name for our reference desk), the same summer traffic was present with the exception of questions from patrons who were

unaware of the A.I.P. Occasionally, the Information and Circulation Desks had to deal with an angry patron who could not access the stacks. Other than that, business was as usual.

Cataloging and Collection Development Departments

The department that faced one of the biggest challenges was probably the Cataloging and Collection Development Departments, comprised of about ten full time staff members and librarians, one or two volunteers, and a couple of student workers. The A.I.P. required temporarily relocating the departments from their offices on the second floor, so they had to change their workflow dramatically. They were scattered on the first floor between the Interlibrary Loan and Reference Offices, a computer lab classroom, and offices in the Center for Student Learning (CSL). Fortunately, since the A.I.P. occurred during the summer, the CSL offices were available.

Nevertheless, with exceptional coordination and teamwork, Cataloging and Collection Development continued their work. Incoming, purchased books were stored in boxes in the computer lab classroom until they could be cataloged and tagged. After cataloging, the books would then be moved to an office in CSL where they were re-boxed and organized based on call numbers. All of this preparation and coordination made the transition to the compact mobile shelving much easier

Circulation

The Circulation Department had a difficult time during the A.I.P, which was a surprise to library administration and staff. Since the Circulation Department would not have a collection to circulate, many assumed that the department would be largely unaffected. The staff anticipated an increase in reserve traffic, due to the notices sent to faculty by the Communications Team, but they did not

anticipate that so many faculty would take advantage of this service, which resulted in an unexpectedly large amount of reserve materials to process and store. The department planned to place reserve materials in boxes organized by the faculty member's name and then by call number, but the unexpected volume rendered the plan inadequate. When faculty members came to retrieve reserve items, it was often difficult for staff to get to them, due to the plethora of boxes, but they were as prepared as they could have been without ever having to provide this service before.

The circulation staff could not foresee how the poor organizational skills of the contractors hired to do a majority of the collection's moving would affect them. Many of the moving company's responsibilities in planning and organizing fell upon the circulation staff. For example, when the moving contractors measured the microfilm shelves incorrectly and left them to impede pathways between the stacks, the staff members had to figure out a solution. An even bigger problem left to circulation by the moving contractors was the monumental task of figuring out shelf placement and call number ranges. Two circulation staff members took on this project and put together an excellent plan that made re-shelving much easier than it would have been following the moving contractors' unorganized notes.

Furthermore, several months after the project was complete, circulation staff were still sorting out mistakes made by the book movers. Books and periodicals were found misshelved in frustratingly large numbers. Circulation staff was again responsible for fixing these errors.

The Addlestone Improvement Project Begins

When the A.I.P. began, the library operated smoothly, other than the aforementioned problems and occasional construction noises.

Many of the College's students were gone for summer break, faculty members were starting their research and writing, and library faculty and staff were starting their usual summer projects. Because communication was so prevalent leading up to the project, few library users were surprised when they came in to find the second and third floors, along with a majority of our collection, off limits.

The Technical Services, Acquisitions, and Cataloging Departments moved to the Interlibrary Loan and Reference offices, and those staff members adjusted well to the change. In fact, the move helped make some of the department's workflows more efficient.

When members of the Reference and Interlibrary Loan Departments had questions about disbursing their collection development funds for their respective liaison departments, all they had to do was ask someone from acquisitions, rather than emailing and waiting for a response or calling and not getting an answer. When interlibrary loan staff wanted to facilitate a purchase on demand for a user, all they had to do was give the standard number of the item to a member of acquisitions and the item would be ordered. When the item arrived, interlibrary loan staff was close by the cataloging staff, which led to quicker cataloging. When the A.I.P. concluded, on the projected date, everyone was happy to have things back to normal, and we certainly learned a lot through the process.

Conclusion – Lessons Learned

Over the course of the Addlestone Improvement Project, many challenges were faced, and for the most part, overcome. Libraries and librarians who face a renovation in their future can learn from the A.I.P. to make their transition smoother. Meticulous planning, abundant communication, flexibility, and tough

decisions are needed to make obstacles scarce and the unavoidable problems easier to handle.

Again, communication is critical. Patrons should be notified about the upcoming changes early and through several different mediums. If possible, set up a blog to inform users of changes before and during the project, and advertise the renovation as much as possible. If time permits, give out informational flyers and bookmarks a few months prior to starting. Hold an informational session to answer any outstanding questions your patron base may have. Send emails and make signage impossible to ignore. With all of these communication methods, it is important to be consistent with your message and branding. Forming a committee to accomplish this was very helpful at Addlestone.

Interlibrary loan can play a huge role in a library renovation, and it is a good opportunity to showcase its value to administration. At Addlestone, our borrowing numbers more than doubled during the A.I.P. when combining traditional interlibrary loan and PASCAL statistics. Interlibrary loan staff should prepare for the project by alerting reciprocal partners and consortium members, such as OCLC. If hiring a moving contractor, make sure you vet them. In our case, we had used the same contractor in a previous move when the library's collection was much smaller. At that time, the College's student body was less than half of what it is today, and because of this, our collection has grown tremendously. The contractor was obviously not equipped for such a large project, and we may have been able to figure that out if we gathered feedback from other similar clients.

Changes are not always good, so carefully plan and consider the benefits and negatives of your renovation or move. In our case, the Circulation Department, Interlibrary loan, and users have noticed the impact of moving our collection to

compact mobile shelving. It can be very inconvenient to wait for another patron to exit a row two shelves down when you are trying to quickly reshelv or pull books.

Finally, if you are planning to let faculty put items on reserve during your renovation, plan accordingly and anticipate a higher volume of materials than you might expect. While our system ultimately worked in the end, with more space and shelving, this service would have gone more smoothly.

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Appendix A: Addlestone Improvement
Project Flyer



Addlestone Library Improvement Project

blogs.cofc.edu/Addlestone-Improvement
addlestoneimprovements@cofc.edu

COMING FALL 2014:

- 200 new seats
- 3 new study rooms
- 1 new high-tech lecture room
- New Starbucks Café
- More power for mobile devices
- Expansion of Special Collections
- South Carolina Historical Society Collection coming in Dec. 2014

IMPORTANT DATES:

2/21/14 - Last Day for Bound Journals to be put on Reserve for Summer Sessions (for Faculty).

3/1/14 - Bound Journals and Periodicals will not be available.

4/15/14 - Last Day for Books to be put on Reserve for Summer Sessions (for Faculty).

5/3/14 - 2nd & 3rd Floors closed. Special Collections closed. Book Stacks unavailable until August 18. Faculty Resource Room closed.

8/18/14 - Estimated completion date. All floors open, all collections available, all departments open.

The first floor of the library will be open for the duration of the renovation. **ILL and PASCAL will be available all summer long.** Technical Services will relocate to the Reference offices on the 1st floor, and faculty should continue to submit orders for library materials as usual. Computers, Microfilm, and the Media Collection are not affected by the project. For more information, please see the Addlestone Library Improvement Blog.

Questions?

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