I Kanban, Can You?
A Librarian’s Introduction to KanbanFlow
For task management at work, do you use:

A) Paper to-do lists / check-lists
B) Workflow software
C) Paper day-planner
D) Calendar reminders
E) White board
F) Sticky notes
G) Bulletin board
H) Highlighters
I) Phone app
J) Tablet app

CHECK ALL THAT APPLY
Kanban is Japanese for “sign” or “billboard.”

- In the 1940’s, Toyota developed Kanban as a way of improving their manufacturing efficiency.
- Kanban method has become an important tool for managing workflow and measuring outcomes.
- Use visual organization to design a process that works for you.
- Not just the manufacturing industry:
  - software development
  - Marketing
  - human resources
  - strategy and leadership teams
  - personal task management
  - Libraries???
Beware of Multi-tasking

- Simplest Kanban board consists of three columns:
  1. “To-Do”
  2. “In Progress”
  3. “Done”
- Key to Kanban is limiting the amount of work you have in progress so that you can focus on completing tasks, rather than letting them pile up in a failed attempt to multitask
- You can create a Kanban board with a white board and colored sticky notes OR use KanbanFlow
- KanbanFlow is a web application that allows you to digitize this method quickly and easily:
  - www.kanbanflow.com
Why ditch paper?

• It has been about 2 years since I started using KanbanFlow. I don’t know how I ever worked without it!

• An example librarian may be doing any of these things at one time:
  1. working the circulation desk
  2. taking reference questions
  3. checking items in or out for patrons,
  4. managing items coming in for the holds shelf
  5. attempting to schedule events
  6. create flyers for events
  7. assisting patrons with computer questions

• Being able to track and visualize the priority level of any given task, and the progress of those tasks, can help a great deal in getting things done plus reviewing work time and how much is completed.
Paper Vs. Digital

• MESSY – ordering the items and re-prioritizing / numbering / checking off / items get lost in long lists

• TREES - at the end of the work day do you wonder how many trees were needed to create your seemingly endless lists?

• LOCATION – you do not always have access to a paper list from home, in the car, or in a meeting

• CLEAN – limit tasks per column / label columns / color code task types / set dates and deadlines

• NO WASTE – eliminate clutter and piles of papers in your bags or on your desk AND saving trees little by little

• ACCESS ANYWHERE - online board on any computer or smartphone so you can edit while in a meeting or on the go
My Kanban Board

- Drag & Drop in 4 Columns
- Create with 4 Colors
- Responsible (Collaborate)
- Description/Notes
- Dates & Deadlines
- Recurring Tasks
- Subtasks (Check boxes)
- Scroll Back in Time
Recurring Tasks

Dates & Deadlines

• Schedule recurring tasks:
  • create one task and set it up to repeat each time you want
  • drag that item to the “done” column
  • a new identical item will appear in the column you set it to start in
  • choose which days of the week to repeat the task

• Select date and time deadlines:
  • fictional library event is scheduled in two weeks - set up a few different tasks for yourself to remind you to:
    1. share about the event on social media
    2. print the flyer and post it on bulletin boards
    3. purchase refreshments before the event
  • Each task can have different dates, and even specific times of the day to accomplish them by
  • Setting deadlines will also generate email reminders when task deadlines approach or are past due
It’s in the Details: Subtasks

For larger projects requiring bigger chunks of your time, creating subtasks is extremely useful. Subtasks can also be helpful for quick tasks that are just tedious and detail-oriented.

- type or paste in a list
- this creates check boxes for each line
- checking off the items as you work can provide a sense of momentum that would otherwise be lost during a long-winded project
- collapse the subtasks, and expand them again, when you are ready to work on them
Organize by Columns

Some people need more or different columns than the three basics (To-do, In Progress & Done). Create and label them to suit your type of work specifically:

- “Ideas” OR “Rainy Day” columns for non-urgent/distant future type tasks
- separate “To-do” and “Do Today” for sorting and prioritizing at the start of each work day

ESSENTIAL:

- “In Progress” & “Done” columns are essential to tracking your productivity!
- Highly recommend setting limits on the number of tasks in your “In Progress” column
- Collapse your columns while you work
Customize with
Color Labels

Color code your task types to allow for even more visual organization. I divide my own board tasks work into four colors:

1. Website
2. Library
3. Graphics, docs & media
4. Personal

By assigning a different colors you can quickly glance at a board and see

• what types of tasks have been most frequent
• which ones are taking more of my time on any given day
• make adjustments for how much time you spend in the future
• regularly scroll back (at least every other week) to view the previous 2 week’s tasks and use them to report back with in team meetings or to supervisors
Time Tracking with the Pomodoro Technique

KanbanFlow has a built in Pomodoro timer that allows you to track the time you are spending on tasks.

• Developed by Francesco Cirillo in the 1980s
• Popular technique encourages full focus on a specific task for 25 minutes at a time
• Rewarding yourself in between each stretch of 25 minutes
• In theory, if you keep your focus for a certain period of time, you will get more accomplished faster

This short video illustrates the technique very well:
Pomodoro Basics

1. Choose a task
2. Start your Pomodoro timer and work for 25 minutes completely focused
3. Take a 5 minute break
4. Re-start your Pomodoro timer and work for another 25 minutes completely focused
5. Repeat steps 1 (if you need to change tasks), 2 and 3 until you have completed 4 Pomodoros
6. After 4 Pomodoros reward yourself with a longer 15 minute break
KanbanFlow’s Pomodoro Timer

- Timer makes charts of your Pomodoros
- Pause for interruptions
- Customize your alarm and ticking sounds for the timer
- Configure work time (between 15 and 55 minutes) if the standard 25 minutes isn’t right for you
- Configure your short and long break times
- If you prefer something less strict, use the simple stopwatch timer instead and log your time spent manually
Free vs. Paid

Everything covered in this presentation is included in the free version. Some extra features for $5 per user per month include:

- file attachments
- Search
- copy board
- task numbering
- Excel and CSV export
- Calendar

* Forecasting
* time estimate report
* add tasks by email
* calendar feed/iCal
* Google Drive and Dropbox integration
* priority support

* 14 day free trial to test everything out

Credits

Grant Evans for illustrations

GLA for inviting me to present today

Carol Watson for first introducing me to KanbanFlow

Questions?

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