Searching for Sustainability: Avalon in the Samvera Community

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Background: What is Avalon?

- Open source software system that enables libraries and archives to provide access to audio and video collections
- Hydra Samvera Solution Bundle
- Goals:
  - Easily installable and configurable
  - Serve a variety of use cases and institutions
  - Create a basis for sustainable development
- Currently in production at 12+ institutions
A grant aimed at sustainability

- US Institute of Museum and library Services (IMLS) grant aimed at finding a sustainable model
- We took two years to focus on what we were doing and how we could improve
- This presentation will try to talk through the challenges of building a sustainable model in a complex environment
The successful warrior is the average man, with laser-like focus.

Bruce Lee
We focused on three areas of sustainability

• Broaden activity within the core community
• Deepen engagement with new users and new partners
• Widen involvement with new technical communities
Absorb what is useful, discard what is useless, and add what is specifically your own.

- Bruce Lee
Broadening activity within core community

• Avalon 7 (Avalon on Hyrax – under development)
  – Developed a component-based approach
  – Dedicated team members to the core codebase
  – Work closely with Product owners to align roadmaps
Jazz - Jazz Performance

Description of timeline

Act I

Part II

Conclusion of Act 1.

Saxophone solo (00:25.63)
Broadening our activity within the core community

• Dedicate Members to the Core Hyrax Team
  – Dedicated resources to normalize releases
  – Improve quality of the product
  – Create a cohesive team rather than feature requests

• Community Sprints
  – Swappable backends (Hyrax on Wings/Valkyrie)
  – Collections Extensions
Broadening activity within core community

• Joined, led, and developed core working groups and sprints
  – UI working group
  – Roadmap
  – Community Sprints
  – Governance WG
  – Hyrax working group
  – Permissions working group
  – Tech calls
  – Ad hoc calls with leadership
  – And more...
Deepening engagement with new adopters, partners, and users

• Develop one-on-one relationships
  – Finding users: current and potential
  – Team-to-team meetings
  – Lots of follow up
  – Learn about our users
Deepening engagement with new adopters, partners, and users

• Create opportunities for the curious to engage
  – Forums (Mini webinars)
  – Online ”Office Hours”
  – Roundtables: users, leaders
  – Email: lists, individual contacts
  – Slack channel within Samvera Slack workgroup
Empty your mind, be formless. Shapeless, like water.
Widening involvement in other technical communities

• Seeing technological opportunities, e.g. IIIF
  – Developer and project management time on IIIF Presentation API 2.0 spec, IIIF AV Technical Specification Group
  – Developed a standalone “Avalonish” IIIF player
Widening involvement in other technical communities

• Opening doors to new partnerships and vendor relationships
  – WGBH: American Archive of Public Broadcasting
  – AVP: Oral History Metadata Synchronizer (OHMS), Aviary
  – LYRASIS: Hosted Avalon pilot

• New communities
  – AV archiving (AMIA/IASA)
  – Oral history
Do not pray for an easy life, pray for the strength to endure a difficult one.

Bruce Lee
Challenges and Successes

• Time and resources. Dedicated time is critical
• Allowing the team to learn how to contribute, it’s a slow process
• “Fail fast” is hard to pull off in open source communities
Conclusion

• The way to sustainability is to be practiced and disciplined enough to respond to a changing environment while also driving a solution to end users.
Thank You!

More information available at avalonmediasystem.org