Collaboration as A Strategy to Accelerate Changes in Library Development

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ABSTRACT
The emerging of Web 2.0 and Library 2.0 provided widespread technological innovation and ease of access to information, as the result of the emphasis on digital collections and electronic resources, libraries around the world are facing challenging future. This naturally causes librarians to revise their professional duties as information providers. The trend should be seen as potential rather than problems. Librarians have always been serving the information needs, but now they must conquer the challenges to which they have been subjected and evolve their professions through collaboration with various parties.

INTRODUCTION
Librarians should witnessed this moment of change as an opportunity to reshape the library services entire structure and reorganize it with a more user-centric approach to the service menus and vocabulary. Librarians have to move away from the traditional way of providing services to that would provide total revolution to their current job expectations. In certain part of the world library user no longer have to enter a library building as most information is available electronically. Physical books, journals and newspapers are now available in electronic form, universities provide students with electronically scanned copies of lecture notes localised in campus system and availability of electronic interlibrary loan.

THE NATIONAL IT AGENDA (NITA) REVISITED
NITA launched in 1996 by the National IT Council (NITC), creates the foundation and framework for the utilisation of information and communication technology (ICT) to transform Malaysia into a developed nation in its mould consistent with Vision 2020. The NITA vision is to utilise ICT to transform all of Malaysian society into an information society, then to a knowledge society and finally to a values-based knowledge society. With the theme “Turning Ripples into Tidal Waves”, NITA focuses on the development of people, infrastructure and applications to create value, to provide equity and access to all Malaysians, and to qualitatively transform Malaysia into a values-based knowledge society by the year 2020.
The National IT Framework (NITF) is a strategic and synergistic combination of a number of key components, working in tandem. The framework is best viewed as an interconnected triangle consisting of three key elements, namely, People, Infrastructure and Applications.

The primary importance of the human factor in a change environment is well reflected by the placement of the “people” element at the apex of the triangle. The triangle itself reflects the three key issues surrounding the triangulation, these being: access and equity, creating value and qualitative transformation.

The principle that all citizens need access to information in an equitable manner has been duly recognized. The infrastructure element is seen in terms of hard and soft infrastructure. The hard infrastructure involves the computer hardware and the relevant telecommunication components. The soft infrastructure on the other hand includes databases, networks, laws, and regulations.

The third element of applications revolves around the development of content that is needed by all players in the ICT field. The main emphasis here is on local content and culture compatibility. The development of appropriate and cost effective applications would be critical in ensuring that Malaysia is able to maintain its competitive position in the market place in the years to come. Each of the three elements in the NITF has its own strategies, all of which work towards the achievement of a knowledge society.

Several years later another national ICT policy was brought to our intention namely Third Outline Perspective Plan (3rd OPP) on Developing Malaysia Into A Knowledge-Based Economy (Economic Planning Unit, 2001) - that reflect clearly that libraries being missed out of the national agenda and if we explore further librarians has their part directly or indirectly towards achieving this very important agenda.
WHAT IS COLLABORATION?

Encyclopaedia Britannica Merriam-Webster Dictionary & Thesaurus defines *collab-o-rate* as three intransitive verbs ie. *to work jointly with others or together especially in an intellectual endeavor,* secondly *to cooperate with or willingly assist an enemy of one's country and especially an occupying force* and thirdly *to cooperate with an agency or instrumentality with which one is not immediately connected.* It is clear that collaboration involves two or more parties that work closely together to achieve mutually agreed objectives and goals. There is statement that insist scholars to examine three areas: antecedents to collaboration, the process of collaboration itself, and the outcomes of that process (Gray, Barbara, and Donna J. Wood, 1991) Mattessich, P.W., Murray-Close, M. & Monsey, B. R. (2001) defines collaboration as a mutually beneficial and well-defined relationship entered into by two or more organizations to achieve common goals.

IMPLEMENTING COLLABORATION

Goals
Most agree that collaboration is a complex process but is only one of several approaches to working with others to achieve common goals. In order for a collaborative effort to reach a successful outcome, it is common for library to treat it like a project or a planned-based job. The job should have goal, time-line, common tools and roles.

Negotiations
Negotiation takes place on two levels addresses the substance and focuses on the procedure for dealing with the substance. Negotiations often involves participants that are adversaries, the goal is victory, demanding concessions as a condition of the relationship, distrust others search for the single answer and settle with the one that we will accept. When the participants are friends, the goal is an agreement. Normally negotiations make concessions to cultivate the relationship and trust others. Negotiating jointly will involves coming to an agreement where everyone gets what they want, reaching a mutually satisfactory agreement: win-win. Mutual trust is established it requires honesty and integrity from both parties. Both sides work together to come up with a compromise solution to suit everyone's best interests. Each party tries to see things from the other's perspective. Assertiveness is the best way here where as being passive or aggressive are not required.

Cooperation
Libraries that team up in collaborating effort often stressed on cooperation in order to marginalised each other differences. Each term suggests a different level or depth in the relationship between or among partnering groups. Some concepts about selecting the type of partnership in collaboration needed to accomplish a goal is cooperation although collaboration is considered the most complex partnership option.
Sharing Resources
When partners cooperate, they provide information to each other as needed. They make decisions independently. They share goals, resources, or responsibilities. When they coordinate, partners communicate frequently, establish compatible goals, and leverage resources together. They make some decisions together and occasionally share resources. Regular meeting offer updates, share helpful resources, encourage problem-solving, and reduce duplication of effort. When partners collaborate, they interact frequently with the explicit goal of sharing decision-making to achieve mutual goals. They pool resources and share responsibilities.

Trust
Trust between negotiating teams is very critical elements in collaboration. In any negotiation, trust was built within both party. The conflicts within the both party surfaced and only sufficient trust was built to allow the team members to reach an amicable, mutual agreement not to proceed with negotiations. It was not sufficient to sustain the partnership if there is no trust. Potential benefits have to be powerful enough to foster the willingness to build trust. The benefits to both parties were important enough to create this willingness and to support tradeoffs around taking and mitigating risk.

Time-line
Collaboration must also be managed carefully because the level of effort, number of people involved are very extensive to certain extent. Even when two people are collaborating on the smallest of projects, the probability of success hinges on very predictable things. The collaborators should agree on deadlines for when the work should be complete and if there are any interim milestones to consider. They should also decide who is in charge or at least responsible for packaging up the final deliverable. The representative of each party should be responsible for coordinating the work to eliminate the “everybody business is nobody business” syndrome that jeopardy the total outcome.

Commitment
Each party should have self awareness which is bold combination of coaching, reflection, conversation and feedback gives people the courage, clarity and leadership to move themselves and their organizations forward.

Constructive interactions through effective facilitation, new ideas and knowledge, meaningful relationships and clear systems, people are able to participate in open dialogue, become creative problem-solvers and build the kind of engaged group that can create transformational change. They should shared common vision, values and path the shared vision that enable people to engage in productive and meaningful work. This becomes the inspiration and blueprint to achieve meaningful change and successfulness of collaboration efforts.
Communications

Communication plays an essential role in the way collaboration functions. Partners should keep in constant contact with each other to discuss their aims and visions but must also remember to involve their target audience related party. It is important communication is clear and concise and helps individuals understand their role. A spokesperson from each side should be appointed to be responsible for communications as this will help co-ordinate their responses and prevent the sending of mixed messages. The key message is crucial at every level of interactions which can change throughout the life of the intentions of the organisation or partnership and from project to project.

CONCLUSION

The policy maker plays their role by institutionalised the best policies or master plan for the nation. Setting up plan would be meaningless if the implementation is not properly carried out. Various agencies has significant roles to ensure the successfulness of each policies developed. Thus, library is one of the institution that has significant roles to achieve the targeted goals. In order to maximise the resources libraries should collaborate their effort with each other or cross industries to succeed in achieving the expected outcome from the developed master plan.

BIBLIOGRAPHY


