

A positive attitude and natural curiosity are the qualities that have buoyed Sinai Wood through many changes during her distinguished career in government information. Today, she is an Associate Professor & Documents Librarian at Baylor University Libraries. Her work with gov docs dates back to her service as a paraprofessional while she was getting her library degree at Texas Woman's University. Thanks to her undergraduate business degree (double major in marketing and management), she began her librarian career as a business librarian and subsequently moved into a position in government documents in 1992. Sinai loves teaching and seeing students get excited about resources such as Policy Map when she presents guest lectures in her liaison areas of social work, sociology, and political science.

Sinai's enthusiasm for government information extends to her work with research fellows at the Baylor Collaborative on Hunger and Poverty and on an Environmental Protection Agency-funded Community Change grant to combat food insecurity in the Waco area. Together with her library colleague Josh Been, Director of Data and Digital Scholarship and a former docs librarian, they produce data dashboards for classroom use by social work instructors and students, and most recently the Hunger Data Lab that provide researchers with data about food insecurity and school meals, with data available by county and school district in Texas. "Food insecurity touches all of us. And to be a part of that, in an interdisciplinary partnership, has been highly rewarding," she said.

Many people in the government documents community know Sinai through her work with TRAIL, the Technical Reports Archive and Image Library, which is a cooperative project to digitize federal technical reports and make them available online.¹ Sinai has served on the TRAIL Steering Committee and Working Groups almost since TRAIL's inception in 2006. She said of her work for TRAIL, "That has been so rewarding. And over the span of all these years, I've gotten to know so many colleagues. Name almost any state, and I know somebody that I've worked with through TRAIL."

With her long tenure as a government information librarian, Sinai has known many of the luminaries in the field. Asked what makes someone a good gov docs librarian, she said, "Back in the day, we would say you have to be crazy to work with documents. You have to have a good sense of humor. You have to have fun. I think now you have to be excited about the thrill of the hunt, and to know that we possess knowledge about finding government information that a lot of our colleagues don't have." She said

that intellectual curiosity and a desire to understand the origins of things are also the hallmarks of a good gov docs librarian.

Sinai's curiosity has led her to learn about Waco's history and she enjoys finding ways to incorporate it into her teaching. She explained, "I've been reading some oral histories through the Baylor institutional repository that have been fascinating. And they cover a lot of topics—Texas Baptist life, Baylor history, Waco history. And to hear first person accounts of 'This is what I experienced,' it's been fascinating." In her classes, she uses this information to help students to understand the throughlines in Waco's history.

Although some librarians have expressed dismay at the transition to a mostly digital FDL, Sinai is glad that government documents "aren't just sitting on a shelf anymore. It's exciting to me that more people have access to government information." It follows that one of her favorite government information tools is <https://data.census.gov/>.² "There's nothing like it, I guess. And they're constantly improving it. They're adding functionality to it all the time," she said. In terms of learning new technologies, Sinai recognizes the need to understand artificial intelligence in order to help students use it appropriately.

Sinai is energized by those who recognize the value of her expertise. "It's that give and take. I enjoy the relationship between the faculty member and myself. They say, 'Hey, let's work on a research project.' And then that leads into something else. And next thing you know, they'll receive a grant and they'll say, 'Oh, you have to be part of this. You get this; I want you to help me with it.' So, building relationships with faculty and teaching—those are the rewarding [moments]...when everybody is commenting on how helpful you were."

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References

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2. United States Census Bureau, *Explore Census Data*, <https://data.census.gov/>.