Suggestions for Implementing a Cooperative Project

Preplanning:

Institution Needing Service

- Decide on a project
- Make sure administration supports the collaboration.
- Check to see if there are any administrative personnel issues. (unions etc.)
- Evaluate library infrastructure and make sure it will support the project. (Shared catalog, similar local practices, standardized cataloging rules etc.)
- Evaluate if it’s more economical to do this project commercially or with collaborator
- Locate library willing to share expertise
- Arrange meeting with potential partner to discuss, build trust and get buy-in

Institution Providing Service

- Make sure administration supports the collaboration.
- Decision making: Do you have the extra capacity? Library offering service must decide if they have the time/resources to agree.
- Evaluate library infrastructure and make sure it will support the project. (Shared catalog, similar local practices, standardized cataloging rules etc.)
- Decide if there are any administrative personnel issues (unions etc.)

Getting Ready

- Assign project leaders on both sides of the project. Have a clear understanding of the agreement on what work is to be done.
- Establish trust by having participants meet in person to plan and kick it off. Get by in from staff participating at both ends
• Discuss specifications and workflow anticipated. Is it a short term project or ongoing?
• Agree in advance on the cost, barter arrangement or compensation to the library either monetarily or gift in kind.
• Do a test run/trial and evaluate to be sure specifications meet understanding.
• Agree on a timeline for the project.
• Put agreement in writing for future reference (MOU).

Implementation

• Schedule meetings/phone calls on a regular basis to discuss status, progress and problems.
• Decide in advance how periodic quality control will be evaluated
• Service receiver should be flexible if they are not paying for a serve and unforeseeable delays happen by the service providers
• If the agreed upon deadline is not possible, or the project is larger than expected, discuss and revise the timeline.
• Be flexible. Don’t be afraid to adjust the workflow if staff finds a better way during the project.
• Communicate. Communicate. Communicate.

Evaluation

• Evaluate project. When project is completed or at periodic points in the project, have a post mortem discussion to alter or improve process along the way.

Conclusion

• Celebrate the conclusion of the project!