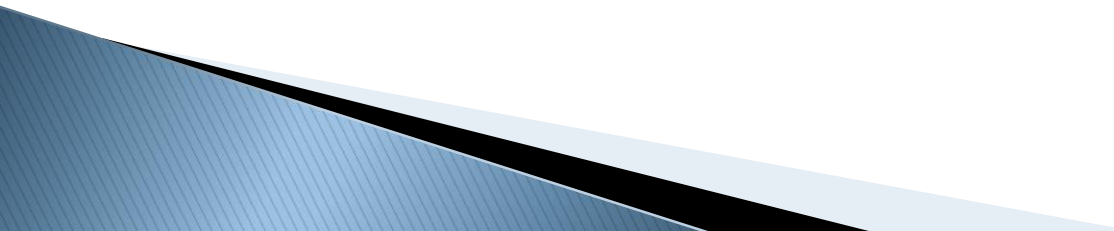# An Examination of Factors Contributing to the Reorganization of Technical Services in Mid-Size Libraries

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Introduction

- Topic important to my work

- Have been hearing rumors of departmental elimination recently

- Not understanding why this is happening
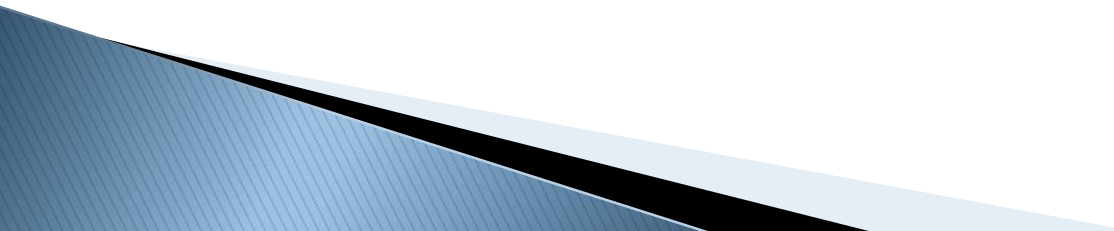
- Would like to find out more

Research Problem

The Technical Services department has historically been an essential element to a library. This department plays an important role because it prepares materials, including electronic resources, in a timely manner to ensure library information seekers have access to all information.

Recently, some libraries have incorporated Technical Services with other departments of the library like Reference, Circulation, or Public Services, resulting in shrinking staff size, and a restructuring of the processing of materials. This has led me to wonder why libraries are making the decision to terminate this department and how this department is being incorporated into different areas of the library.
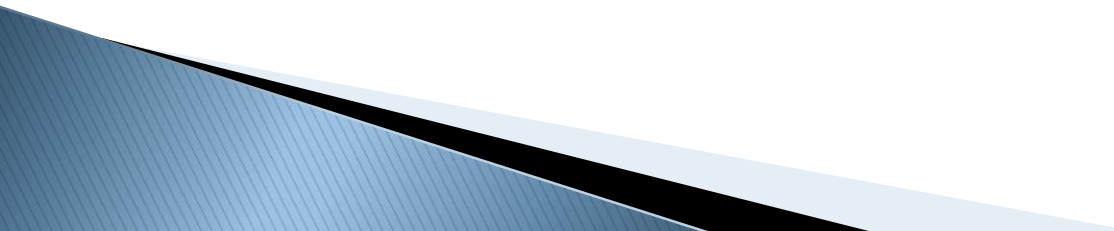
Research Question

What factors do mid-sized academic libraries consider when making the decision to incorporate Technical Services into other departments?
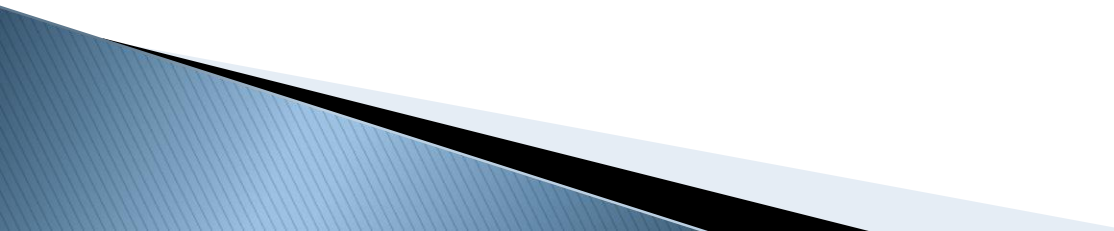
Interested Parties

- Library directors and board members

- Librarians and staff of Technical Services

- Technical Services professors at library schools

- Patrons of the libraries

Literature Review

- Explores how important Technical Services is to the functionality of libraries (Montoya, 1999)

- Shows how Technical Services has changed over the last 35 years (Johnson, 2006)

- Considers Technical Services' new role in an ever-changing environment (Johnson, 2006)

Literature Review

- Shows Technical Services is a continuing need. Electronic forms of information will still need processing (Bothmann, 2004)

- States there will always be some form of Technical Services, just renamed and reorganized (Fessler, 2007)

Literature Review

- Examines that there will always be some form of processing to keep Technical Services needed (Taylor, 1994)
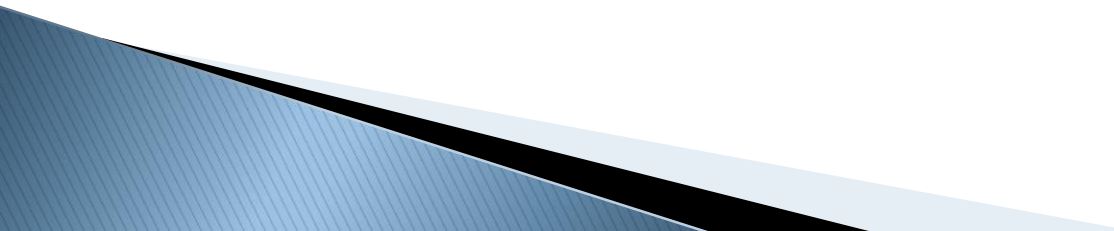
Information Gathering Method

- Contact information
  - Library Directors
  - Three to five mid-size libraries in United States
  - Technical Services integrated into other departments
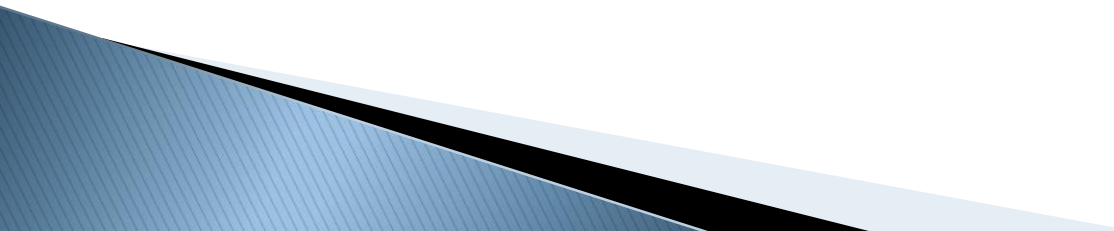
- Interview Questionnaire (appendix)

Research Design

- Research goals
  - Interview design
  - Type of research

- Possible factors of the reorganization
  - Changing user focus
  - Budgetary reasons
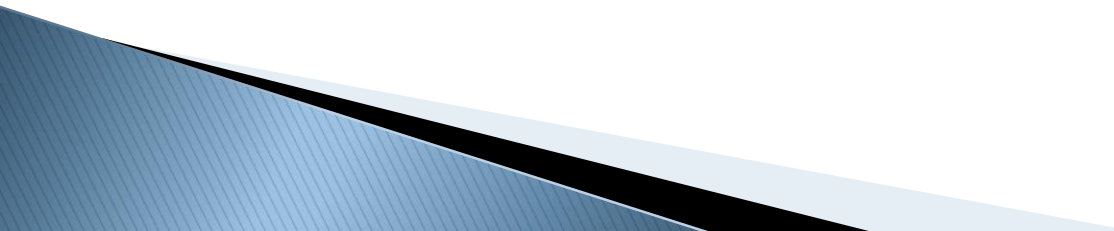 - Location of libraries
  - Changing operation of Technical Services

Fieldwork

- Contact directors of libraries

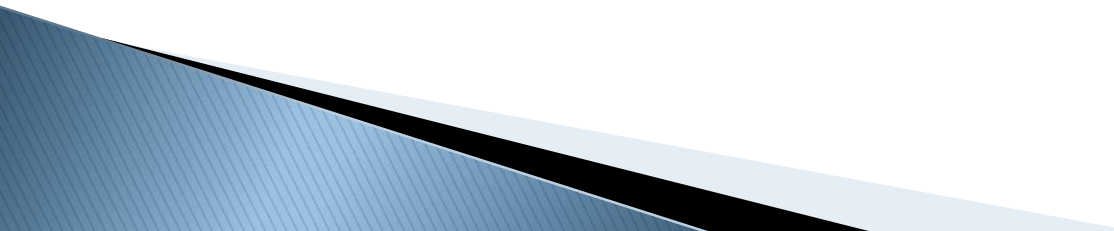- Interview and possibly travel to these libraries

- See integration first-hand

Data Analysis

- Qualitative method

- Database for information tracking
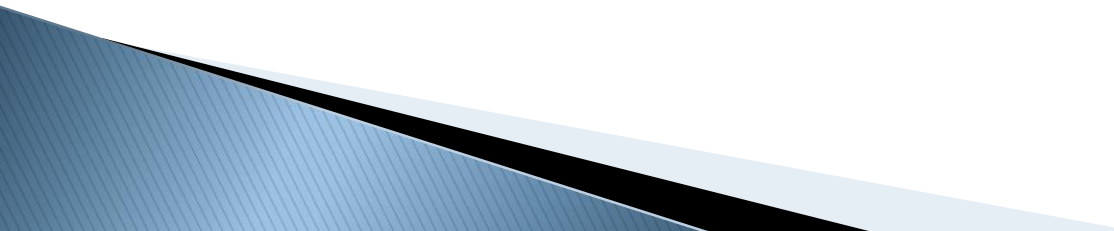
- Ranking of answers in order of importance

Timeline

- September–Literature review and complete interview questions

- October–Interview directors (in person or via telephone)

- November–Compile and analyze data gathered from interviews

Timeline

- December–Complete research paper and send to stakeholders to get their opinions

- January–Bind final draft of research paper

Conclusion

- Like to learn what directors are finding as factors

- Understand what criteria is being used to figure out placement of Technical Services

References

Bothmann, Robert (2004). Cataloging Electronic Books. *Library Resources and Technical Services*, 48(1), 12–19.

Fessler, Vera (2007). The Future of Technical Services (It's not the Technical Services it was). *Library Administration and Management,* 21(3), 139–155.

Johnson, Peggy (2006). From the Editor's Desk. *Technicalities*, 26(1), 2–3.
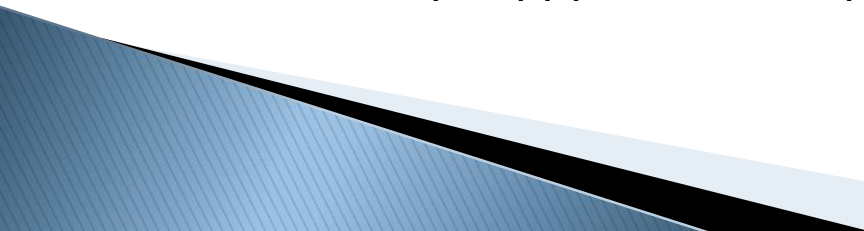
References

Montoya, Leopoldo M. (1999). Vital Technical Services in Academic Libraries. *Library Philosophy and Practice*, 2(1), 1–15.

Taylor, Arlene G. (1994). The information universe: will we have chaos or control? *American Libraries*, 25(7), 629–631.

Appendix

- Has T.S. been incorporated in the other departments, or has the actual department been done away with?

- Has support staff been laid off, or have they been worked in with the other departments?

- With the explosion of technology, and the need for cataloging these new resources, why is T.S. being re-organized at such a time?

- Has the trend of fewer students coming to the library influenced the reorganization of T.S.?

- Has budgetary reasons forced the closing of T.S.?

- Have librarians in the other departments felt comfortable having more work put on them?

Appendix

- How many items are outsourced?
    - If so, what is cost to outsource compared to pay staff in library?

- Have other campus departments fought to keep T.S. as a reflection on the wealth of the school?

- Who is taking over the preservation of books that T.S. would normally do?

- Has there been discussion of this happening in public libraries, or just academic?

- Who decides how to streamline the work flow, if there is no longer a head of T.S.?

- Is the library happy with the way things turned out?

Appendix

- How are the usual functions of T.S. (orders/claims/payment, cataloging, continuations/binding) split between the two remaining departments (public and circulation)?
    - What is the rationalization behind the assignments of functions?
    - Who deals with the online catalog?

- Electronic resources are playing a big part in cataloging right now. If there is no cataloger, how are these resources, or just books, for that matter, going to be put in the system for use by the public?

- With the re-organization of T.S. has communication between the remaining librarians been better, or worse?

- Has the collection and service changes associated with technology facilitated the re-organization of T.S.?