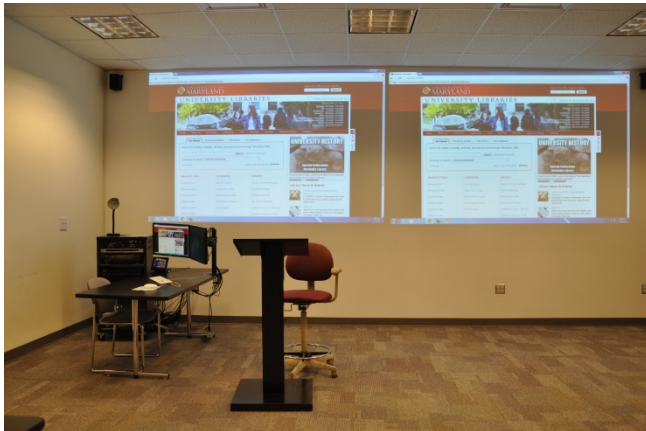# Articulating a Vision for a Media Commons at the University of Maryland

Andy Horbal
University of Maryland
June 10, 2014

Library Media Services
Then + Now

Library Media Services
Then + Now

1973

Nonprint Media Services, one of the first video-centric media centers in any research institution, opens

2001

University of Maryland creates one of North America's first academic Video On Demand services

1971

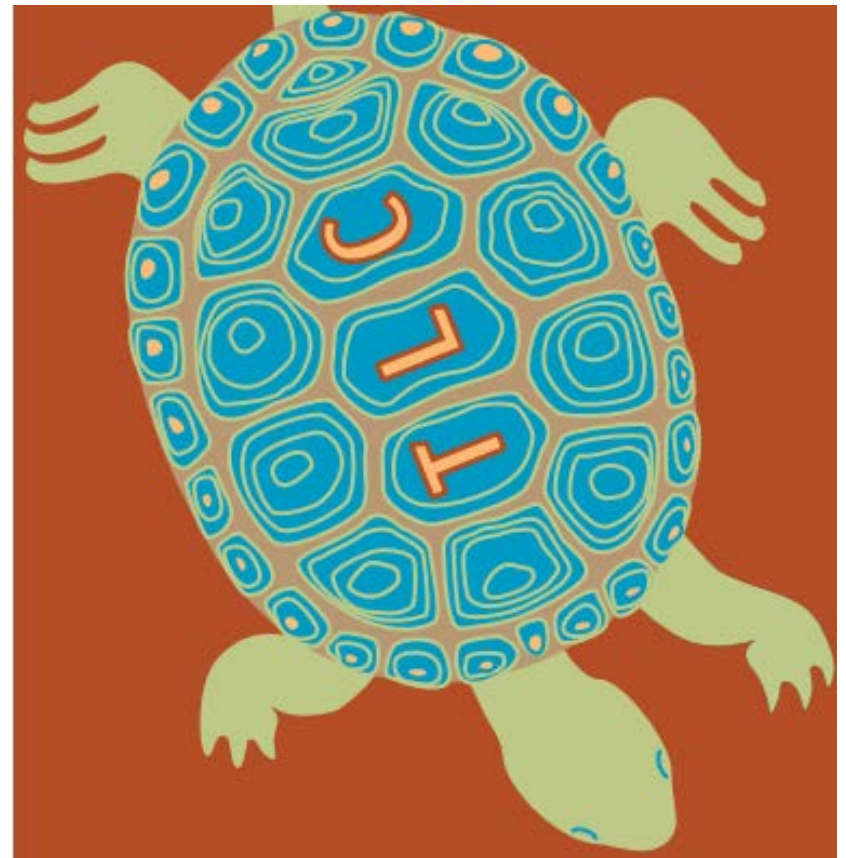Sony releases first ¾" videocassette

2013

Name changed to Library Media Services + creation of Media Commons Task Force

Media Commons Task Force

Charge:

Develop the framework to create a "Media Commons" environment that incorporates Library Media Services into other services offered by the Libraries.

"Other Services Offered by the Libraries"

Deliverables

- Environmental scan/overview of best practices related to media services

- Overview of the types of services that will be offered and a service implementation plan, including services for both students and faculty

- Equipment and staffing needs

- Partnerships/plan for how media commons will integrate with other services and units

- Space plan

- Communications and marketing strategy

- Timeline

Environmental Scan

- Literature review

- External model interviews

- Internal partner interviews

- Surveys

- Focus groups

Literature Review

"While the information commons in libraries represents very literally a physical space, it operates from the same principles as the notion of information commons in legal circles: to encourage the free, collaborative exchange and creation of ideas and information, which in turn benefits and strengthens the community."

--Elizabeth J. Milewicz, *A Field Guide to the Information Commons*

External Model Interviews

Who We Talked To:

- Pennsylvania State University
- University of Michigan
- University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign
- University of Minnesota
- North Carolina State University

External Model Interviews

Main Takeaways:

- 2 major approaches: either build a media commons from scratch or adapt an existing space

- Either way the space will evolve

- Low-barrier = better

External Model Interviews

Top Resources - Important	Very Important	Somewhat Important	Percent
Expertise to help with use of visualization tools	570	191	74.68
Images/Animations showcasing a concept, design, or theory	481	267	73.41
Web Technologies (Flash, WebGL, HTML5, etc.)	411	299	69.68
Images/Movies of raw data	455	248	68.99
Audio/Video Production	362	288	63.79
Mobile devices (tablets and phones)	344	278	61.04
Curriculum focused on visualization related topics	307	290	58.59
High Resolution Displays (4k+)	261	270	52.11
High Performance Computing Clusters	346	149	48.58
Multi-touch Tables or Screens	196	250	43.77

--From "University Visualization Activities," a report of the University of Michigan's Future of Visualization Committee

Internal Partner Interviews

Main Takeaways:

- Strong desire for more access to multimedia production equipment, such as cameras, lighting and sound equipment, and editing software

- Support services = just as important, though

- Provide information about what's available on our campus

Surveys

Main Takeaways:

- They want stuff we already have (Adobe Creative Suite, Final Cut Pro)

- 68% of faculty and 83% of students support development of campus-wide multimedia competencies

Focus Groups

"Design thinking is a creative process based around the generation and layering of ideas stemming from a concept that is often abstract and messy. An example of a design thinking process could have several stages: *define, research, prototype, implement*, and *learn or assess*. Within these steps, problems can be reframed, questions can be asked, more ideas can be created, and the best actions can be chosen."
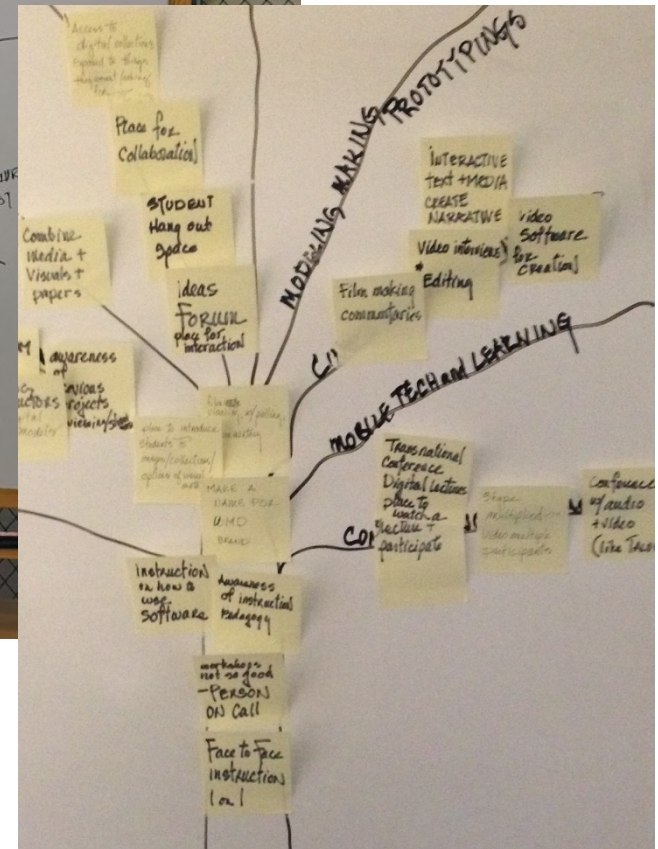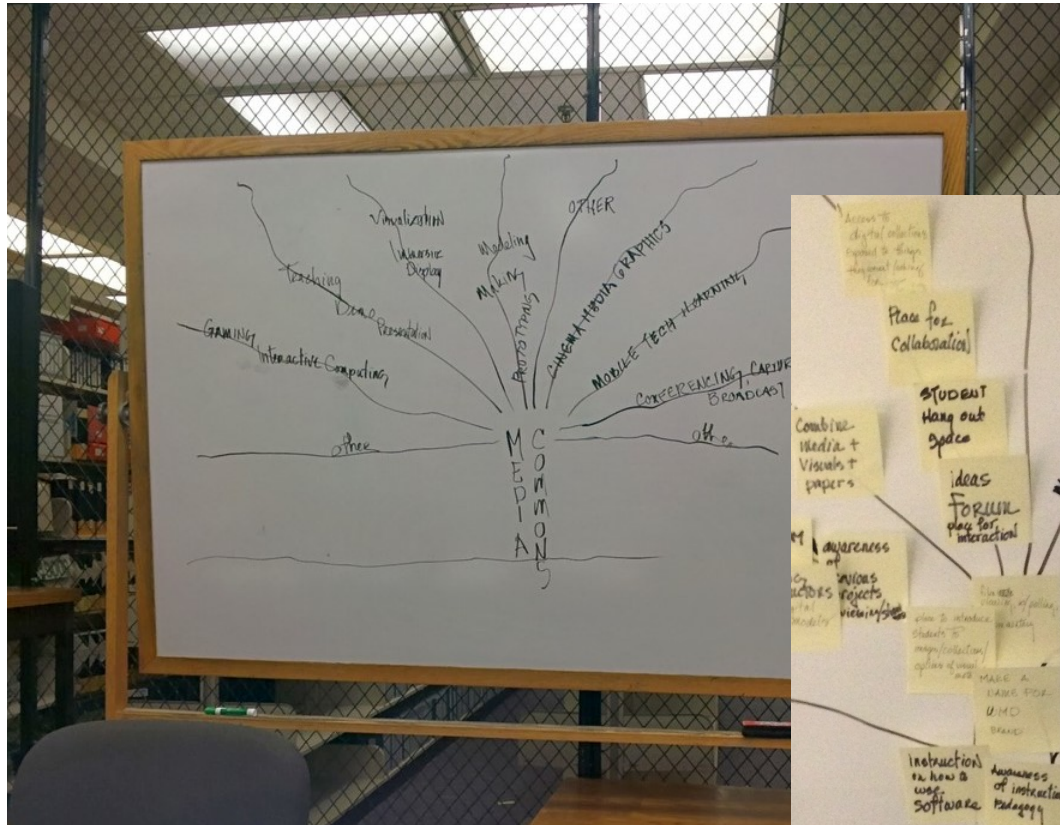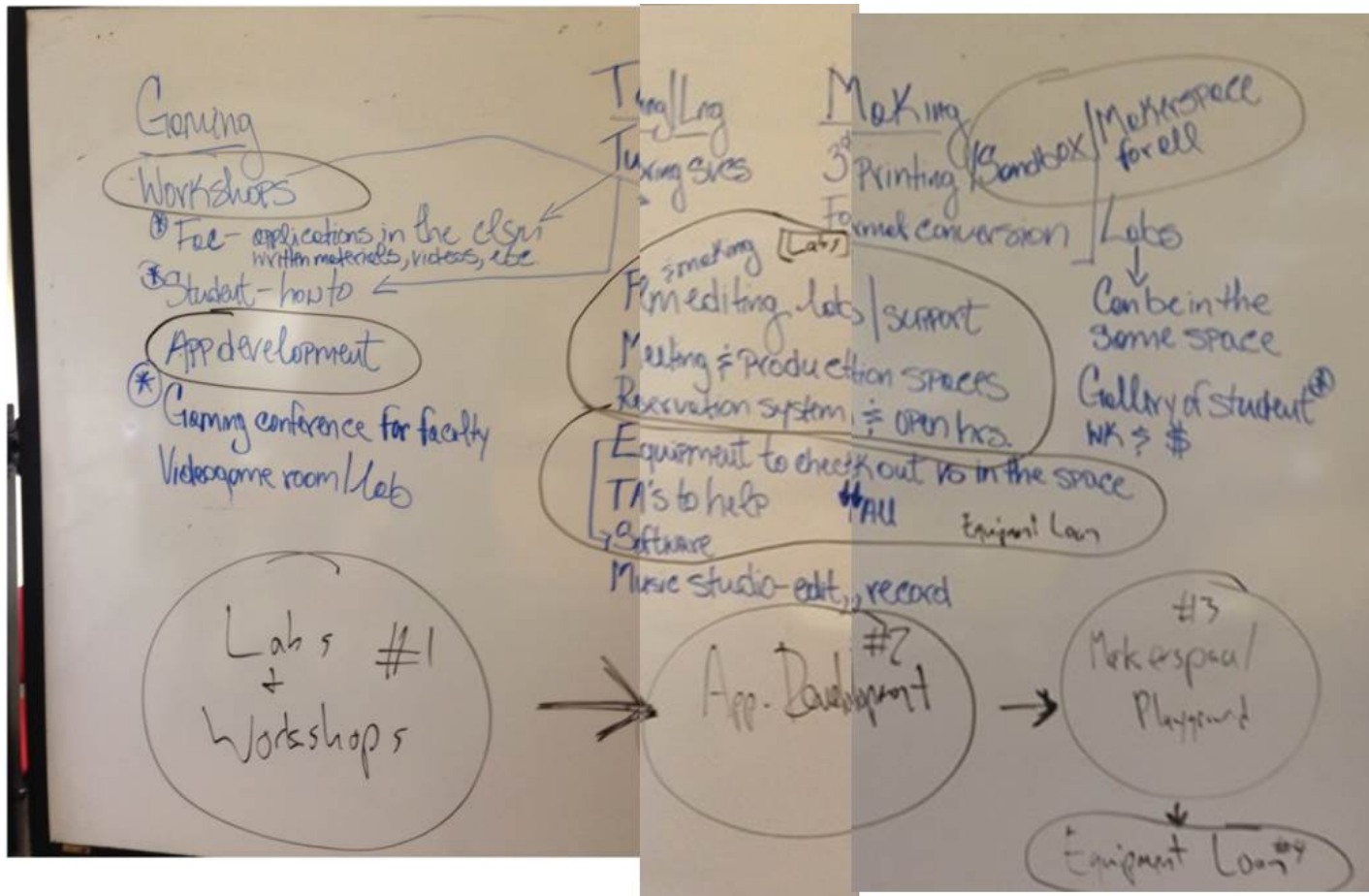
Focus Groups

Design Thinking "Games":

- Prune the Product Tree Activity

- Meta Memes Activity

- 20/20 Vision Activity

--Adapted from *Innovation Games: Creating Breakthrough Products Through Collaborative Play* by Luke Hohmann

Focus Groups

Focus Groups

Focus Groups

Main Takeaways:

- Drop-in assistance and consultation services = top priority

- Comfortable, flexible, and "awesome-looking" spaces = a close second

- Equipment loan = a distant third

Preliminary Report

"For FY2015 we are proposing that we create a Prototype Multimedia Media Production Lab and support it with staffing sufficient to ensure that everyone who uses this lab is able to get all of the technical assistance they require. "

Prototype Multimedia Production Lab

Computer w/ post-production (editing) software: $4,000
Projector: $750
Video recording equipment: $750
Audio recording equipment: $300
Conversion equipment: $1,750
Green screen/lighting: $600
Headphones/speakers: $400
Soundproofing/privacy: $450
Signage/project exhibition: $3,000
File storage: $1,500
Furniture: $3,750

Total estimated cost for production lab: $16,500

Final Report

Eight Essential Elements:

- Innovation
- Flexible
- Audio, visual, digital
- Networking, outreach, partnerships: intra- and inter-campus
- Creation and use
- Integrating media into teaching and learning
- Support services
- Physical and virtual spaces

Final Report

Guiding Statement:

"The media commons supports the creation and use of audio, visual, and digital materials and the integration of media literacy skills into the teaching and learning goals of the University of Maryland community by encouraging innovation, building a network of on- and off-campus partnerships, and providing flexible physical and virtual spaces."

Deliverables

- Environmental scan/overview of best practices related to media services

- Overview of the types of services that will be offered and a service implementation plan, including services for both students and faculty

- Equipment and staffing needs

- Partnerships/plan for how media commons will integrate with other services and units

- Space plan

- Communications and marketing strategy

- Timeline

Services That Will Be Offered

Overview:

Services should be tailored to faculty and students and include both physical and virtual components. Connecting library users to other units and people across campus is essential to our service model.

Services That Will Be Offered

- Directories of multimedia software, equipment, and expertise available at the University of Maryland

- "Pop up" spaces that campus units, community organizations, and student groups can occupy for a semester at a time to try out multimedia-related ideas

- Prototyping by staff to develop scalable multimedia tools and objects will model how they can be used for teaching and learning.

Space Plan

Overview:

The media commons should be an exciting, collaborative, and learning-oriented environment. We recommend that a professional designer be hired to help create a space that will be equal parts functional and visually stunning.

Space Plan

- Goal is to create a space that is visually and stylistically inspiring: creativity does not happen in a vacuum

- Collaboration space at center of media commons will be surrounded by specialized rooms along the periphery, including large and small classrooms, multimedia labs, "one-button studios," prototyping/sandbox lab, gaming labs, and pop-up spaces

- Entire media commons will operate under the commitment to remaining adaptable

Staffing Needs

Overview:

Services provided will include general collection access services and core information commons assistance, but will also feature advanced media production support. All staff will be trained to threshold levels in all these areas, but the media commons will also recruit and/or train staff for knowledge, skills and abilities in areas of specialization.

Staffing Needs

- Operate, maintain, and repair legacy analog and current digital audio/visual format playback and presentation equipment

- Help faculty, students, and staff create innovative media technology projects for research and instruction with emphasis on curriculum design

- Media-specific metadata creation and curation

- Design and carry out preservation and reformatting projects

Partnerships

Overview:

Partnerships should be built around skills and programming instead of being limited to shared equipment. Within the Libraries all of the commons will be networked and utilize similar staffing models to provide a core set of services and equipment with each individual commons taking on unique characteristics as appropriate.

Partnerships

- Close collaboration with the Teaching and Learning Transformation Center to establish clear "pass-off" points so that when a faculty member or student needs multimedia assistance, we will be able to direct them to the appropriate group or individual

- Media commons will ideally become the center of a "media hub" in Hornbake Library

- Provide different levels of jobs to students as part of a practicum where they can gain experience in fields related to multimedia production

Communications and Marketing Strategy

Overview:

Communications and marketing should focus on interpreting the purpose and function of the media commons environment and its value to the teaching and learning goals of faculty, staff, and students.

Communications and Marketing Strategy

- Robust web presence which includes expert and services directories, access to media resources and instructional/training materials, and work produced in commons

- Importance of establishing a brand, both for media commons specifically and Libraries commons more broadly

- Don't neglect traditional models—reach out to department heads/unit leaders, attend meetings, use successful classes to generate positive word of mouth

Implementation Strategy

Phase One:

- Create Prototype Multimedia Production Lab as per the recommendations of this task force's preliminary report

- Conduct a comprehensive survey of multimedia production equipment, spaces, services, and expertise available at the University of Maryland and create a public directories of such resources.

- Begin fundraising efforts.

- Finalize a staffing plan for the media commons aligned with the rest of the Libraries commons.

- Develop campus-wide multimedia competencies for faculty and students and build a library instruction program around them.

Implementation Strategy

Phase Two:

- Hire and begin working with a designer.

- Plan and prepare for renovation; ensure that multimedia production equipment and services remain accessible throughout the entire project.

- Hire dedicated media commons staff and re-train existing staff as necessary to ensure desired level of service.

- Create a web presence for the media commons.

- Develop a "brand" for the media commons specifically and an umbrella brand for all of the Libraries commons.

Implementation Strategy

Phases Three + Four:

- Launch multi-stage renovation project.

- Create a "media hub" in Hornbake Library.

- Proactively market media commons to the University of Maryland community to ensure a healthy level of use when the space is launched.

- Engage in continual assessment of spaces, equipment, and services in the media commons and add, subtract, and redesign as necessary to meet the actual and anticipated needs of library users.

What's Next

- Report will be reviewed by Library Management Group

- Pending their approval, it will be presented to Library Assembly and disseminated to staff

- Phase one initiatives will commence this summer

- We will follow this roadmap regardless of whether or not funding comes through as quickly as we hope

Bibliography

- Milewic, E.J. (2009). Origin and development of the information commons in academic libraries. In C. Forrest & M. Halbert (Eds), *A field guide to the information commons* (pp. 3-17). Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press.

- Future of Visualization Committee. (2014, June 4). *University visualization activities: A report of the University of Michigan's future of visualization committee*. Retrieved from http://arc.research.umich.edu/wpcontent/uploads/2013/06/Report_VisualizationOnCampus_2013.pdf

- Hohmann, L. (2006). *Innovation games: Creating breakthrough products through collaborative play*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Addison-Wesley.

Contact

Andrew Horbal

Media Resources Librarian

0300 Hornbake Library

University of Maryland

College Park, MD 20742

(301) 405-9227

ahorbal@umd.edu

http://www.slideshare.net/horbal125/articulating-a-vision-for-a-media-commons-at-the-university-of-maryland