Library Multimedia Project
The Client View

Julie Kwan
USC Science & Engineering Library
March 11, 1997
Library Multimedia Project
The Client View

- Library objectives and concerns
- Library client activities
- Evaluation of results to date
- Comments on WinWin spiral process
USC University Libraries

- Large & complex system with 20 service points serving diverse community
- Lean staff & limited resources
- Many current competing priorities
- Organizational values: service, respect, innovation, collaboration, opportunity
The Opportunity

- Information technology (IT) provides new delivery tools for primary research materials
- IT is increasing types of materials available compared to traditional library offerings
- Short time from problem to prototype solution is critical in IT
- Rapid rate of development in IT area introduces costs & risks to develop tools
Goal of the Collaboration

To bring together experts from the University Libraries and the Department of Computer Science:

- In a defined period of time
- At an acceptable level of risk
- With an affordable level of effort
University Libraries’ Expertise

We hypothesized that librarians should serve in the customer role due to their:

- Subject expertise in many disciplines
- Information resource expertise
- Knowledge of critical “unsolved” problems
- Sense of the value of the solutions for the user
Computer Science Expertise

We looked to the Computer Science faculty & students for:

- Systems design knowledge
- Systems development approach
- Experience with problem solving tools
- Programming & technical knowledge & skill
Library’s Win Conditions

- Projects must be do-able with our resources
- Librarian time was a big concern
- Project must not interfere with library operations
- Participation would offer what we didn’t have -- programmers & software designers
- Entrepreneurial opportunity
Librarians’ Win Conditions

- Librarians wanted to have an opportunity to work on problems they’d like to see solved
- Librarians wanted to make a new kind of contribution to education at USC
- Librarians wanted recognition for their contributions
- Librarians wanted tools for fund raising & development
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Getting Started

- Project coordinator issued call for participation & received volunteers
- Project coordinator & technical advisor recruited others through internal discussions
- Librarians submitted problem statements
- Student teams self-selected problems
- Librarians served as clients for student teams
Librarians' Role

- Met with student teams as needed
- Described problem, information resources & needs
- Described & negotiated win conditions
- Attended prototype demonstrations
- Evaluated prototype & interaction with team

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Process Management

- Shared experiences during lunch meetings
- Communicated via email
- Library coordinator served as link between professor & librarians
- Library technical consultant provided additional trouble-shooting
- Initiated contact with reporter for USC Chronicle
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Evaluation of Results to Date

- At difficult points, focused on primary purpose -- the educational experience
- Want more direct experience with WinWin
- Librarians enjoyed project & learned from it
- Librarians were effective in client role
- Results were far better than expected
- Began planning projects for next year

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Course Environment Benefits

- Semester works well for “proof of concept” needed for funding proposals
- Course environment defines a hard & fast delivery date
- Productive interaction with University community even if prototype might not be delivered
Course Environment Risks

- Minimal resource expenditure to develop concept -- however, "cost avoidance" if the concept is not viable
- Less control over final product choices
- Sometimes difficult to respond to technical problems quickly

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Problems Encountered

- Most materials were not in digital form & there were limited resources to digitize examples
- Did not have access to suitable search engine
- Link to integrated library system was not feasible at this time
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Librarians’ Views of WinWin

- Recognized that everyone’s win conditions were essential for project success
- Developed stronger awareness of software developers’ issues
- Thought more critically about our own measures of success
- Made us more likely to look for others’ win conditions

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Broader Implications of WinWin

- Encouraged us to “think big”
- Practical experience with WinWin fostered adoption of philosophy both within & beyond the project
- Changed subtly our view of teams
- Are considering using WinWin as we “reinvent” the library

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