

## **Workshop**

### **Workshop title**

Using Lego Serious Play™ to identify bottle necks and to LEAN your library

### **Organizer**

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### **Scope and Rationale**

Every year in the month of June, the same problem occurs at the University Library of Southern Denmark. The problem starts when the students return their borrowed materials before heading for summer vacation. This creates a bottleneck in the library. Normally, the department that shelves books is slightly overstaffed, but in June it becomes heavily understaffed.

So, for a period of up to three months after and well into the fall semester there are books everywhere awaiting shelving. First, they get stashed on the book trolleys. This appears to be practical because then the unshelved books are easier to move. But it also creates another bottle neck in the acquisition department, where the trolleys are needed for new materials. And it creates one more bottleneck among the subject specialists, who would want to spend the quiet summer months trimming the shelves. To do that they need the books to be shelved and book trolleys to be available. Altogether this creates irritation and stress that lasts well into the autumn. Situations like the one described above are classic in almost all large public sector organizations. To eliminate such situations Libraries increasingly turn to process improvement models, such as LEAN.

LEAN was initially introduced within the private sector, it was only a question of time before multiple industries within the public sector, found them desirable as well. As a part of the New Public Management movement, LEAN is today seen everywhere in the public- and privat sector, and it is probably coming to a library near you too (Schubert, 2009; Schweikhart & Dembe, 2009). But what is LEAN and why does many think of LEAN negatively? Some would argue that LEAN is similar to a cost-reduction program as it may offer a method for cost-cutting

strategies (Daudelin et al., 2015). However, the original idea of LEAN was to introduce cost-effectiveness (Nelson-Peterson & Leppa, 2007; Zuffo, 2011). LEAN has further found its way to the universities. The opinions of implementation of LEAN at universities are divided as one side may argue the variety of benefits and utilities that follows the new regime, and the other side may argue that the universities are now killed off in the new transformation (Lock & Lorenz, 2007; Lorenz, 2012). Nevertheless, it seems like a natural step for LEAN to be adopted at every department within the university, even the research libraries.

But what happens when LEAN finds its way to a library? The central element of our presentation is a discussion of the strengths and weaknesses related to the implementation of such process improvement systems, as LEAN, in a mid-size research library as seen at the University Library of Southern Denmark. But we will also give a demonstration of how a LEAN process can be simulated using the concept of Lego Serious Play™.

Lego Serious Play is a concept created for strategical development. We will demonstrate how the creation of mock-ups of library departments using Lego bricks can enhance the identification of organizational bottle necks and enhance discussions of how to eliminate them.

We are proposing this item as a full session since we want not just to give a demonstration of the concept but also include workshop participants in the building of the mock-up of a library. Such demonstration cannot be made within the normal 15-20 minutes of a paper presentation, we will need 1 hour. We will bring Lego Bricks to the venue for the session.