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Collaborations between Research Libraries and University Presses

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Forms of Collaboration

Technological Support:
- The library hosts the online publishing platform for the press’s journals.
- The library creates metadata and MARC records for the press’s electronic books.
- The library hosts the online publishing platform for the press’s books for open access while the press sells the print version of the books at the same time.
- The library reformats some dated publications published by the press, and provides an online platform for open access to them.

Development of Scholarly Resources:
- The library and the press work together to create a topical Web site.
- They work together to develop and maintain a subscription-based database.

Creation of New Services:
- The library and the press create a joint office for collaborative projects.
- They jointly create a new position, the incumbent of which will help faculty explore different channels for digital publishing.
- They discuss and plan for developments in areas such as their changing roles, possible services for scholars and researchers, and new technology for future scholarly communication.

Consultative Service:
- The library participates in a pilot project of the press’s new electronic product, and provides feedback to the press.
- The library fills the press in on users’ information-seeking behavior for the sake of enhancement of a current electronic product.
- A librarian serves on the press’s editorial committee or advisory board.

Issues or Challenges Encountered

Cultural Differences:
- The library tends to focus on serving the community of its host university. The press acquires materials all over academe and market them to the world.
- The library aims at disseminating information to the broadest base.
- The library publishes selectively.
- The press as a business tends to work with deadlines. The library might not feel the same kind of chronological urgency.
- The library tends to have a liberal view of copyright while the press regards copyright as the exclusive right to promote scholarship.

Operational Issues:
- The library is funded by its host university while the press has to generate incomes to cover 90% of its operational costs. The library and the press run on different operational models.
- The library and the press have to ensure that other stakeholders understand and are open to what they are working on.
- The library and the press do not communicate with other stakeholders regarding the expectations of the collaboration.

External Assistance:
- The library and the press have to make compromises.
- The press has questions about how many of its employees should be involved in the collaborative project.
- There are questions about what could be added to the electronic books to enhance their functionality.
- The library and the press do not communicate with other stakeholders regarding the expectations of the collaboration.

How to Address These Issues

Mutual Understanding:
- The library and the press have to acknowledge the cultural differences between them with sympathy and respect. They should learn to appreciate each other’s viewpoint and needs.
- The press has questions about how many of its employees should be involved in the collaborative project.
- There could be various ways to cover the financial aspect so that the collaboration does not affect commercial concerns. It requires careful business planning between the library and the press.
- Sometimes a business consultant would be able to provide assistance for the library and the press.

Consultative Service:
- It requires careful business planning between the library and the press.
- The library may have to underwrite a higher percentage of the costs incurred by the collaborative project because the press does not have as many resources.
- The library and the press have to ensure that other stakeholders understand and are open to what they are working on.