



# **Silos No More: Harness Library Wide Teams for Success**

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# MY PERSPECTIVE

- ✓ First part of my career was as a reference librarian in a collective bargaining environment
- ✓ Served in a Management/Administrative capacity for the past nine years
- ✓ Have witnessed amazing technological transformation of libraries
- ✓ Have observed many silo'd systems over the years.

# WHAT WE WILL COVER TODAY

- Part 1 – Silos – Define and describe how they can affect library operations
- Part 2 – Silos – Harnessing interdisciplinary work teams as an antidote to silos.

# WHAT IS THE HISTORY OF THE TERM SILO?

Definitions of *silo* according to the [Oxford Living Dictionaries](#):

## NOUN-

- 1 A tall tower or pit on a farm used to store grain.
- 2 A pit or other airtight structure in which green crops are compressed and stored as silage.
- 3 An underground chamber in which a guided missile is kept ready for firing.
- 4 A system, process, department, etc. that operates in isolation from others



# SILO EFFECTS

“While the world is increasingly interlinked as a system, our lives remain fragmented. Many large organizations are divided, and then subdivided into numerous different departments which often fail to talk to each other – let alone collaborate.” - Gillian Tett



*Silo Effect: The Peril of Expertise and the Promise of Breaking Down Barriers.*

# **WHY IDENTIFY SILOS IN LIBRARIES?**

**Shifting trends have demonstrated that organizations need to adapt to the current needs and patterns of patrons in order to successfully be nimble in today's fast-paced information environment.**



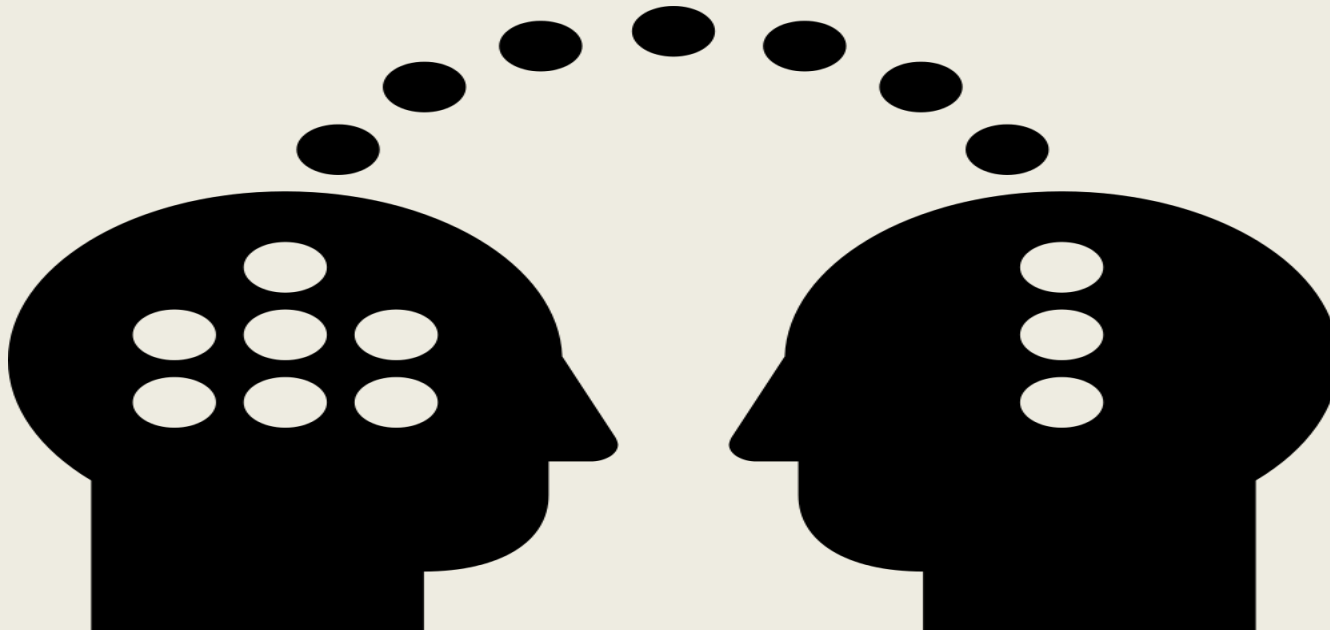
# CHARACTERISTICS OF SILOS

- Bureaucracy – Departments not communicating with each other
- Team infighting
- Individual or team unwilling to share information/process
- Overlook dangerous and costly risks
- Fragmentation leads to bottlenecks and loss of innovation/creativity



# SILO IDENTIFICATION

- Silos often emerge when a need for knowledge transfer is unmet.



# **TRADITIONAL LIBRARY STRUCTURE HAS OFTEN BEEN SILO'D**

- ✓ Experienced by libraries of all sizes, not just large institutions.
- ✓ Library structure often encourages separate entities.
- ✓ Lack of Technology formerly a barrier.
- ✓ Expert/Specialist culture

# SILOS ARE NOT NECESSARILY NEGATIVE

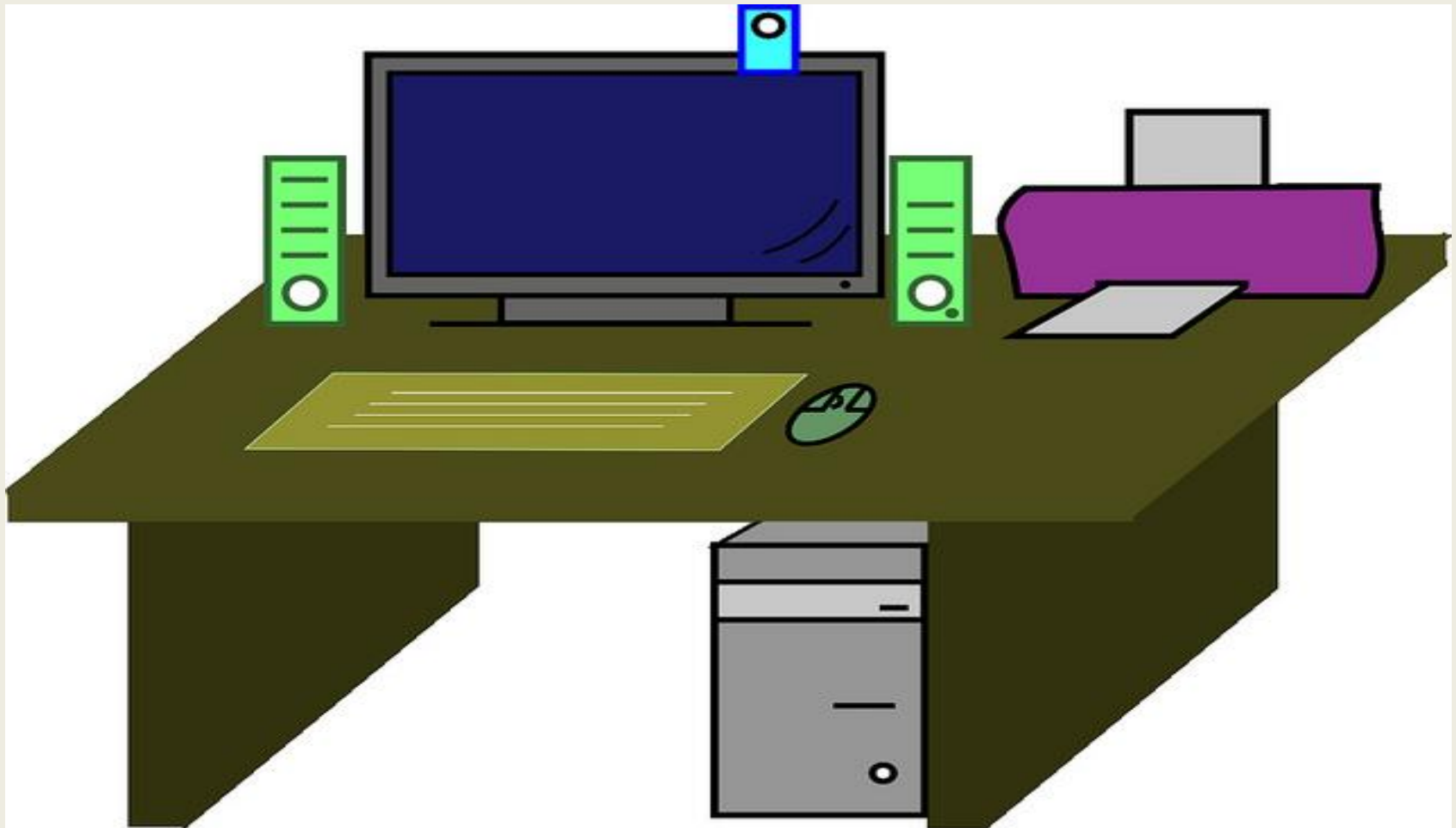
- Subject expertise can be very valuable in many circumstances.
- Specialists necessary to create order in a complex world.
  - For example, I.T.



# A SILO CAN EXIST AS A SINGLE LIBRARY LOCATION OR IN MULTIPLE LOCATIONS



# A SILO CAN ALSO BE ONE PERSON



# HOW TO RESOLVE SILOS IN LIBRARIES

- Employ staff from all levels on work teams
- Communicate, Communicate, Communicate!
- Teams can be deployed:
  - Short term for a one time project.
  - Ongoing on a regular basis.



# SMART COLLABORATION

Heidi Gardner:

“Today’s problems simply demand that specialists in the context of professional service firms work together to integrate their separate knowledge bases and skill sets to forge coherent, unified solutions.”

From: Gardner, Heidi K. *Smart Collaboration: How Professionals and Their Firms Succeed by Breaking Down Silos*. Boston, MA: Harvard Business Review, 2016.

# OUTCOMES OF SILO REDUCTION

- Decreases redundancy in operations.
- Time savings for more efficient operations.
- Large scale project support.
- Establish uniform best practices across the library.



# SOCIAL MEDIA AND SILOS

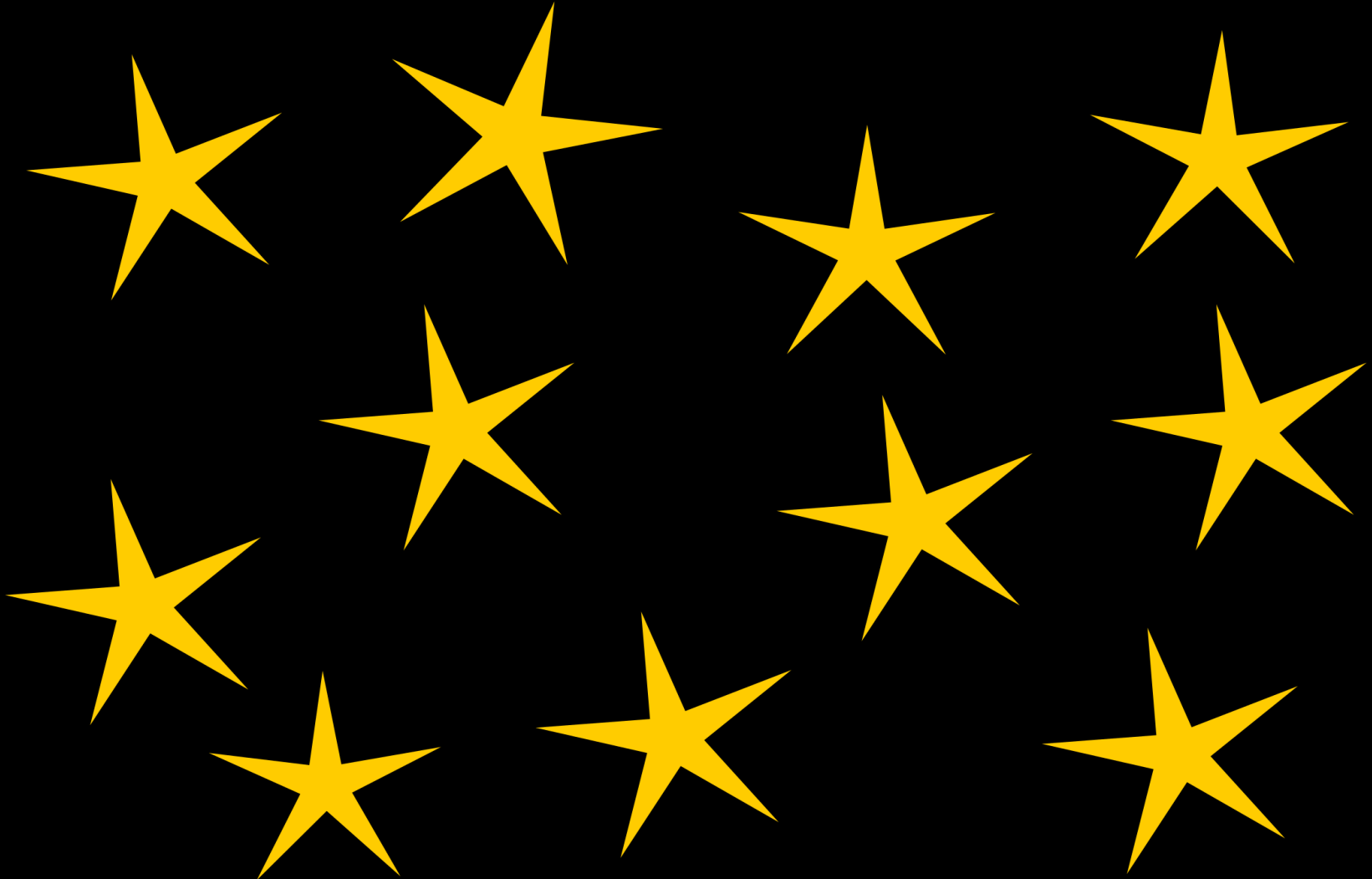
# Technology enables sharing across platforms



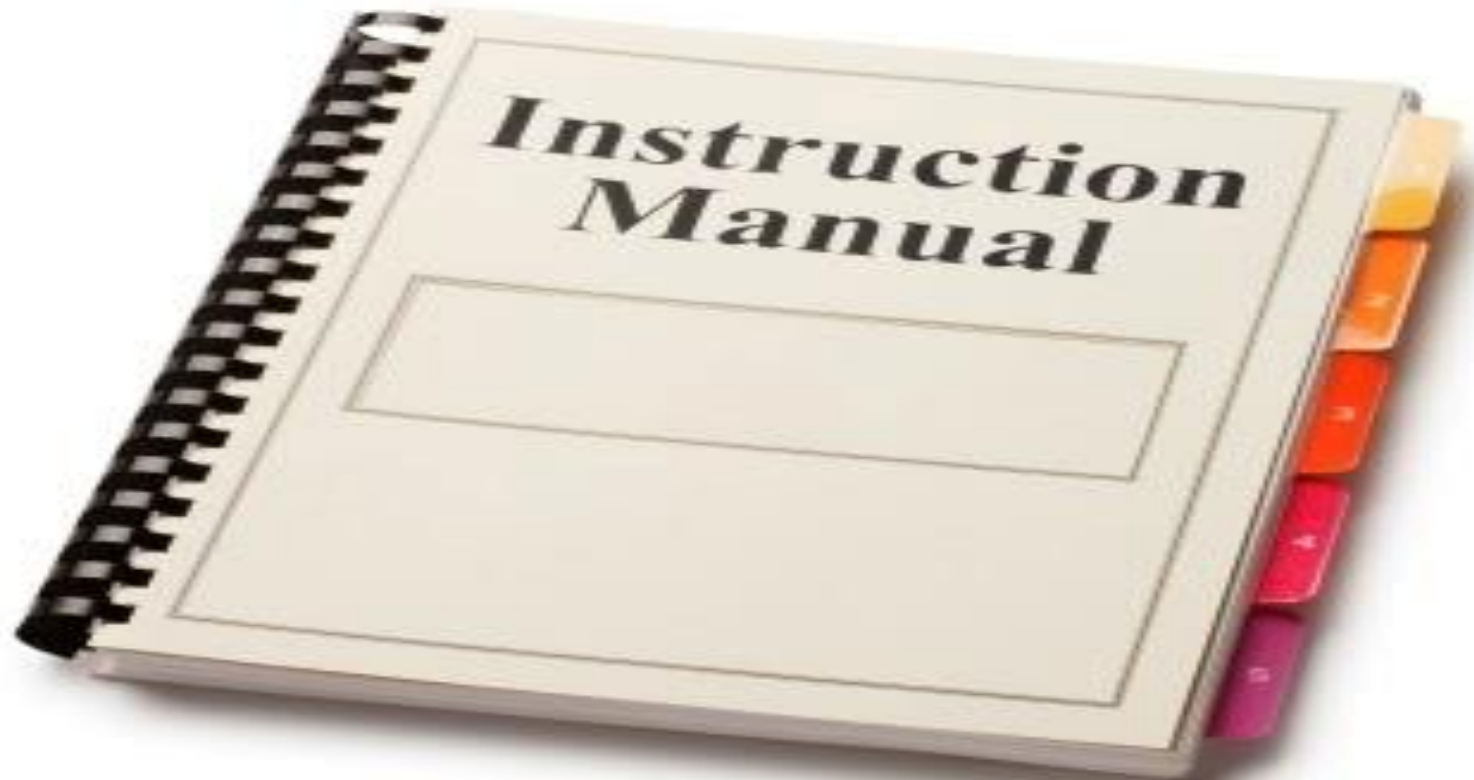
# **LEADERS MAKE COLLABORATION HAPPEN**

- Keep the boundaries of teams flexible and fluid when possible.
- Ensure that information flows and not restricted to one oneself or one team.
- Use Technology to challenge silos.

# **INVESTMENTS IN COLLABORATION DOES NOT HAPPEN OVERNIGHT**



# THERE IS NO ONE SPECIFIC MANUAL FOR COLLABORATION



# Questions, Comments, Thoughts?



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# Keep in Touch

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