

Virtual Water Cooler Chats

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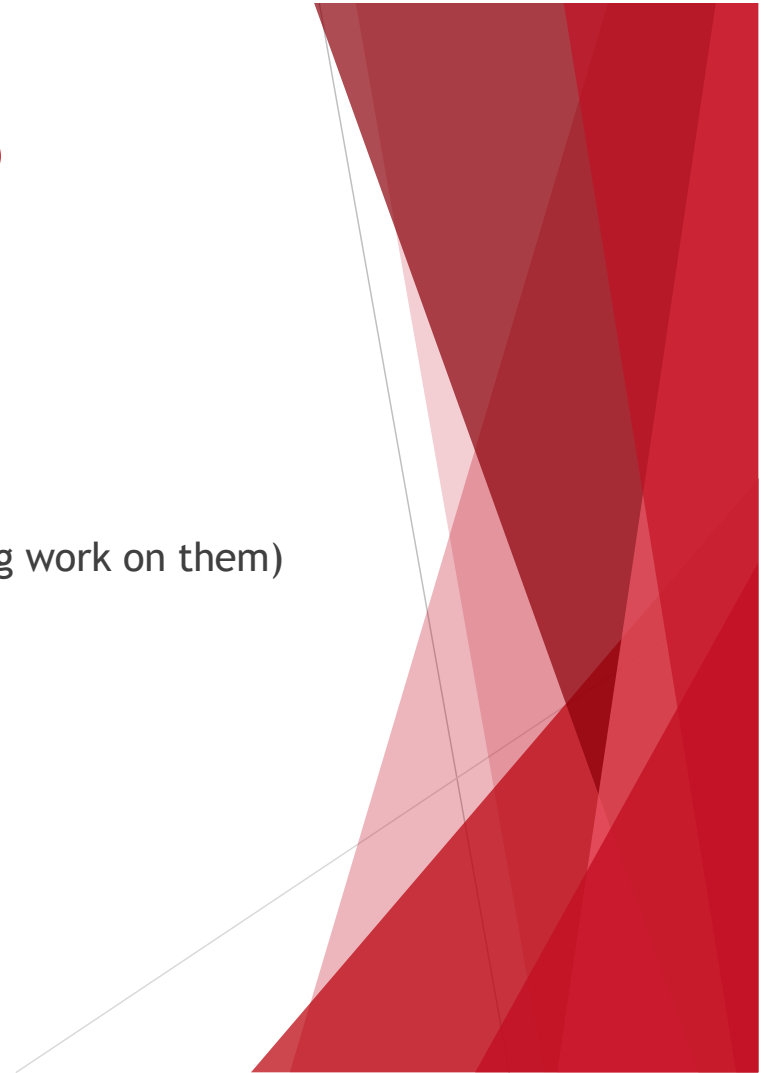
Tips for the One-Person Shop

Greg's Experience in One-Person Shops

- ▶ Jesus College, Oxford: Database Creator/Administrator and Part-time Researcher
- ▶ St. Edmund Hall, Oxford: Database Administrator and Data Reviewer
- ▶ Marymount College Palos Verdes: Manager, Advancement Services
- ▶ Niagara University: Senior Research Associate, later Director, Advancement Services

Consultancy -> One-Person Shop

- ▶ Time management
- ▶ Motivation vs. need to pace work
- ▶ Handling multiple requests (and prioritizing them)
- ▶ Carving out time for long-term projects (and justifying work on them)
- ▶ Getting professional development opportunities



Time Management

- ▶ Conjures up ideas of constantly scheduling one's workday (-week, -month, even -year)
- ▶ This never works, ever
 - When you're a one-person shop, important work always overtakes any attempts at scheduling
- ▶ Rather, time management here means flexibility in scheduling

Flexible Scheduling

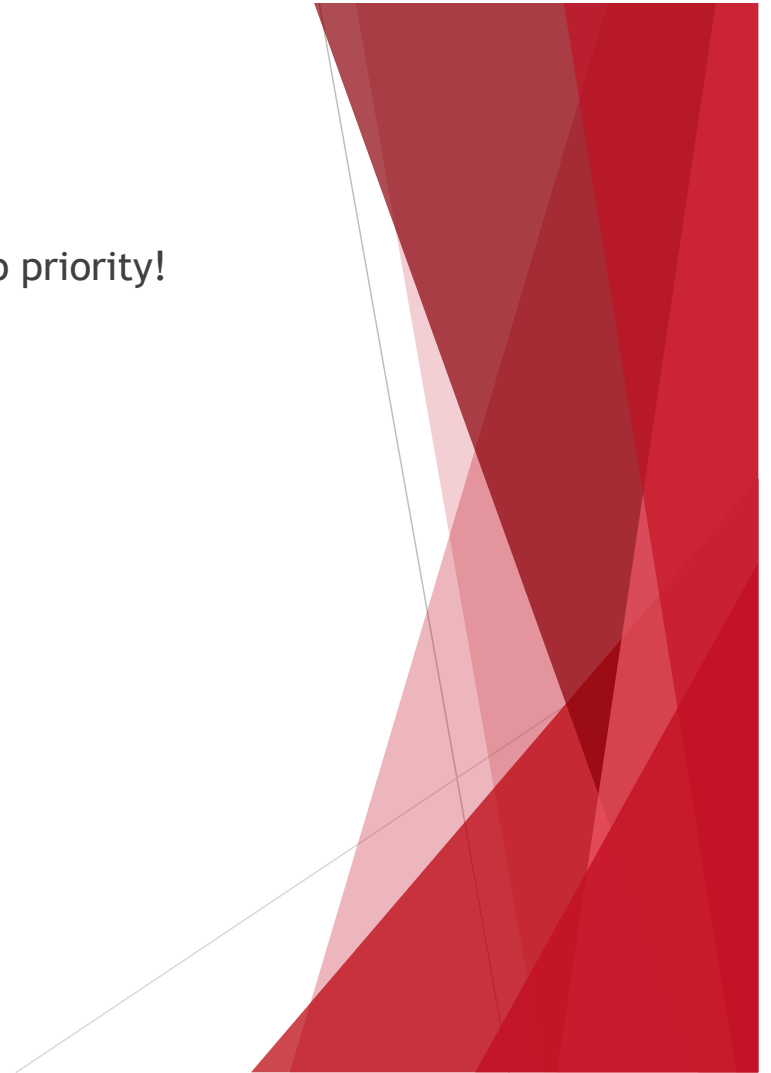
- ▶ It's OK to schedule a day or two in advance, but always be aware that circumstances can change
- ▶ Know when your “busy” times are likely to happen, and prepare for them
 - But conversely, prepare long-term projects for times which are not particularly busy
- ▶ Have projects at the ready when you have unexpected time

Motivation vs. Need to Pace Work

- ▶ Grad school lament: “You don’t have to be told to start, but you do need to know when to stop”
 - If at all possible, never do the very same task for too many hours consecutively
 - “First 15 minutes and last 15 minutes” on a project are (said to be) most productive
- ▶ Pacing work: if possible, have a start and an end time for your day’s work
 - 12 hours of work in day does not mean you get 50% more done

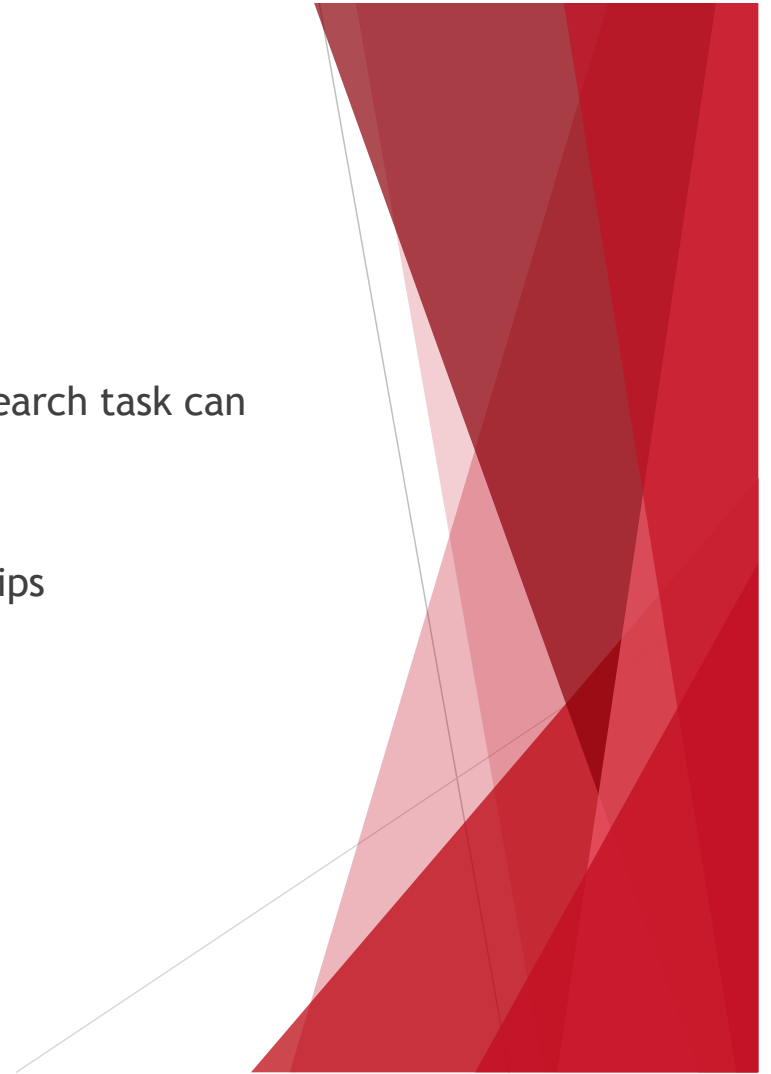
Prioritizing Multiple Requests

- ▶ Obviously, something from the President or VP gets top priority!
- ▶ But following that:
 - Prioritize requests from “out of office”
 - Next priority goes to hard-deadline projects



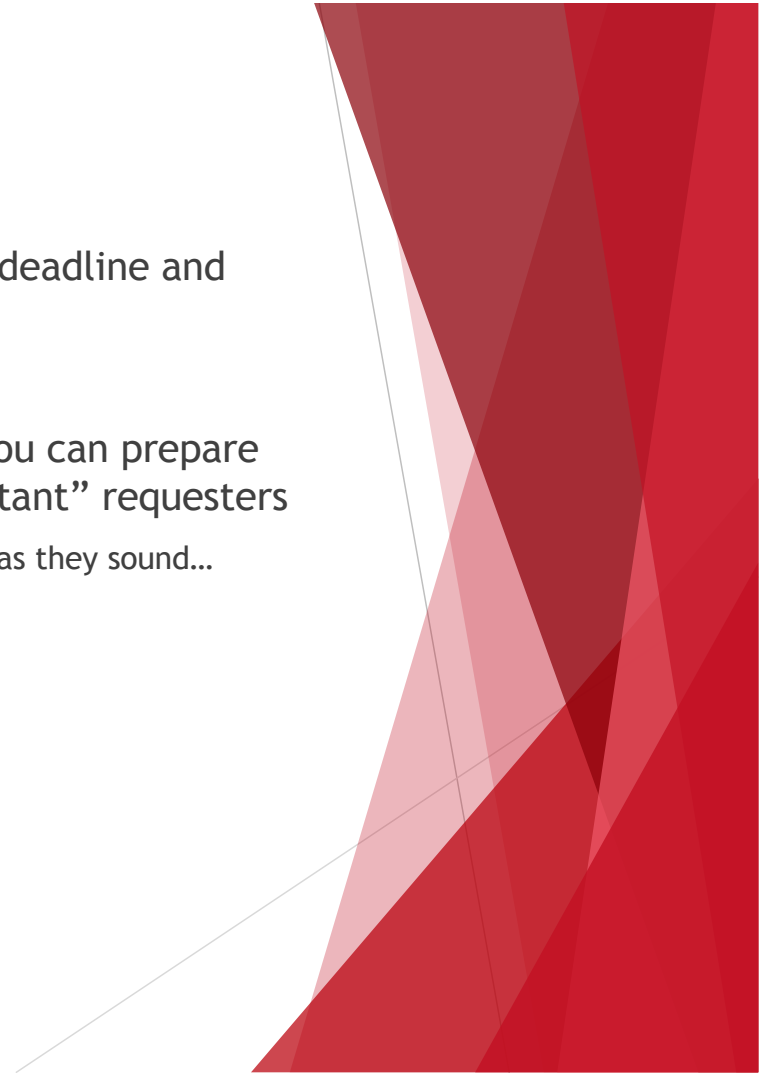
Handling Multiple Requests

- ▶ Learning to manage expectations
- ▶ Why giving X amount of time for a specific type of research task can backfire
- ▶ The key to managing expectations: building relationships



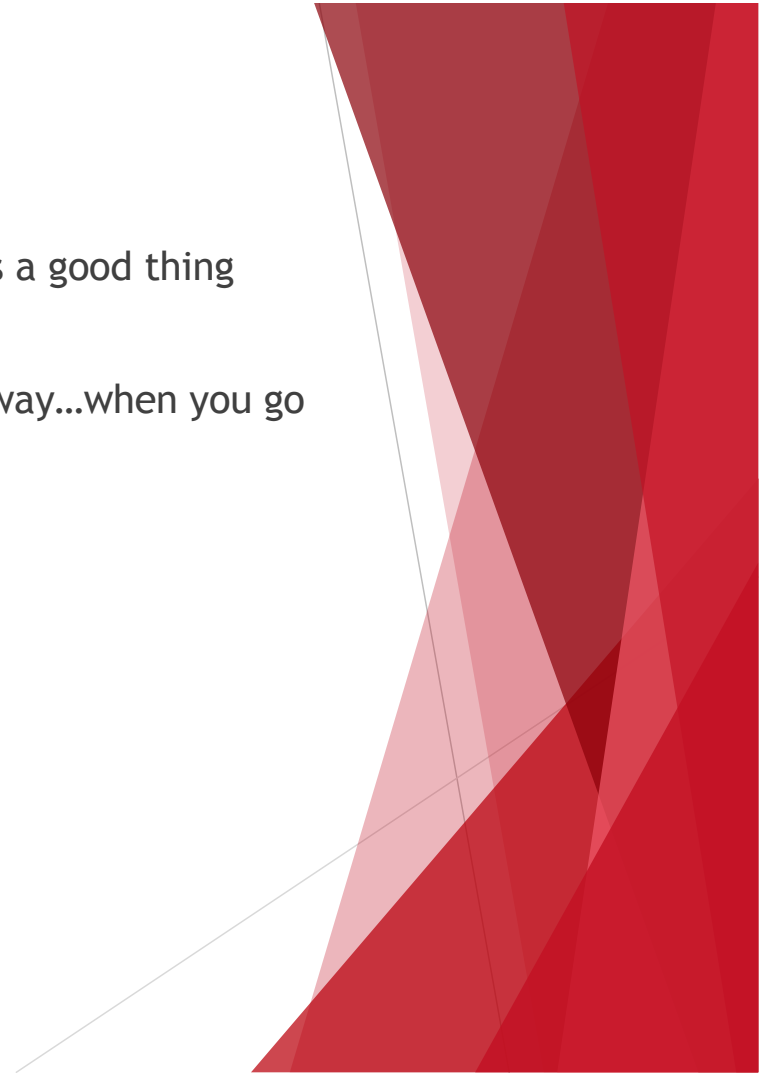
Handling Multiple Requests

- ▶ But what happens when you have more than one hard deadline and can't finish all the projects?
- ▶ Maybe there's not much you can do at the time—but you can prepare for these eventualities by working closely with “important” requesters
 - In my experience, “hard deadlines” aren't always as inflexible as they sound...



Handling Multiple Projects

- ▶ Sometimes having more than one project to work on is a good thing
- ▶ Getting stuck on one project? Move to another right away...when you go back to it, you may have the answer



Long-term Projects

- ▶ Fighting Parkinson's Law (work expands to fill the time available)
 - Sometimes you need to learn how to take less time to complete common projects—can you build shortcuts or time-saving procedures?
- ▶ Identify times you may have fewer deadlines than others
- ▶ Don't completely stop working on a long-term project...the longer it goes without any work, the less likely it is that it will be picked up again

Justifying Long-term Projects

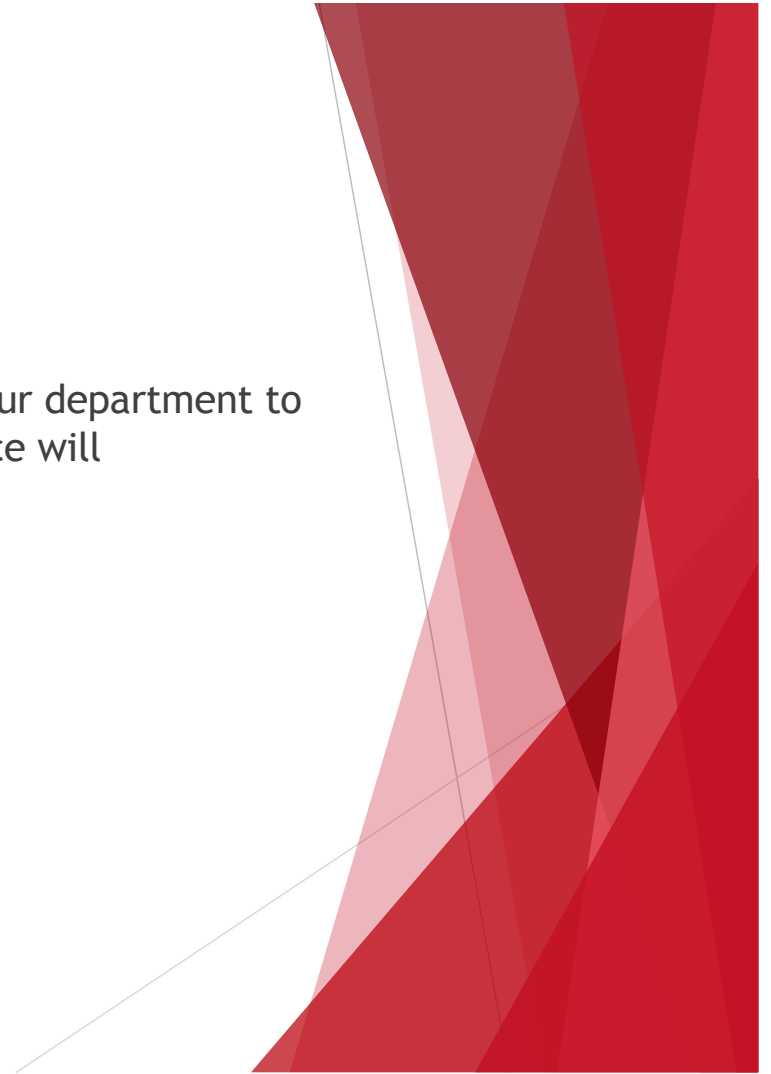
- ▶ Ask important questions before starting:
 - Will this project really help our organization?
 - Is it worth the amount of time it will take?
 - If the project can't be completed, will getting part of it done be helpful?
- ▶ Let people who will be affected positively by the project know about it
 - But also be sure to manage expectations about its completion date

Getting Professional Development

- ▶ Attending as many free opportunities (like this one) as you can
- ▶ Read e-mail lists—not only do they have good advice, posters to lists often link to useful articles
- ▶ Advocate for funding
 - Keep in mind—in the future, many conferences may be virtual and theoretically cheaper

Most Important of All...

- ▶ Reach out to your co-workers
- ▶ When you're a one-person shop you have nobody in your department to advocate for you, so make sure that others in the office will



What Are Your Questions?



Keeping in Touch with Us

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