

## Making Connections:

### Personal Productivity: the Eternal Quest

As libraries are increasingly asked to do more with less, we all have more things to do and less time to do them. Sometimes, the tools we have to help -like email and smartphones - actually make things worse! The trick is connecting technology and techniques that can best help us to manage our time and productivity effectively.

In this presentation, Anali will lead an intrepid party on the eternal quest of improving personal productivity. Together, we'll fight the email dragon, vanquish the time stealing goblins, and explore an arsenal of tools that help us get things done. By sharing ideas and best practices, we can each make connections to the techniques and tools will help us succeed on our quest!

### Outline:

- I am not an expert. Look around you - we're all on the same quest!
- Different strengths and weaknesses
- So today we'll talk about a variety of tips, tricks, and tools, and you can take note of the ones that you think you want to explore later.
- You can't set off on a Quest without an adventuring party
  - The Party Leader
  - The Scout
  - The Warrior
  - The Wizard
  - The Healer
- Party Leader
  - To me, this is the hardest part. The leader is who keeps us from wandering in the wilderness. It's easy to be reactionary and work on the day to day tasks, but never make personal or professional progress, or step back and plan anything big.
  - Need to identify goals, set priorities, establish focus. Ask -What's important to you?
    - What are my values?
    - What are my priorities?
    - What are my professional goals? Where do I see myself in 1 year/5 years?
    - What do I need to do to get there?
  - For me - getting home on time is a daily priority. What about you?
  - techniques like:
    - Fixed schedule productivity
      - Choose a schedule of work hours that you think provides the ideal balance of effort and relaxation.
      - Do whatever it takes to avoid violating this schedule.

- Work diaries - (help you identify focus, patience, planning, personal growth)
  - Give yourself the time and space to plan. This is hard, deep work.
  -

Which leads us to -

- The Scout: calendar, planning, due dates
  - Organizing time: balancing immediate, short term, medium range, and long term obligations.
  - Looking ahead: Plan to plan
    - e.g. 1 hour monday morning (or Friday afternoon)- organize tasks for the week
    - take a little time each morning (or afternoon) to organize your day
  - Keep an eye out for Due dates, deadlines
  - Schedule all the hours (if tasks have a scheduled time for your focus, they're more likely to get done). A Guide for for what tasks I need to accomplish and how I would like to get them done.
    - Make appointments with yourself to block out time to work on tasks that require more focus
    - Don't have to be super specific with calendar, just set task blocks
    - Remember -this has to be flexible - no day unfolds as you expect it. But this helps you be intentional about what you do with your time instead of "drift along in a haze of reactive, inbox-driven busyness tempered with mindless surfing." (Cal Newport) Tackle your day with deliberation.
    - Can still do this for things like desk shifts, reference hours where you know you'll be interrupted - give secondary purpose like - "during down time, work on x"
  - For me -this especially helps intentionally focus my efforts on small chunks of time, like between meetings, where I'd otherwise waste it checking twitter or email
  - What about you?
- The Warrior (Gamers will know this is the Tank or Defender)
  - Protect yourself from things that will derail your productivity for the day
  - Defensive email tips
    - filters
      - my favorites: listservs/committee - straight to specific folder
      - not to me - anything not directly addressed to me
      - unsubscribe in body - to junk folder
    - schedule email time vs. always on (lets other impose their priorities on you)
    - hard core: don't check email for an hour after arriving to work
  - No-fly zone - set aside time for yourself w/out interruptions to focus on deep tasks
    - schedule appointment w/yourself- BUSY

- turn off email notifications
    - turn off texts/phones/IM
  - Avoid the siren call of the internet: no web surfing, no exceptions. Willpower helpers:
    - StayFocusd <http://www.stayfocusd.com/>,
    - Cold Turkey <http://getcoldturkey.com/>,
    - Take a Five <http://www.takeafive.com/>
  - I am particularly susceptible to the internet siren - StayFocusd and Cold Turkey have been useful to me. I'm interested in trying Take a Five.
  - What's your biggest weakness?
- The Wizard (i.e. DPS) (or Legolas, for Orlando Bloom fans)
  - Do the most damage per second - get through your tasks!
  - Tricks
    - To do lists
      - tiny to do lists (top 3 mits)
      - 1-3-5 rule (1 big thing, 3 medium things, 5 little things)
    - 15 minute rule
      - pick out single task
      - work without pause, break, or excuse for 15 minutes straight
      - at end of 15 minutes, can quit or multitask - or otherwise keep going
    - Pomodoro: 25 minute bursts (w/timer), short break, new burst. Every 4 bursts, take a longer break (<http://pomodorotechnique.com/get-started/>)
    - Longer Bursts - 50 minutes, 10 minute break
    - Email tricks (see previous Inbox Zero presentations) - remember email is just a tool for work. process, take action, don't just read
    - Batch tasking: set times to do tasks that trickle in throughout the day - say 10:00, 2:00, and 4:00
- Healer
  - Work shutdown routines
    - look over calendar & tasks,
    - check in on major projects
    - come up with plan for tomorrow, rest of week
    - shut down for the day (mentally)
    - maybe even (gasp) disconnect work email from your phone!
  - Weekly Review / end of the week brain dump
    - list all of the things floating around in your head
    - maybe keep a running list all day, so you can quickly add things as they come to you
    - hand off to the party leader..free up brain space!
  - DO LESS - start saying no
  - Talk walks/take breaks/take care of yourself

- Intentional transition from work mental state to home - at least 20 minutes, focus on something other than work. (for me, bike ride home)
- Rewards
- Gear
  - Tools
    - Trello: <https://trello.com>
    - Evernote: <https://www.evernote.com>
    - Simplenote: <http://simplenote.com/>
    - Google Keep: <https://keep.google.com/>
    - Pocket: <https://getpocket.com>
    - To dos:
      - Wunderlist( <https://www.wunderlist.com/>)
      - Todoist (<https://todoist.com/>)
      - Remember the Milk (<https://www.rememberthemilk.com/>)
    - Text files
    - paper notebooks ([hipster pda](#))
    - combinations - paper, digital, apps
- What's working for me right now:
  - Trello - organizing to-dos, projects
  - Evernote & Pocket for references (Evernote for long-term storage, Pocket for Read Later)
  - scheduling all the hours!
  - I confess - not so much at inbox zero any more, but usually at inbox 10 or less.
- What's your favorite? What's working for you?
- Remember - nothing is going to stick immediately. Forming new habits, developing new skills, takes time. And we're all trying to undo old habits and ingrained behavior.

Some of my guides:

- Cal Newport: <http://calnewport.com/blog/>
- David Allen: <http://gettingthingsdone.com/>
- Lifehacker: <http://lifehacker.com/tag/productivity>
- <http://joshuaearl.com/rocking-gtd-with-trello/>
- <https://medium.com/precise-curiosity/locus-focus-an-approach-to-productivity-without-my-opia-c56456fef7c6>
- Leo Babauta: <http://zenhabits.net/>
- <http://simpleprogrammer.com/2012/10/28/my-15-minute-rule-to-productivity/>

