Princeton University
LIBRARY

Beyond the Buzzwords:

Agile collaboration and rejecting the perfectionist mindset (how we did it and you can too!)

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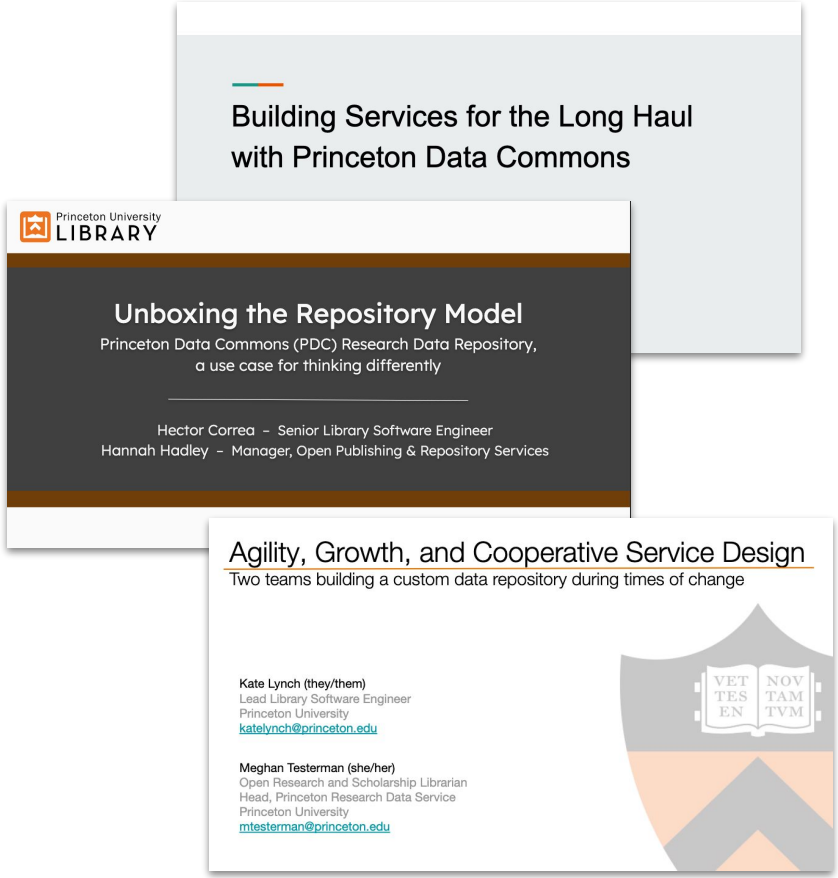
Previously on...

- Unboxing the Repository Model: Princeton Data Commons (PDC) Research Data Repository, a use case for thinking differently
  - DLF Forum 2023
- Agility, Growth, and Cooperative Service Design: two teams building a data repository during times of change
  - Open Repositories 2024
- Building Services for the Long Haul with Princeton Data Commons
  - RDAP Summit 2025

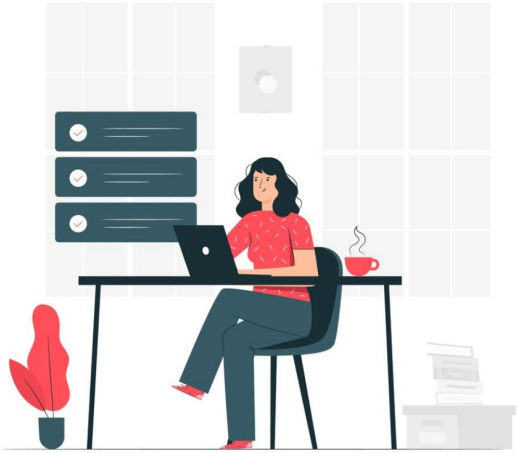


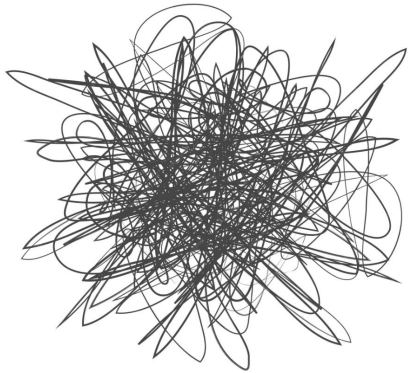
Getting un-stuck

- Situation:
  - Multiple unrelated collections and workflows - a “grab bag” of content
  - Monolithic approach to object lifecycle management
  - Heavily customized in unknown ways over several years before coming to the Library

Image from Gamespot

Getting un-stuck





But it was still in active use.

Left image from FreePik | Center image from FreePik | Right image from FreePik

Previous assumptions

We need to maintain continuity of service.

We need to ensure as much parity as possible in replacement features.

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Moving forward

- We need to understand how users need to use the software, what they are trying to accomplish when they use it.

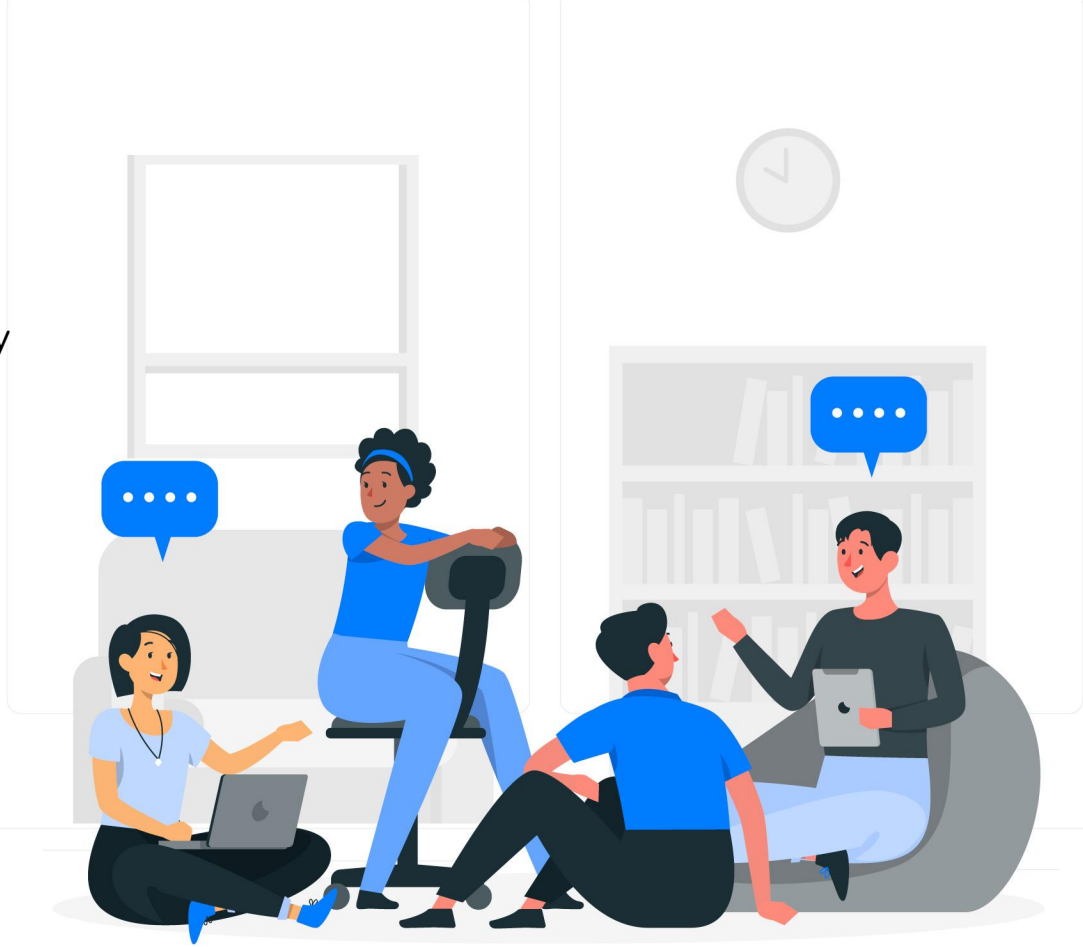

Image by storyset on Freepik

Moving forward

- We need to understand how users need to use the software, what they are trying to accomplish when they use it.
- We need to build positive working relationships with our users and stakeholders in ways that enable them to tell us what they need and negotiate how that works in the software.

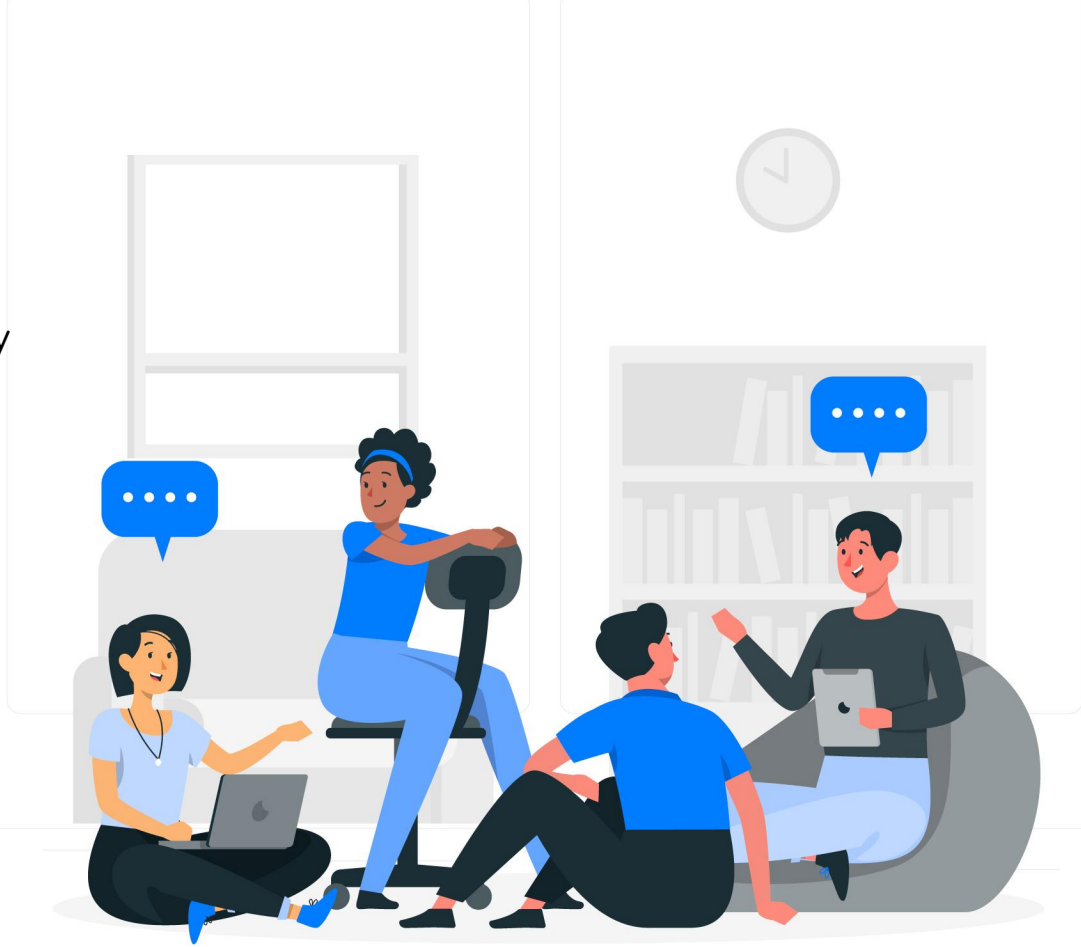

Image by storyset on Freepik

Moving forward

- People need to feel heard.
- People need to feel that their expertise is trusted.

Top image by storyset on Freepik | Bottom image by storyset on Freepik

- Improving Communication

Situation:

- Two Teams
- Varied Professional Backgrounds

- Improving Communication

Obstacle:

- Varied professional experiences
  - Jargon
  - Different priorities
  - Incorrect Assumptions

Cultivating the Team

- Improving Communication

Solution:

- Professional opportunities for the team to grow together
  - Sharing perspectives
  - Training together
  - Including one another
  - Building Trust

Examples:

- Curator walk-throughs; also “gaming” curation to make understanding fun
- Cross-team PO trainings
- Cross-team involvement in stakeholder interviews
- Cross-team presentations

- Improving Communication

Solution:

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THIS MUST BE ONGOING

Valuable Connections

- Diverse backgrounds allow us to leverage valuable connections more broadly
  - Extends opportunities to collaborate and share expertise
  - Community is important for every aspect of this work

Example: Replacing Legacy Software

Open Access Repository
(Custom DSpace 5x)

Problems:

- Customizations don't allow for an advisable upgrade
- Local development
  - Ruby on Rails shop
  - At capacity with other projects

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Key Problems:

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  - Ruby on Rails shop
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Towards a Solution:

We need to outsource

- Leverage connections to interview colleagues at similarly scoped institutions that have outsourced repository solutions

Research Infrastructures

That our teams are involved in managing

Projects that are developed locally

Princeton Data Commons (PDC)
- Ruby on Rails
- Apache Solr
- AWS
- Globus

Tiger Data
- Ruby on Rails
- Mediaflux
- Various storage

ORCID at Princeton
- Ruby on Rails

OA Waiver Database
- Ruby on Rails
- Apache Solr

Projects that will be outsourced

Thesis and Dissertations
(DSpace 5x - formerly DataSpace)
DSpace 8
- Java

Open Publications (name TBD)
(DSpace 5x - soon to retire Open Access Repository, OAR)
DSpace 8
- Java

Open Publishing (Manifold)
- Ruby on Rails
- Other (see website)

Getting there

A few foundations

- Unboxing the problem
- In-house vs outsourcing
- Metadata schema

Break down the problem

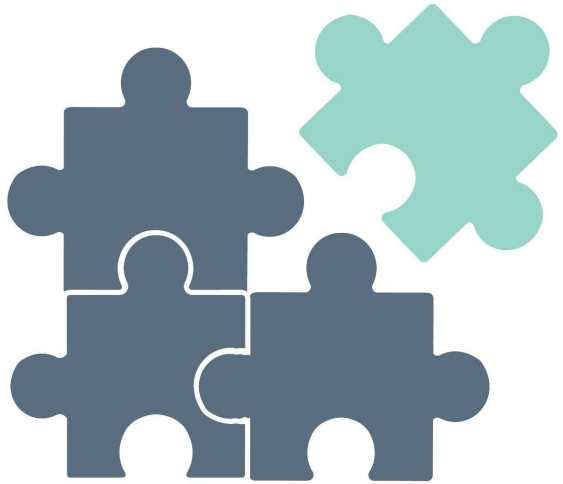
- Research data vs non-research data
- Scholarly communications
- Theses and dissertations
- Discovery, curation, storage, preservation

Image from FreePik

Getting there

Deliver small increments

- Embarrassingly simple versions
- Work closely with key stakeholders willing to collaborate
- Iterative and incremental



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Once you are there

Continue to evolve the system

- Significant enhancements
  - Data entry, file upload, performance, embargoes
  - Both: areas we expected and did not expect
- Requires trust across the board
  - Stakeholders, product owner, developers, curators
- Quick response to feedback
  - Even if to say no/not now

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What's next

Enhancements and new features

- Virus scanning
- Preservation (3rd copy)
- Reporting
- Better support for larger datasets
- Data entry improvements
- Embargoes and peer-reviews

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Thank you!

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