

FROM THE 2006 PLANNING RETREAT

Barriers and Solutions

Barbara introduced this discussion by referencing barriers identified in the literature on consortia:

- Physical distance between members
- Need for institutional recognition versus recognition of the whole
- Barbara encouraged a discussion of barriers with regard to the six new potential projects – come up with barriers AND if possible, solutions
- *Overheard: “We’re this close to greatness”*

| Barriers | Solutions |
|--|---|
| Understanding the issues to a sufficient degree to participate | Seminars, information sharing, briefing papers, briefing at Council meetings |
| Money and budget cycle | Stronger central budget, more advanced planning, dues increases, using central funds to pilot a project or test a product or service. |
| Local time commitments | Augment TRLN staff with consultants, tap into non-librarian profession or paraprofessional staff in our libraries |
| Competing resources among institutions (including staff) | Focusing on projects with the biggest impact, partners, grants, etc. |
| Different perspectives, adequacy of skill sets, conservative nature of librarians – need to be risk-takers | Encourage risk-taking, big idea speaker series to break out of how we do our jobs day to day |
| Organizational structures: Different institutions have different funding, different timing for readiness to do something | |
| Committee structures are not nimble enough | Specific project groups – drawing on expertise where it exists – not representative (necessarily) |
| Organizing leadership through TRLN | Strong central staff, strategic planning |
| Small size is a barrier in some contexts: Licensing, last – copy | Bring in other partners, consortia, etc. for targeted areas |

One group focused on the integration of the proposed six projects – noted that they have individual merit but are strengthened by linking them together under a vision/rubric “TRLN Digitization Project.”

- Strategically work through this using project management expertise
- We have more opportunities than barriers – tremendous amount of expertise
- Would have to learn to live with ambiguity -- some things position us for other projects and are not in themselves results or products or deliverables
- Leadership exists in TRLN – also need grants, library schools, consultants – these people have to feel part of TRLN and our institutions
- Microsoft as a model for integrating disparate projects
- TRLN Suite of E-Services and Content
- TRLN central staff are an asset – hungry and eager for opportunity