Background and History of the “ERIAL Project”

David Green
Associate University Librarian
Northeastern Illinois University

Starting at the beginning

Program Description

Anthropologists and librarians will present the findings from a two-year anthropological study of five diverse institutions: including the significance of the faculty/librarian relationship, an examination of student research skills, and the assessment of information literacy. In addition to examining the study results, conference attendees will use a detailed take-home toolkit to learn about planning an anthropological study, and will engage in role-playing activities to learn and practice three anthropological methods to apply in their libraries.
Starting at the beginning

• LITA Conference 2007
• LSTA Research Grants 2008
• Can we do an ethnographic study in Illinois?

Starting at the beginning

• Discussions with Nancy Foster
• Discussions with colleagues
• Discussions with State Library [$100k Minimum]
• This would have to be big
Make no small plans…

- 5 (very different) institutions
- 2 full time anthropologists
- About 25 librarians
- Funding for (almost) 2 years
- Ethnographic Research in Illinois Academic Libraries

Make no small plans…
A very demanding project

- Almost 30 meetings a month
- Cohesive research core, additional local pursuits
- Multiple training sessions, extensive data gathering
- Transcription of all interviews, data analysis
- Other deliverables created
Make no small plans…