DttP

Documents to the People

Spring 2010 | Volume 38, No. 1 | ISSN 0091-2085

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- Ted Kennedy's Speech at the 1980 Democratic National Convention
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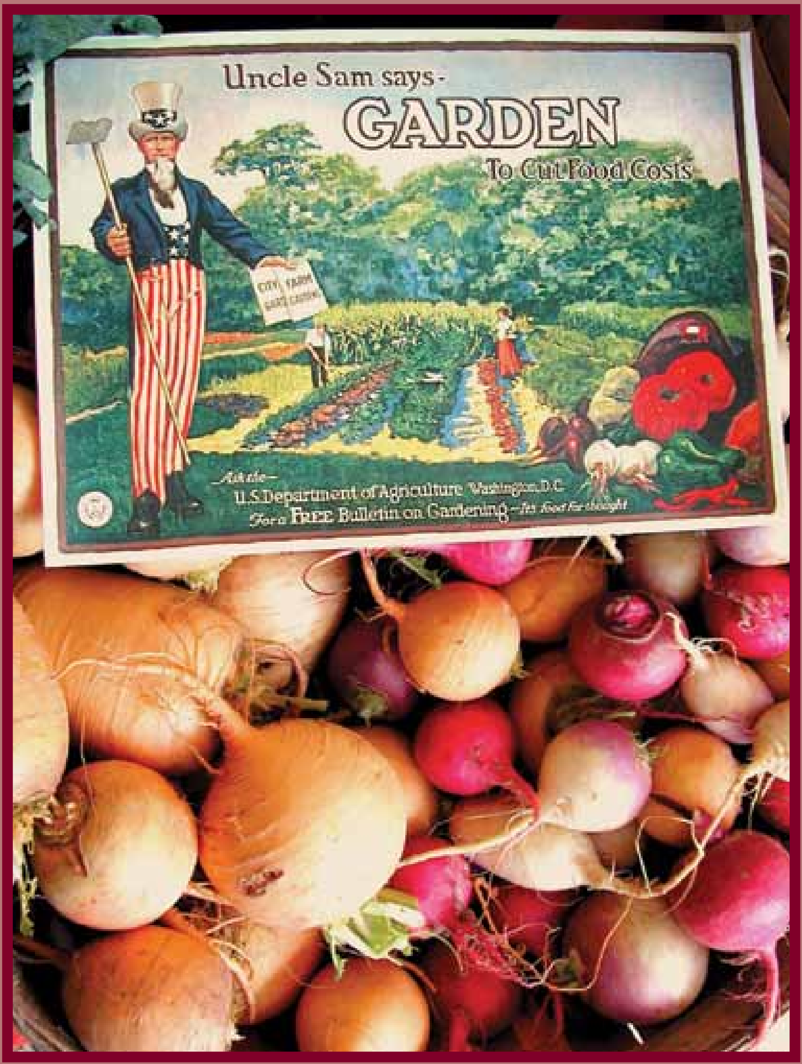

ORGANISATION FOR ECONOMIC CO-OPERATION AND DEVELOPMENT

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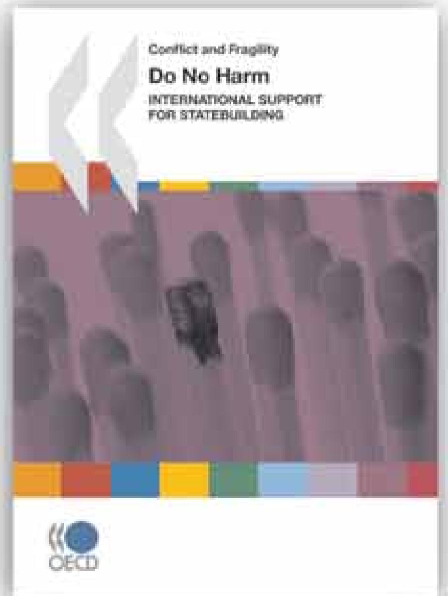
OECD Factbook 2010 available in April

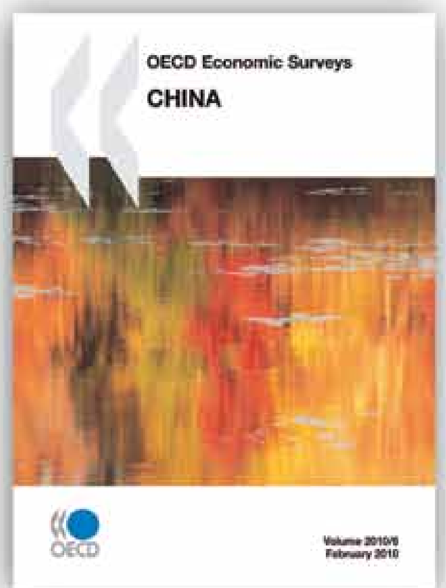
For a stronger, cleaner, fairer world economy



Conflict and Fragility
Do No Harm: International Support for Statebuilding

ISBN: 978-92-64-07738-6, January 2010

How can donors ensure they do no harm? How can they be sure they intervene constructively in fragile situations? *Do No Harm* provides practical guidance based on the results of research undertaken on behalf of the OECD DAC International Network on Conflict and Fragility (INCAF). The book is based on comparative case studies of six countries (Afghanistan, Bolivia, Democratic Republic of Congo, Nepal, Rwanda and Sierra Leone) and a comprehensive literature review. It addresses how the interventions of OECD countries may risk undermining positive statebuilding processes, and makes recommendations as to how this may be avoided in the future. *Do No Harm* is an important source to guide external engagement in situations of fragility and conflict, both at the policy and the field level.



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ISBN: 978-92-64-07667-9, February 2010

OECD's periodic survey of the Chinese economy provides a solid analysis of developments in China and extensive statistical information. This edition features monetary and financial policy, product market regulation, inequalities and social policy.

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The *Atlas of Gender and Development* is an indispensable tool for development practitioners, policy makers, academics and the wider public. It provides detailed country notes, maps and graphics describing the situation of women in 124 developing and transition countries using a new composite measure of gender inequality — the Social Institutions and Gender Index (SIGI) — developed by the OECD Development Centre.

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DttP

Documents to the People

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Columns

Articles

Reviews

'Round the Table

About the Cover: The cover photo was the winner of the 2010 *DttP* Cover Contest. The photo was taken and submitted by Sarah Ball, a student at the Pratt Institute, and features some home-grown turnips alongside a 1917 USDA poster "Uncle Sam Says—Garden to Cut Food Costs."

Editor's Corner

New Volume, New Columns

Beth Clausen and Valerie Glenn

As promised, the first issue of 2010 features some changes to *DttP*. The most obvious change (aside from the cover color) is in the list of columns. In response to readers' wishes as expressed in last spring's *DttP* reader survey, we have introduced several new columns and reconfigured some continuing columns.

New columns appearing in this and every issue are:

- Get to Know.... Features members of the government information community. The inaugural column by Julia Stewart features Steve Beleu of the Oklahoma Department of Libraries.
- Federal Documents Focus. The name says it all, and in this issue, new columnists Lucia Orlando and Rebecca Hyde discuss various aspects of the 2010 Census including its brevity, technology, and importance.

Columns appearing in the spring and fall issues:

- Spread the Word. Will feature outreach, instruction, marketing tips, trends, and advice. In this issue Melanie Blau writes about using a free government resource, the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office's Patent Full-Text and Image Database, to create outreach programming for different audiences.
- Documents without Borders. The reconceived International Documents Roundup column will focus on IGOs, foreign government publishing, and other non-U.S. government information topics. New columnist Cyril Emery of the United Nations' Dag Hammarskjöld Library writes about new resources certain to be of interest to those of us who have patrons in need of international information.

As always, GODORT Chair Amy West continues to inform, asking questions about library partnerships that are certain to spur discussion and further thought by readers.

You may be wondering what happened to Tech Watch and the Washington Report. Never fear, these favorite columns are not gone, but have migrated to an online-only availability. The primary reason for this is to improve their timeliness—because of the lag between submitting a column and its publication date, these columns that are by nature "current" would be less useful than they may have been. The columns are now published on the GODORT wiki at wikis.ala.org/godort/index.php/DttP_Columns.

There is a nice mix of feature articles in this issue as well. New librarian Benjy Stein weaves an interesting tale of the development of federal weather data gathering and distribution with the story of inventor and army general Albert Meyer. Debbie Rabina provides an interesting illustration of using digital government information for research—even on an historical topic—in this case the verification of statements in a 1980 speech by Edward Kennedy. Clearly her students are learning important lessons, and through this article, we can learn along with them. Tanya Finchum details the beginning and current status of the Herculean effort she has been leading to create oral histories of GODORT members and government information professionals.

Don't forget to catch up on what you may have missed at the Midwinter Meeting in Boston by reading the Conference Highlights. Look forward to the Annual Conference in Washington, D.C., by reading the Society of American Archivists' Congressional Papers Roundtable's Linda Whitaker's perspective on that group's and GODORT's shared mission. This is also a preview of the GODORT Program at Annual, "Archivists and Librarians: Together We Can Save Congress."

Please take a moment to take another look at the fabulously "springy" cover photo taken by Sarah Ball, a student at the Pratt Institute's School of Information and Library Science. We received several visually interesting and clever covers that were submitted for the Fourth Annual Cover Contest, but we could choose just one. You can take a look at all of the photo submissions at wikis.ala.org/godort/index.php/2010_DttP_Cover_Contest.

We would love to hear what you think about the new columns! You can contact us about them (or anything else!) at dttp.editor@gmail.com.

From the Chair

Sponsoring Resources for Public Benefit: A New Kind of Ownership

Amy West

This column started out being about UNdata—a resource with many great qualities—but I found myself getting stuck on the description of how UNdata is funded. According to its "About Us" information, "This database service is part of a project . . . called 'Statistics as a Public Good,' whose objectives are to provide free access to global statistics, to educate users about the importance of statistics for evidence-based policy and decision-making and . . . implemented in partnership with Statistics Sweden and the Gapminder Foundation with partial financial support from the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA)." To restate, UNdata is free to every library because the SIDA and the United Nations cooperatively subsidize such access. Instances of resources like UNdata are not that common—much more common are instances in which a provider uses access to the data as a revenue source. The result is that many libraries spend many dollars, but the access is available only to those libraries that pay. In that way, access to many official sources is just like access to journals. At that point I found myself thinking once again about a talk I heard recently, and what GODORT might take away from it.

The University of Minnesota Libraries have taken a new approach to its planning process this year by hosting a speaker series. One of these speakers, Paul Courant, university librarian and dean of libraries at the University of Michigan, talked about the economics of scholarly communications and publishing.[1] Courant's talk can be best described as a reflection on what we'd like to pay for versus what we do pay for. Courant meant academic libraries when he said "we," but I think his points apply to all types of libraries because one thing all libraries do is spend funds to acquire or lease materials.

He first discussed university presses. At the University of Michigan, the university press is now part of the library system. In describing the situation, Courant said that he thought that this was a good move because the rest of the scholarly communication process is subsidized, so why not subsidize this part too? If it makes some money, great, but mostly, the important thing is to rationalize the finances so that the primary goal—enhanced scholarly communication—remains in the forefront.

Courant then discussed the role he hopes libraries will take with respect to journals. Namely, like the University of Michigan Press, he hopes libraries will begin to subsidize open access journals. Yes, it would cost money, but then, as Courant notes, we already spend money on a situation that isn't necessarily ideal for either individual libraries or scholarly communication in general. So why not start devoting some funds to creating a situation that benefits all libraries?

While some depository programs have no participation fees, all depository programs incur costs for storage, cataloging, and staff. And in cases in which government information isn't available via a depository program, libraries expend funds to acquire documents just like they do for other materials. In a print-primary environment, retaining a local copy is an effective method of enhancing access to the greatest number of users. In the web-primary environment, I'm increasingly of the view that subsidizing free-to-everyone-else access is closer to the ideal method.

Another of our speakers, Jim Neal, vice president for information services and university librarian at Columbia University, noted that often the most successful library collaborations are bilateral or maybe trilateral.[2] We have almost no working examples of multilateral partnerships. Every library has its own needs, users to satisfy, financial picture, and so forth. For example, one of the regularly touted strengths of the U.S. Federal Depository Library Program (FDLP) is that it allows each library substantial latitude in implementing the program locally. The FDLP has been historically successful because its flexibility allows each library to act individually. Neal's view also provides some explanation for why we have not succeeded in cooperatively cataloging the pre-1976 materials: such a project doesn't allow for the individuality that traditional FDLP collecting does.

I've been feeling a bit worried about the prospects for long-term access to government information at any level because I've been worrying about the lack of multilateral cooperative projects to address government information. Now I'm beginning to think that maybe I've been worrying about the wrong thing. Instead, I think that a viable future for government information is one in which many unilateral projects, or bilateral and trilateral partnerships exist to subsidize and take ownership of individual government information resources like the UNdata project described above.

These partnerships may take all kinds of forms and may involve our usual vendors. I recently put part of my non-data collections funds into a pool to subsidize the digitization of a number of local newspapers in languages other than English.

A vendor that often works with government information is involved. I contributed because the project charter promises to eventually make all of the digitized content available for free. It won't be for about ten years, but then libraries weren't asked to contribute that much money up front, and this situation still improves on the alternatives because at least the digitized content will be freely available someday. None of the funds we expend on traditional journals or databases guarantee that the content will *ever* be available to the public for free.

Is there a role here for GODORT? I think so. Not necessarily to recommend what individual libraries do, but perhaps to maintain registries of subsidized resources, connect like-minded libraries, and connect libraries to the information producers. The long-standing success of depository programs shows that libraries are willing to spend at least some money to maintain government information. As we learn from the changes to the information landscape inside and outside of the government information universe, we can develop new avenues for our collections funds, we can retain ownership of content in a way we've lost in the shift toward lease-based and centralized-source access, and be full partners in long-term public access to government information.

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2. Jim Neal, "Defensive Diversification versus Radical Collaboration: The Strategic Context and Directions for Content and Collections in the Academic Research Library" (presentation at the University of Minnesota, Jan. 7, 2010), tinyurl.com/y82dnv7.

GODORT Needs a New Web Administrator

GODORT is seeking a new web administrator for a three-year initial term of office to begin in July 2010. The successful candidate will have responsibility for GODORT's online presence, serve as GODORT's liaison to ALA's web staff, and coordinate the round table's web managers to provide accurate and timely content. To assure consideration, applications should be submitted by April 30, 2010. For details, see wikis.ala.org/godort/index.php/Administrator.

—John A. Stevenson, Chair, GODORT Publications Committee

Get to Know . . .

Steve Beleu, Regional Depository Librarian and Co-Recipient of the 2009 Federal Depository Library of the Year Award

Julia Stewart

Steve Beleu, Oklahoma Department of Libraries' (ODL) regional depository librarian and corecipient of this year's Depository Library of the Year Award, spends a lot of time driving in his car listening to the radio.

"When I'm driving to present a workshop, I pass the time listening to local classical music stations or National Public Radio," said Beleu. "I only feel like I've done any appreciable driving when I go to Oklahoma Panhandle State University, which is six hours one way from Oklahoma City, and I make that a two-day trip."

Beleu started developing workshops in 2001 and 2002, began presenting them in 2003, and hasn't stopped since. In 2009, Beleu spent fifty-four hours driving in Oklahoma and the surrounding states to present workshops that educate the public on a variety of federal and state topics. Popular workshops include "Get Ready for the 2010 Census" and "American Memory for Oklahomans."

"In the beginning, I focused on topics that libraries seemed interested in based on the types of requests we'd received in USGID [Oklahoma Department of Libraries' United States Government Information Division] via reference questions from other libraries and interlibrary loan requests from Oklahoma libraries. Eventually, I narrowed the topics to certain agencies for the workshops. We had already been contacted by the Library of Congress to become a test library for American Memory, so that also became a workshop topic."

Because the ODL is also the coordinating agency for the Oklahoma State Data Center, Beleu has presented more than sixty census workshops since 2003. These include "The 2010 Census is Almost Here," "Using the Census for Economic Development," and "How to Use the 2007 Census of Agriculture and the National Agriculture Statistics Service."

Beleu admits there are challenges to presenting information that is prone to continual updates and changes.

"I have to teach the website the way the website exists on the day I give the workshop. In preparation, I will look at the website two or three days before the workshop to see if it has modifications or updates, then I update my teaching guide if necessary—and it is always necessary. When American Memory had their basic revision a few years ago, my Library of Congress contact told me this major revision would occur on the very day that I was driving to Altus, Oklahoma, to give an American Memory workshop at Western Oklahoma State College. When I got to Altus, I had to work on their library's computer three hours that night to almost completely revise my American Memory teaching guide for the next morning's workshop."

Beleu's commitment to outreach continues, and expansion of ODL's workshops is a possibility for 2010.

"I've presented workshops in Arkansas, Kansas, Missouri, and Texas, but would like to do more. I'd also like to include New Mexico and Colorado in our outreach area," said Beleu. He and Cliff Broadworth, ODL reference librarian, plan to offer twenty workshops in the spring of 2010, including a new workshop on federal websites about American Indian topics for all types of libraries, and a special workshop about online federal government information to tribal librarians and tribal government staff.

Steve Beleu on his way to another workshop.

Since 2005, ongoing work for Beleu and his team includes visiting with various Oklahoma Tribal Colleges, such as the Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribal College and the College of the Muscogee Nation, informing these groups about the Federal Depository Library Program and possible membership. According to Beleu, "This work continues."

"I'm doing my job when I'm out in the field teaching the public about state and federal information, not when I'm inside my library," said Beleu.

"Plus, I'm good at driving."

Federal Documents Focus

Census 2010: What's the Big Deal?

Lucia Orlando and Rebecca Hyde

Would you be willing to answer ten questions if it meant you could win millions of dollars for your community? This is one of the messages the public is hearing from the U.S. Census Bureau as the agency works to inform the nation's residents about the 2010 Census and persuade them to complete and return census survey forms. The U.S. Constitution mandates conducting a census of the population every ten years. Census population data is used to apportion seats in the House of Representatives, redraw congressional boundaries, and allocate billions of dollars in federal aid. The goal of the decennial census is deceptively simple: count each person in the United States once, at his or her usual address, and collect accurate information about each respondent.[1] From a practical standpoint, conducting the census requires a massive coordinated effort to find people, mail out surveys, encourage them to respond, and follow up when they don't. Making this undertaking more difficult is the complexity involved in locating and counting the large, highly mobile, and diverse U.S. population.[2] With so much at stake, it's not surprising that the census has historically come under fire for bias in undercounting or overcounting certain racial or ethnic groups.

Census 2010: One of the shortest in history

Census 2010 differs from previous censuses in that it consists of a single form with only ten questions and eliminates the long form used in Census 2000, which contained a daunting fifty-three questions. Traditionally, the census long form collected more detailed housing and socioeconomic information from a sample of the population. The Census Bureau now collects that information as part of its separate ongoing program called the American Community Survey.

The ten-question Census 2010 form asks the bare minimum needed to fulfill legal requirements and, according to the Bureau Director's Blog, makes this census one of the shortest questionnaires in history (blogs.census.gov/2010census). The form asks how many people are living in a given home, their relationship to others in the household, type of housing, phone number, gender, date of birth, Hispanic origin, race, and if members of the household sometimes live or stay somewhere else. See figure 1 for the ten questions.

Why census data matter

The answers to these simple questions, cumulated over millions of U.S. residents, are then used for a variety of purposes at the national, state, and local levels. Recently, the Government Accountability Office (GAO) analyzed the ten largest federal assistance programs and determined that each of these programs relied at least in some part on census data. In 2009, the amount of federal funding for these programs was $478 billion, or about 84 percent of total federal assistance.[3] The specific programs include Medicaid, Highway Planning & Construction, State Fiscal Stabilization Fund—Education State Grants, Title I Grants to Local Education Agencies, Individuals with Disabilities Education Act Part B, Temporary Aid for Needy Families, Section 8 Housing Choice Vouchers, Community Development Block Grant, Federal Transit Formula Grants Programs, and the Children's Health Insurance Program.[4] Local and state agencies also rely to varying extents on census data to guide decisions regarding funding of schools, hospitals, and emergency services in a community.

Is the census reliable?

Getting the census count right is obviously crucial. Accuracy depends on two major factors: a correct address list to facilitate the mapping of census geographies and delivery of forms, and subsequent in-person follow-up with anyone who doesn't return the survey. The GAO commented in a recent report that "if the address list is inaccurate, people can be missed, counted more than once or counted in the wrong location."[5]

The Census Bureau sends out canvassers to verify addresses and identify hidden dwellings such as renters living in converted attics, basements, or garages. This is an enormous undertaking, made more complex by shifting housing patterns brought about by escalated home foreclosures and natural disasters along the Gulf Coast and in other regions. The GAO pointed out that these factors "have likely increased the number of people doubling-up, living in motels, cars, tent cities, and other less conventional living arrangements. Such individuals are at greater risk of being missed in the census."[6]

Technology

To assist with address canvassing and nonresponse follow-up, the Census Bureau conceived of using handheld computers. Unfortunately, this innovative idea was plagued with technological problems such as system freeze-ups, long transmission times, and other technical problems.[7] As a result, the bureau is confining the use of the handheld computers to address canvassing and updating housing unit information in the Census Bureau's address file. The good news is that address canvassing was completed in less time than originally estimated, on average ten weeks instead of fourteen. However, the effort resulted in an additional cost of $88 million, or 25 percent over budget.[8] Because of the technical difficulties, the bureau decided to revert to a paper-based system for nonresponse follow-up, whereby census field workers follow up in person with home visits, using printed forms. This type of follow-up is expensive and time consuming and is expected to add three billion dollars to the total cost overrun.[9]

Getting the word out: Be counted

An accurate census relies on counting individuals who historically have been undercounted, such as minority populations, children, renters, and people living in nontraditional housing situations. Public participation is essential and in many cases involves overcoming distrust on the part of some groups of anything associated with "The Government." According to the Census Bureau, all information provided to the Census Bureau remains confidential and by law cannot be shared with other government agencies. The census does not request information about residency or citizenship status and is concerned only with counting everyone who lives in the United States regardless of where they are from or their legal status. Census takers must pass a background check and be fingerprinted, and they are required to take a lifelong oath to protect all personal information (2010.census.gov/2010census/privacy).

In order to reach undercounted populations, the Census Bureau developed the Integrated Communications Campaign. The campaign represents a coordinated effort of outreach and partnerships with "government, private sector, social service, and other organizations; paid advertising; public relations; and Census in Schools (a program designed to reach parents and guardians through their school-age children)."[10] Although the communications campaign is raising awareness about the census, a far more difficult goal is prodding individuals to complete and return their forms.[11]

Concluding observations

The decennial census is a complex undertaking that would be daunting under the best of circumstances. The large, ethnically and linguistically diverse population of the United States makes this an even more difficult proposal. The Census Bureau, with urging from Congress and the GAO, is doing its best to remedy deficiencies and address issues that could lead to perceptions of bias in the count. The Congressional Research Service best summarized the ongoing nature of these issues when it stated, "Concerns about possible bias in the enumeration, and about whom the census counts, miscounts, or omits, likely will persist in 2010 and beyond because the census numbers serve such important national, state, and local purposes."[12]

Figure 1. The ten questions asked in Census 2010

1. How many people were living or staying in this house, apartment, or mobile home on April 1, 2010?
2. Were there any additional people staying here April 1, 2010 that you did not include in Question 1?
3. Is this a house, apartment, or mobile home?
4. What is your telephone number?

Please provide information for each person living here…This will be Person 1.

5. What is Person 1's name?
6. What is Person 1's sex?
7. What is Person 1's age and what is Person 1's date of birth?

NOTE: Please answer BOTH Question 8 about Hispanic origin and Question 9 about race. For this census, Hispanic origins are not races.

8. Is Person 1 of Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin?
9. What is Person 1's race?
10. Does Person 1 sometimes live or stay somewhere else?

Adapted from 2010.census.gov

One important thing to remember is that in spite of any issues there may be in obtaining an accurate count, it remains the only survey in the United States that even attempts to count every single person, and, as a result, it is the closest thing we have to a complete count of our population.

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Documents without Borders

A New Europe and Some New Resources

Cyril Robert Emery

Treaty of Lisbon

On December 1, 2009, after almost two years since its initial signing, the Treaty of Lisbon entered into force. The treaty introduces sweeping changes in the European Union (EU) designed to make the organization more democratic and transparent.[1] The treaty is available in twenty-three languages at europa.eu/lisbon_treaty. The treaty amends previous EU agreements, and the EU provides a single consolidated text on the treaty's site. For a comprehensive view of the EU's new organizational structure, researchers will probably find it helpful to work from the consolidated text.

The treaty's ratification required the signature of Czech President Václav Klaus who had previously been opposed to its adoption.[2] He signed it on November 3, 2009, after the Czech Constitutional Court ruled that its implementation would not violate the Czech Constitution. An English translation of the ruling is available at www.usoud.cz/soubor/2506, and you can find the Czech-language version on the court's website (tinyurl.com/pl-us-29-09). Observers will also recall that in 2008, the Irish public voted "no" to the adoption of the treaty, preventing its ratification. A second referendum took place last fall, however, and the treaty was welcomed by a large majority.[3]

In terms of documentation, two new offices mandated by the treaty will, at the very least, be generating press releases, and reports are likely to follow. There is now a high representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy to manage the EU's foreign relationships and a president of the European Council who will serve for a term of two and one-half years.[4] It appears that the primary sites for both the high representative and European Council president will be hosted on the Council of the European Union website (www.consilium.europa.eu).[5] The two sites are fairly basic, but are likely to continue to develop additional features. The president's site, for example, is already equipped with a video blog.

Preexisting EU bodies will also be generating more documents as the scope of the Union's authority broadens. In particular, the European Court of Justice might see an increased caseload, which should lead to publishing additional court records.

Goldstone Report

The *Report of the United Nations Fact-Finding Mission on the Gaza Conflict* kept the United Nations occupied for much of the fall of 2009. A team led by Justice Richard Goldstone, a respected international jurist, put the report together to examine human-rights violations stemming from the conflict in Gaza during late 2008 and early 2009. According to the *New York Times*, the "report found evidence that both Israeli and Palestinian actions amounted to war crimes but it was more harshly critical of Israel."[6] It is available as a Human Rights Council document (A/HRC/12/48; tinyurl.com/AHRC-12-48-pdf) and a General Assembly document (A/64/490; tinyurl.com/A64-490-pdf).

In October, the Goldstone Report was endorsed by the UN Human Rights Council in A/HRC/RES/S-12/1 by a vote of twenty-five in favor, six against, and eleven abstentions.[7] The UN General Assembly then took up the issue and also endorsed the report by resolution. The transcript of the deliberations is available as A/64/PV.39 (tinyurl.com/A64-PV39-pdf). The resolution (A/RES/64/10; tinyurl.com/ARES64-10) calls for the report to be transmitted to the Security Council as well as for investigations by Israel and the Palestinian Authority into the events of the conflict. General Assembly resolutions are generally not binding, and the United States voted against it, stating that it found the report flawed as it focused too much on Israel's actions.[8]

For a concise view of the General Assembly proceedings, a press release summarizing the debate and presenting the voting record is available at tinyurl.com/ga10883. It is not clear whether the Security Council will address the report, but any Security Council resolutions or debate would appear on the Security Council Actions page of the United Nations Documentation Research Guide (tinyurl.com/scact2010).

Copenhagen Climate Change Conference

On December 19, 2009, after some doubt as to whether a deal would be reached, world leaders adopted the Copenhagen Accord, a non-binding political agreement to limit the global temperature rise to below two degrees Celsius. The accord does not, as had once been sought, "set a firm deadline for a legally binding treaty."[9] As UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon put it, "The Copenhagen Accord may not be everything that everyone hoped for, but this decision of the Conference of Parties is a beginning, an essential beginning."[10]

At the time of the writing of this column, the final report of the Conference of Parties was not yet complete. An advance unedited version of the official text of the accord is available on the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change website (tinyurl.com/cop15cphauv-pdf). From a procedural perspective, the conference generated two other important decisions that allow work toward a legally binding agreement to continue: the *Outcome of the work of the Ad Hoc Working Group on Long-term Cooperative Action under the Convention* and the *Outcome of the work of the Ad Hoc Working Group on Further Commitments for Annex I Parties under the Kyoto Protocol*. These decisions are also available as advance versions (tinyurl.com/cop15lcaauv-pdf; tinyurl.com/cmp5awgauv-pdf).

New resources

On the INT-LAW listserv, Pamela Snyman of the University of Cape Town Law Library drew attention to the Laws of Botswana website (www.laws.gov.bw), which now makes Botswana legislation publicly available worldwide. At the Dag Hammarskjöld Library, my colleagues completed a two-year project to make voting records available for all General Assembly and Security Council resolutions since 1946 (tinyurl.com/voterecords). The library also introduced UN Member States on the Record (www.un.org/depts/dhl/unms), which makes it possible to browse by country for member-state reports, statements, and more.

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Spread the Word

Creating Vital and Compelling Outreach Programming Using Freely Available Government Resources: USPTO Patent Full-Text and Image Database

Melanie A. Blau

In this era of do-it-yourself, it's easy to feel unsure about what people know how to do or what they may need help doing. Listening to your friends, relatives, and customers will help draw a sketch for you—a sketch you can fill in with your expertise. By creating targeted programming you stand the best chance of sharing knowledge that is of real value to your customers. Let's package our contribution in a way that suits most of our patrons who have short attention spans, time pressures, and are overbooked.

Eating the elephant (one bite at a time)

There are many groups that would benefit from knowledge of the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office (USPTO) Trademark Database. Depending on your library type, you may serve one or more of the groups discussed. Your customers are not all the same, as you know. Just as marketing experts segment their market and direct specific messages to those submarkets, you can divide your customers into recognizable groups. You can then create programming relevant to those groups, providing precise, useful content. This column outlines how you can use freely available resources such as the USPTO Patent Database to help your customers and, in turn, learn more about them. Knowing your customers better allows you to iteratively refine your approach and continue to provide interesting and important outreach programming. Let's begin by creating our own market segments.

Who are you? Who, who, who, who?

You (my readers) are not all the same either. You work in different kinds of libraries and perhaps many of you do not even work in a library but are instead "embedded" within a department inside your organization. For each of you, the program you may need will be a variation on one or all of these.

Who could benefit from patent and trademark searching assistance?

- Individuals with an idea;
- Businesses of any type;
- Attorneys/paralegals; and
- University populations, e.g., students studying any of the sciences, business majors, law students.

Why would they want to learn about the USPTO services?

- Individuals with an idea often don't know how or where to begin. By making your program available, you are offering a safe, time-saving, money-saving outlet for their questions.
- Businesses—especially those that are small to medium-sized—often don't have the financial resources to employ their own research departments, let alone librarians. They have their own businesses to run. Your offering a brief, targeted program for a busy entrepreneur/businessperson saves him/her time, effort, and money.
- Sure, large law firms have their own internal research departments, but what about everyone else?
- Sometimes bibliographic instruction turns into an attempt on our part to teach everything we know to the students in one hour. This is, of course, not possible. The result is often dry, and patrons quickly reach information overload. Taking a different approach, one of functional utility in small bites, may produce a better result. It's frankly easier on us and easier on our patrons.

How?

Let's develop an outreach program for each of these population that you can tailor to your individual situation. Following are ways to perform this outreach:

- Create posters, flyers, announcements, or e-mails with a light bulb or other simple image saying "Got an idea? Want to know if it's already been patented? Come to our brief session/class/seminar (whatever words work for you) where we go to the source, the USPTO's database. After a short overview, we show you tips and tricks and then will perform live searches on any topic you would like searched!" Or you could come up with a funny idea or off-beat invention that's already been patented and use that or save that for the class itself. Make sure to stress that your presentation will be short.
- Create a seven- or eight-slide presentation (no longer) with key searching tips. (See "The slides")
- Make sure the slides do not have too much information on them and keep your talking to approximately fifteen minutes. At each slide, ask your patrons a question to keep things interactive, such as "What other website do people like to use?" or "What makes a website user friendly?" or "What are the users' favorite search tricks they would like to share?" Basically any kind of question keeps things interactive, and you can pick up on what your patrons are saying and work that into your session.
- Go to the live searching part and you bring up the website. Hopefully you are in a situation where your searching is projected on a wall or screen so everyone can see what you're doing. You should have some examples ready to go. Do one search and ask if they brought any topics they would like you to perform. Run with those or proceed with your other examples.
- Offer the program regularly.

Business outreach

- Create posters, flyers, announcements, or e-mails saying "Stop paying fees for patent research! Come to our brief session/class/seminar (whatever words work for you) where we go to the source, the USPTO's database. After a short overview we show you tips and tricks and then will perform live searches on any topic you would like searched! We guarantee that you will be able to perform your own successful searching at the end of the thirty minutes!"
- Create a seven or eight slide presentation (no longer) with key searching tips. (See "The slides.")
- Make sure the slides do not have too much information on them and keep your talking to approximately fifteen minutes.
- Go to the live searching part where you bring up the website. You should have some examples ready to go. Do one search and ask folks if they brought any topics they would like you to perform. Run with those or proceed with your other examples.
- Offer the program regularly.

Attorneys/paralegals

See "Business outreach"—they're working for someone.

University populations

- Contact various departments such as engineering, law, medicine, physics, chemistry, or biology, etc. and arrange to work with them on patent searching. Either create a stand-alone class for them, or obtain course schedules so you can target your session for specific classes. Find out by asking faculty what would help their students most, or what focus/topic most useful to them? Talk to people with whom you already have a relationship. They can be your early adopters and help you promote future outreach to their departments.
- It's best if you can present to them in their building rather than asking them to come to you. Their day is more seamless, and you have a better chance of attracting more people.
- Create posters, flyers, announcements, or e-mails saying "Go to the source—quickest methods with the most accurate results!" Add other enticements related to their field. For example, a plant patent search could be mentioned in a flyer for the biology department. Keep the subject focused on them.
- The slide show will have the same introductory slides but then your examples will reflect the group you are addressing. You will need to create different examples for each department. This will mean creating four or five different presentations but once you have the core done, it's not too much work to change a few slides in the middle.
    - Engineering—from the quick search screen, in Term 1, type "bridge"; in Field 1, select Title from the drop-down menu; in Term 2, type "modular"; and in Field 2, select Abstract from the drop-down menu.
    - Physics—for those sci-fi fans, what's up with hovercraft development? There are over five

hundred hits so you can have some fun narrowing things down.
- Chemistry/Materials—Spiderman fans looking to create that next great webbing material, search "sticky web"—you can have a discussion about improving results when synonyms come up.
- Biology—An example of a plant patent is useful. From the quick search screen, in Term 1 type "4"; in Field 1, select Application Type from the drop-down menu (this is the specific Application Type for plant patents). In Term 2, type "carnivorous"; you may leave Field 2 on the default.

Ask the students to bring examples if possible but always be ready with your own.

The slides

Here is one way to approach the slides which should not exceed eight in number:

1. An Overview Slide. Some learning styles require overview and context before the person will absorb anything else well. This context is easy to provide. Simply choose your favorite parts from the Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) or the Help pages from the site such as the following: "The Web Patent Full-Text Database (PatFT) contains the full-text of over 3,000,000 patents from 1976 to the present, plus limited bibliographic data for over 4,000,000 patents from 1790 to 1975. It provides links to the Web Patent Full-Page Images Database (PatImg), which contains over 70,000,000 images, including every page of over 7,000,000 patents from 1790 to the most recent issue week. The Web Patent Databases now serve over 25,000,000 pages of text (over 150,000,000 hits) per month to over 350,000 customers."[1]

2. A Searching Basics Slide. This slide needs to be stripped down and encouraging. The object here is to quickly get to the point that they will be successful without too much headache. Text and proposed screenshot may be:
   - quick search works for most people and most searches;
   - example, "spray and skunk" (screenshot of results); and
   - too many results at fifty-six, added the word "defense"—results down to nine.

   At this point you may have questions for your audience. You may want to ask what people think so far–does this seem like something they could do, etc.?

3. The How to Access Images Slide. This is potentially the most difficult part when you are dealing with the public. It depends on their level of computer knowledge. You may want to offer to show people how to download a plug-in after the session is over and that step will not interfere with your flow. The main point is that they should understand they will need this special plug-in. You've told them, you can move on. One approach could be the following:
   - a special TIFF plug-in is required to view the images;
   - there is a link to the free plug-in on the USPTO site; and
   - plug-ins are available for Macintosh and Linux operating systems.[2]

4. The Definitions Slide. These are field definitions used in the database. Pick just a few that you think will most help your particular audience. Type the word and a brief explanation. A law group may like the following:
   - assignee: person(s) or entities awarded the patent;
   - application types: may be simply a design, or the actual item (a utility patent); and
   - government interest: indicates if the work was sponsored by a government agency and what their representative interest remains, if any.

5. The Stop Words Slide. As with many other databases, the USPTO patent database has a list of words it ignores while searching. Many people are unaware of stop words and will type whole sentences into databases as if it's Google. Because this would be a stumbling block to good results, it's important for you to cover the topic. Select stop words relevant to your audience, or at least words that will surprise them. Before you show them the stop words you can have them guess some. Even those who are not familiar with the concept will probably join in if others speak up. Some examples that may surprise (they surprised me at any rate!) are: comprises, use, and figs.[3]

6. Searching on Different Fields Slide. For different users this may be the most exciting area—learning about the different searchable fields in the database. Perhaps you've received questions about how to find patents from inventors in your state. Yep, there's a field for that: Assignee State (AS). How about attorneys who represent successful

patent holders? Yes, there's a field for that: Attorney or Agent (LREP). How about the full list of other patents that used this patent? Yes, it's Referenced by (REF).

7. Your contact information for follow-up slide.

Your "canned" presentation is over, and you're jumping to the USPTO patent database to perform some live searches relevant to your audience.

Congratulations!

So you've segmented your customers into addressable submarkets, and provided outreach to them based on their needs using the USPTO patent database. Bravo! Consider this round one. Assuredly, you've gained insight into your patrons' needs as you've asked questions and listened to their comments and responses during the sessions. Recognize these insights as the beginning of round two. While you're keeping track of questions that come up at the reference desk (or at your own desk!), you should add them to the insights gained. With confidence you will combine all of this information and experience to continue to create targeted outreach.

Hopefully, freely available government resources will help you do just that!

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Give to the Rozkuszka Scholarship

The W. David Rozkuszka Scholarship provides financial assistance to an individual who is currently working with government documents in a library and is trying to complete a master's degree in library science. This award, established in 1994, is named after W. David Rozkuszka, former documents librarian at Stanford University. The award winner receives $3,000.

If you would like to assist in raising the amount of money in the endowment fund, please make your check out to ALA/GODORT. In the memo field please note: Rozkuszka Endowment.

Send your check to GODORT Treasurer: John Hernandez, Coordinator for Social Sciences, Northwestern University Library, 1970 Campus Drive, Evanston, IL 60208-2300.

More information about the scholarship and past recipients can be found on the GODORT Awards Committee wiki (wikis.ala.org/godort/index.php/awards).

Ted Kennedy's Speech at the 1980 Democratic National Convention

Researching Pre-digital Government in the Digital Age

Debbie Rabina

On May 21, 2008, U.S. Senator Edward M. Kennedy (D-MA) was diagnosed with a malignant brain tumor. Senator Kennedy was known, among other things, for being a great orator, remembered most recently for his endorsement speech of Barack Obama.[1]

I was in upstate New York when the news of Senator Kennedy's illness was made public, listening to National Public Radio's broadcasts of some of Senator Kennedy's finest speeches. It was the speech at the 1980 Democratic National Convention that caught my attention.[2]

The 1980s were the beginning of the shift of many government publications to an online environment, and I thought a careful examination of this speech, in the context of a government information course, would provide a good teaching opportunity for students, exposing them to sources available both in print and online.[3]

The summer of 2008, a few months short of the November presidential election, was a time of increased interest in American politics, particularly among college students.[4] Everyone seemed to be paying attention to and taking an interest in the candidates' speeches and, as someone who teaches a course in government information sources, I am always looking for real-life situations that can be used in the classroom.

Students in the fall 2008 government information class at the Pratt Institute were given the task of substantiating some of the claims made by Senator Kennedy in his speech. This was not a straightforward, fact-checking assignment but one that required interpretation. Students were asked to work in groups and locate government documents that support (or contradict) some of the claims he made in the speech. For example, Senator Kennedy states in the speech that the Democratic Party ended excessive regulation in the airline and trucking industries: Can students find government documents that support this claim? He describes the workplace as unsafe. Are there statistics from the 1970s about workplace safety and accidents that support this claim?

The idea was simple, its execution exhausting, the lessons learned invaluable for students. The project itself was indicative of the problematic nature of teaching and learning about government documents in the digital age.

Project goals and outcomes

Those of us who teach government documents courses in library and information science programs and schools are well aware of the difficulties in teaching this course, difficulties that have been expressed and discussed in various blog posts, discussion lists, and scholarly articles.[5] These challenges include the inability of traditional textbook publishing to keep up with the rapid changes in government publications, the obstacles in accessing older print sources as many depository libraries send their collections to remote storage, the growth of the scope of government information sources into areas of e-government—local government, international information sources, and information policy, just to mention a few.

This assignment, accounting for 30 percent of students' final grades, could not tackle all these issues and instead set out to achieve more modest goals: how to assemble evidence by locating and identifying the variety of government documents, both in print and online, that could substantiate their selected claims; interpreting evidence by learning how to analyze and extract relevant information contained within the documents; and reflecting upon and describing the search process and methodology used to identify and locate the most suitable government documents available. A secondary objective of this project was to encourage students to work in partnership on a research project requiring collaborative tools and group participation.

It is not possible, within the scope of this article, to detail all of the finding aids, sources, search processes, and methodologies used by the students in this project. Overall, students used seventy government sources to substantiate eleven claims made in Senator Kennedy's speech and sifted through countless others, resulting in a joint research project that exceeded forty pages. The samples below provide a limited snapshot of the work involved in a project like this, and highlight the knowledge needed to use primary and secondary sources. One student summed up the lessons learned from this project nicely when she said that "although searching the Internet can be (at times) a faster way of finding information, looking through the bound volumes of government literature dating back to the 1930s gave us a real sense and appreciation of the insurmountable amount of work that our elected officials, as well as government employees, go through in order to carry on the legacy established by America's Founding Fathers."

Annotating Senator Kennedy

The following section includes selected samples of Senator Kennedy's speech verified by students along with the government information sources that were used to validate the claims and the methodology used to locate the sources. Each example is provided in summary format and highlights the non-linear aspect of work with government information sources. The actual student searches were quite long and detailed but are summarized here for readers' convenience without compromising the valuable insight to the "breadcrumbs" followed by researchers working with government documents.

> Quote 1: The same Republicans who are talking about preserving the environment have nominated a man who last year made the preposterous statement, and I quote, "Eighty percent of our air pollution comes from plants and trees." And that nominee is no friend of the environment.

Students' primary intention regarding this section of Senator Kennedy's speech was not to verify that Ronald Reagan said the words attributed to him, but rather to find supporting evidence to the claim that plants and trees are responsible for 80 percent of air pollution. Finding the quote attributed to Reagan was just an added bonus.

The students began with querying USASearch.gov for "air pollution" and, using the topical clustering feature for a more specific list of documents, they chose "outdoor air pollution—chemical" to narrow down the results. Among the narrowed list of results they chose a USA.gov "Frequently Asked Questions" webpage (answers.usa.gov) that defined outdoor air pollution and listed some of the primary outdoor air pollutants of concern.[6] This webpage also included a list of hyperlinks for more information. From this list of hyperlinks, they chose the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) "Six Common Air Pollutants" webpage (epa.gov/air/urbanair). The six common air pollutants listed are ozone, particulate matter, carbon monoxide, nitrogen dioxide, sulfur dioxide, and lead. The brief explanation of air pollution on this page made no mention of plants or trees; therefore, students decided to check each of the pollutants. The definition for ozone explained that ground-level ozone is a pollution hazard and causes smog, as opposed to the ozone layer miles high in the atmosphere which is protective of and necessary to life. However, the mention of "volatile organic compounds" (VOC) in the definition sounded suspiciously like a kind of pollution that trees and plants could produce. Perhaps this was the idea to which Reagan was referring. Students also searched the EPA's website for a definition of VOCs by using the keyword "VOC" and found a webpage titled "An Introduction to Indoor Air Quality" (www.epa.gov/iaq/voc.html). Despite this information, students still had a nagging feeling that the answer lay with this VOC concept and decided to keep searching for more documents related to VOCs. Consequently, students performed another search on USASearch.gov for "VOC." Again, they consulted the topical clustering feature and chose "Volatile Organic—Term—Chemicals" which opened a subtopic menu, from which the students chose "Volatile Organic Compounds." They tried another search on the same website, this time for "VOC" and "trees." The very first result was a PDF from the U.S. Forest Service (www.fs.fed.us). This document, titled "The Effects of Urban Trees on Air Quality" was a long discussion outlining how trees, in fact, reduced air pollution. This appeared to be the kind of document the students had been hoping to find. Included in this document was a section titled "Emissions of Volatile Organic Compounds (VOCs)," which stated:

> Emissions of volatile organic compounds by trees can contribute to the formation of ozone and carbon monoxide. However, in atmospheres with low nitrogen oxide concentrations (e.g., some rural environments), VOCs may actually remove ozone. Because VOC emissions are temperature dependent and trees generally lower air temperatures, increased tree cover can lower overall VOC emissions and, consequently, ozone levels in urban areas.[7]

Indeed, Reagan could have been referring to "the formation of ozone and carbon monoxide" when he stated that air pollution came from plants and trees. Conversely, the U.S.

Forest Service document also explained, in the quote above, that trees also lower air pollution.

The second result was another article from the EPA titled "Vegetation & Air Quality." Under the section of the article titled "Vegetation and VOCs," the article explains that trees and vegetation do indeed emit VOCs, which contribute to ground-level ozone, and these emissions may represent a sizable portion of the total VOC emissions in an area.[8]

By further reviewing the rest of the results produced by the last search on USASearch.gov, the students found a document from NASA's Earth Observatory website (earthobservatory.nasa.gov) that confirms what had been suspected throughout the research. This article discusses VOC emissions from trees and vegetation, and the conclusion of the article tacitly confirms that Reagan's statement about tree-caused air pollution referred to VOCs:

> "noting President Ronald Reagan's notorious 1980 reference to trees causing pollution (Reagan said: 'Approximately 80 percent of our air pollution stems from hydrocarbons released by vegetation.'), the authors conclude: 'The results reported here . . . do not provide any evidence that responsibility for air pollution can or should be shifted from humans to trees.'"[9]

Therefore, because of this document and the others found before, it seems Reagan's quote did refer to VOCs after all. In hindsight, the research appears to be a bit backward because the students probably should have searched with the keyword "Reagan" from the beginning—they may have found the last article first. However, this research was done rather quickly and efficiently thanks to USASearch.gov.

> Quote 2: While others talked of free enterprise, it was the Democratic Party that acted and we ended excessive regulation in the airline and trucking industry, and we restored competition to the marketplace. And I take some satisfaction that this deregulation legislation that I sponsored and passed in the Congress of the United States.

The methodology for documenting this section of Senator Kennedy's speech, in which he claims that he had been a sponsor and strong supporter of deregulation in both the airline and the trucking industries, may have been less orthodox than would be expected in a government documents course. Students searched Google for signs of correlation between the senator and such legislation, typing in the search box: "Airline deregulation Ted Kennedy." That search led students to an article in Wikipedia that gave the name of the act along with the public law number. The official names for both deregulation acts, the *Airline Deregulation Act of 1978* and the *Motor Carrier Act of 1980*, were available, respectively, in the 1975–1978 and 1979–1981 volumes of the *Congressional Information Service (CIS) Four-Year Cumulative Index*.[10] From there, students proceeded to the legislative abstracts for 1978 and 1980 available from CIS.[11] With the abstracts, students were able to confirm the names of the acts, dates of approval, depository item numbers, House of Representatives/Senate reports, and *Monthly Catalog* numbers. However, students still needed a little more in the sense of the legislative history of those acts; they wanted Senate and House reports, hearings, and other types of documents that would enable them to confirm Senator Kennedy's involvement in the passage of these laws. The next source they approached was the *United States Statutes at Large*. At the end of the respective pages of the public laws that students were researching, they found the legislative histories for the acts. For example:

> Airline Deregulation Act of 1978, Public Law 95-504, October 24, 1978: House Reports: No. 95-1211, accompanying H.R. 12611; Senate Report no. 95-631; Congressional Record, Vol. 124 (1978); Weekly Compilation of Presidential Documents.[12]

Armed with these finds, students decided to search within these documents in order to find the endorsement from Senator Kennedy. The first attempt was not fruitful; students skimmed through the Senate Report but near the end of the report, where the nays and yeas are listed alphabetically by last name, students were not able to find Senator Kennedy's name.[13] Their luck changed when they went to the *Congressional Record* and found the following quote by Harrison Schmitt (R-NM): "We would be remiss if we did not remind our colleagues that it was through the efforts of the senator from Massachusetts (Mr. Kennedy) that a great deal of the momentum was built up for the measure we are discussing today."[14] Even better, students actually found a section in the *Congressional Record* in which Senator Kennedy addresses President Carter (page 10658) and gives all the reasons why competition is better than regulation for the airline industry. He goes on to explain how Senate Bill 2493 reforms the present law in four fundamental ways.[15]

Finding Senator Kennedy as a sponsor of the *Motor Carrier Act* also proved to be a little elusive. Students searched the *THOMAS* site of the Library of Congress (thomas.loc.gov) for bill number S. 2245 and then chose the 96th Congress. It returned the right bill and resolution; however, the sponsor listed was not Edward Kennedy but Howard W. Cannon (D-NV) and Bob Packwood (R-OR). Students went back and searched by the name of the bill, "Motor Carrier Act," and chose the 96th Congress. This time they received three results and one of them was a Kennedy-sponsored bill. However, the bill was S. 1400 and was called the "Trucking Competition and Safety Act of 1979." This bill had been introduced on June 25, 1979. Perhaps, by the time it went through the various legislative steps that a bill goes through before being signed into law, the bill was merged through amendments into the *Motor Carrier Act*.

> Quote 3: Women hold their rightful place at our convention, and women must have their rightful place in the Constitution of the United States. On this issue we will not yield; we will not equivocate; we will not rationalize, explain, or excuse. We will stand for E.R.A. and for the recognition at long last that our nation was made up of founding mothers as well as founding fathers.

A collection of congressional reports, public laws, and bills were used to substantiate this statement. Students assumed that of the many digitization projects undertaken by universities and research centers, there would be some devoted to women's rights, equal rights, or civil rights legislation. Turning to the "GPO digitization registry" (registry.fdlp.gov) students found a link to the Thurgood Marshall Law Library of the University of Maryland (www.law.umaryland.edu/marshall) where they discovered a collection of civil rights documents, browseable by title, SuDoc number, date, or subject. One item that seemed relevant was titled "Women's Rights in the United States of America," particularly the section, "Major Legislative Activity Affecting Women."[16] This section lists and describes public laws, by name and/or number, of the 94th and 95th Congresses that the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, Women's Rights Task Force deemed significant—aside from the Equal Rights Amendment itself, which was passed in 1972. The ERA was given until June 30, 1982, to be ratified by the needed thirty-eight states. At the time of the report, thirty-five states had ratified the amendment. Students used *THOMAS* to locate sponsors of the original bills that were enacted into law listed in the Women's Rights Task Force report, and they used the *Congressional Bibliographical Directory* to verify the sponsor's party affiliation.

In addition, students searched *THOMAS* and the Congressional Research Service summaries for bills from the 95th Congress concerning ratification of the Equal Rights Amendment and came up with bill sponsors. Students then searched for the sponsors of each bill in the *Congressional Biographical Directory* (biogwide.congress.gov) to verify the sponsors' party affiliation.

The report from the Women's Rights Task Force identifies the following public laws from the 94th and 95th Congresses as significant to the establishment of women's rights: P.L. 94-482; P.L. 94-559; and P.L. 95-216. These public laws affirmed equality for women's rights in the spirit of the ratification of the Equal Rights Amendment and were all sponsored by members of the Democratic Party, which substantiates Senator Kennedy's claim that his party stands for the "recognition" of women's rights.

All's well that ends well

This journey through government documents dating from around the 1930s to the 1980s gave students a good sense of what is available electronically and what is not, what are the best finding aids for locating documents, the elusive nature of congressional hearings, and the subtleties of political speech. With regard to paradigmatic shifts in the teaching of government documents, the Kennedy speech provides a case study for research using mostly online tools for a time period that predates born-digital documents, as well as an example of a collaborative research project using Web 2.0 tools. The aspect of this project that was least successful was the collaborative research, and more work to promote this is underway. The transformative potential for digital tools in classroom research has not been fully realized, but this project made some steps toward providing tools that share the cognitive burden of accomplishing tasks.

It seems most appropriate to end with the words of one student who said:

> In many ways, the search had a life of its own, i.e., a search did not yield what I wanted but lead me to another place where I made another discovery. This was the case at the National Archives website: the images were so intriguing that I looked through the relevant images and felt lucky to find one that I could incorporate into my report. My chief observation from this project is that it would have been faster and easier to use more print sources to research pre-1980s. Hours and hours of drilling through search engines made me realize that most of what I needed is either in the "Invisible Web" or in the library on the shelves or in the drawers of microfilm.

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Documenting the Force of Storms

The Origins of U.S. Government Weather Information

Benjy Stein

Scientists, researchers, librarians, and curious members of the public have come to take the availability of weather data—historical and current—for granted. Temperatures, precipitation totals, and other weather conditions for hundreds, if not thousands, of geographic places and points in time from different dates (even hours!), spanning more than the last century—the access is at one's fingertips. The data is not just free, it is considered valid and reliable. Without a perfect storm of innovations in weather instruments and data transfer mechanisms, the will of government agencies and Congress, and the work of one man would this be the case? Possibly. And possibly not.

This article explains the conditions, innovations, and government support necessary for General Albert James Myer of the U.S. Army to play a pivotal role in the development of standardized weather information gathering by, and dissemination from, the federal government. Without his work, the National Weather Service, an agency that produces information upon which many people depend may not have developed as it has. In addition to Myer being an innovative information professional and data manager, he was also an inventor. In many ways, his meteorological instrument[1] (see inset, p. 26) embodies and symbolizes his work almost as much as his legacy—the availability of reliable weather data.

Brainwave

By 1879, the year he received his patent, Myer had been a government meteorological information manager for the previous eight years. Vested in his position as chief of a new government agency within the U.S. Army, Myer was responsible for providing official meteorological observation reports from all military stations across American states and territories. Myer administered the network of military weather observation stations. He was responsible for the content standards, quality, and accuracy of the reports. In addition to being an information network administrator, Myer managed government meteorological data in these respects: architecture and modeling, organization, standardization, and analysis. Through harnessing information dissemination technologies, he directed the distribution of government meteorological information throughout the country.

Myer's work was vital to his department, the U.S. Army Signal Service Division of Telegrams and Reports for the Benefit of Commerce, which later became the National Weather Service. Myer sought to improve weather report credibility through the organization, standardization, and dissemination of precise meteorological data. He worked to convert such weather data into reliable weather information through data collection and organization standards, metadata applications, and creative representation with accurate transmission. Likewise, Meyer's invention would display distinct measurements in one container, all of which would produce "satisfactory and trustworthy observations . . . by the mind thus grasping at once the several atmospheric conditions."[2]

Preceding the invention of Myer's meteorological instrument is a tale of information management, government infrastructure, and ingenuity.

Making information move

Superior weather reports are accurate, timely, and accessible to people. Access to information in disparate locations requires transmission. This became feasible with the invention of the telegraph and signal code that made rapid transmission of information from distinct geographic points possible via a data transmission language. Patented by Samuel Morse in 1840, the telegraph and its signal code revolutionized information transmission, dissemination, and networking.[3] Telegraph wires became the new railroad system of intelligence and communication. Data and information could be relayed electronically, with swift transmission of transcontinental messages.[4] Telegraph technology paved the way for unprecedented interconnectivity and data transport, and was essentially a forerunner to telephone networks and the Internet.

Telegraphing made transcontinental weather observation possible. With proper management of observations at distinct geographic points, synchronous transcontinental observations could be taken. The weather data could then be transmitted from these locations to a home location for analysis. In this way, such filtering and analysis would improve the accuracy of reports.

Networking

After 1840, many private companies established telegraph networks. The federal government took part in the development of telegraph lines and weather observation in the establishment of the Smithsonian Institution. On August 10, 1846, Congress acted to establish the Smithsonian Institution upon a large donation of wealth from James Smithson, a Londoner with an affinity for American philanthropy. The Smithsonian was developed "for the increase and diffusion of knowledge."[5] Knowledge—the state following "information" in the structural progression of data—could be achieved only through standardized data organization and metadata application and methodical data collection. Congress recognized the need to inform the people by disseminating reliable knowledge around the continent. The congressional impetus jumpstarted many Smithsonian projects, including an early one centered on meteorological observations. This project aimed to establish a network of volunteer observers to measure weather data and analyze various weather factors. This meteorological data gathering and information generation predated that of Myer's Signal Service.

This Smithsonian initiative began by distributing weather observation instruments to newly established telegraph companies that volunteered to collect weather data for the government.[6] Gathering data on various weather factors, the volunteer observation stations across the nation reported the data back to the Smithsonian in Washington. Smithsonian scientists compiled the observations, and organized and analyzed the data. The organization and analysis was used to create informational weather maps:

> By the end of 1849, 150 volunteers throughout the United States were reporting weather observations to the Smithsonian regularly. By 1860, 500 stations were furnishing daily telegraphic weather reports to the Washington Evening Star.[7]

However, the beginnings of the Civil War in 1860 and 1861 truncated the Smithsonian's promising project.

Chief signal officer

In 1860, Congress created a position in the army for chief signal officer to support the Department of War, the forerunner of the Department of Defense. The chief signal officer would "have charge, under the direction of the secretary of war, of all signal duty."[8]

The chief signal officer would administer military signal network operations, among other responsibilities. At the time, Myer was an adept telegrapher and former army major. More importantly, he was an expert in the new data transmission language of signal code and in use of the telegraph.[9] President James Buchanan appointed Myer, who was working then as an assistant surgeon in the army, to fill the new slot.[10] It was here that Myer began his career in information science by creating a specialized data transmission language: a signal system for the U.S. Army in the West.

After three years at his post, a conflict arose between Myer and the superintendent of U.S. military telegraphs. The conflict over rivaling responsibilities for control of the telegraph system resulted in the removal of Myer from the position in November 1863.[11] Myer was transferred and "reassigned to the Military Division of the West Mississippi and named brigadier general after the Confederacy surrendered."[12]

The position of chief signal officer, which was not held by Myer at the time, underwent reestablishment in 1863 when the Signal Service was given official organization for the first time. Congress provided funding for the position of chief signal officer and for multiple professionals to function under the chief.[13] The Signal Service was again restructured in 1866. Congress further redefined the position of chief signal officer, recognizing the import of relaying information and intelligence.[14] Myer was reappointed as chief in 1866 to begin a new era of standardized weather data collection and organization, and information management.[15]

Federal telegraphing

After the Civil War, the federal government revived efforts to build a telegraphic infrastructure for official message transmissions. In the summer of 1866, Congress passed an act to fund the construction of telegraph lines and stations throughout various states and territories.[16] The act allowed for telegraph companies to continue maintenance and development of telegraph lines, but ordered that no telegraph line could obstruct "navigation of streams and waters" or interfere with military travel routes. After July 24, 1866, government telegraph line construction was given authority and priority in the arena of information transmission and dissemination.[17] With proper funds, the federal government now had potential to be a market leader in weather data collection and information dissemination; the American people were the primary stakeholders.

Safety from storms

On February 2, 1870, Representative Halbert E. Paine (R-WI) introduced a congressional joint resolution. Paine hoped the bill would quell significant local concerns about maritime casualties of storms in the Great Lakes region. A major influence on Paine was the sentiments of Professor Increase A. Lapham of Milwaukee. Lapham "sent frequent clippings of maritime casualties to Paine, asking 'if it were not the duty of the Government to see whether anything can be done to prevent some portion of this sad loss in the future?'"[18]

Lapham's letters had normative resonance; Representative Paine was compelled to act. Evoking the Smithsonian's early efforts, Paine's bill proposed establishing a systematic meteorological observation network at military stations under the direction of the secretary of war.[19]

Federal weather information services

Legislation progressed quickly. A week later, President Ulysses S. Grant signed Paine's bill into law, authorizing the secretary of war to establish the observation system in various eastern states, the Great Lakes region, and other select areas.[20] The resolution promulgated regulations for systematic weather observations and reporting "for giving notice on the northern lakes and [Atlantic] sea-coast, by magnetic telegraph and marine signals, of the approach and force of storms."[21]

This War Department weather information service needed considerable infrastructure and operating procedures including standardized data collection methods and uniform data organization schemes to compile weather data. Only then could the War Department deliver accurate, reliable weather information in reports to forecast storms for half the country. The information service was "dependent on a reliable communication system and placed under the secretary of war because 'military discipline would probably secure the greatest promptness, regularity, and accuracy in the required observations.'"[22] Within the War Department, responsibility for making meteorological observations at military stations across the country was assigned to the Signal Service Corps of the army. It was the chief signal officer who was responsible for managing data collection and organization, structuring the data properly, and consistently coordinating the weather data distribution plan throughout the network of meteorology stations to home locations for analysis. Through managing such great tasks, Myer became chief government weather information manager:

> At 7:35 a.m. on November 1, 1870, the first systematized, synchronous meteorological reports were taken by observer-sergeants at twenty-four stations in the new agency. These observations, transmitted by telegraph to the central office in Washington, D.C., commenced the beginning of the new division of the Signal Service.[23]

Network expansion

After the establishment of the Signal Service weather observation division, a related congressional resolution was introduced two years later that extended the geographic coverage of Signal Service weather observations. The 1870 law provided for weather observation services only for the Gulf of Mexico, the Atlantic coast, and the Great Lakes. On June

Myer's "Meteorological-Instrument," patented in 1879, in many ways embodies his life's work regarding the accurate measurement and reporting of weather data. This invention brings together in a single container a thermometer, a barometer, an anemometer, a hygrometer, and dials indicating dry and wet weather. It was the first device to combine measuring instruments for temperature, atmospheric pressure, wind speed and direction, and moisture in gas.

Meteorological observations taken with this instrument were to have a high degree of empirical legitimacy. Myer's thinking was that one set of eyes observing measurements of weather conditions with a single instrument would be more accurate and reliable than different observers using measurements from independent instruments in separate containers. His invention, potentially, would eliminate such perceived uncertainty. The main article illuminates Myer's journey through advancements and developments that made possible the systematic collection, description, and dissemination of meteorological data that we know today—all told through federal government documents and resources. *It is the story of how we know a storm is coming.*

10, 1872, an act of Congress provided funding to extend the service throughout the United States "for the benefit of commerce and agriculture."[24] The smaller network seemed to have procured benefits for related agencies and the people. Having proved its utility to the country, this series of laws provided for network growth.

By 1873, there were eighty-nine Signal Service weather stations across the continent. Local and national newspapers published weather bulletins from Signal Service reports, which were displayed at post offices, train stations, trade boards, and chambers of commerce. As many as twenty offices under Myer's supervision published detailed weather maps and charts.[25]

In just four years, Myer's leadership advanced the transcontinental diffusion of government weather information:

> In 1872, weather predictions were made regularly for 24 hours in advance for 9 United States regions . . . In 1873, forecasts were distributed to thousands of rural post offices for display as "Farmers' Bulletins" in front of post office buildings . . . In 1874, forecasts were made for 11 regions and 4 elements, namely weather, wind, pressure, and temperature.[26]

In just eight years, the number of Signal Service observation stations achieved a remarkable 1,083 percent growth. "From 1870 through 1878, the number of Signal Service field stations grew from twenty-four to 284. Three times a day, each station telegraphed weather data to Washington, D.C."[27]

Along with countrywide coverage, Myer propelled improvements in precision and accuracy of government weather data collection and information reporting.

Modeling data and harnessing information

Myer utilized his various talents as expert meteorologist, telegrapher, manager of signal service employees, and cartographer in data modeling and information design of government weather information. Many of these skills he carried from multifaceted experiences. Myer had a thorough understanding of medicine, military affairs, and communication technologies. His varied academic interests maintained an information science undercurrent, which was an affinity for leveraging code-based systems. Besides his dissertation from the University of Buffalo Medical College, "A New Sign Language for Deaf Mutes," he also published multiple signaling textbooks.

While the secretary of war required annual reports on Signal Service activities, Myer composed annual reports even before weather observations were delegated to the Signal Corps. Myer's first report contained a weather data model, in addition to narrative. The narrative piece outlined organizational and financial dilemmas, current projects, and goals.[28] In his data modeling efforts, Myer standardized the definition and formats of government weather data. He created working forms of telegraph circuit regions that standardized meteorological data structures with templates and tables with specified fields and measurement units. This metadata standardization represented a conceptual data model; his standardized collection methods represented a logical data model; and his descriptions of data tables and working forms to store and ultimately transmit data via telegraph and signal code represented a physical data model. Through these data modeling processes the Signal Service professionals could analyze the raw data and extract weather information from it.

Myer initiated new information design methods and organizational schemes to represent weather information cartographically. He concurrently introduced a new method of organization to military stations. The army had previously grouped its military stations by administrative department, irrespective of geographic location. Myer reorganized the stations according to their location and climate. As such, he established new metadata and information design principles for station organization and visual representation. As the station network expanded, the Signal Service weather maps plotted the military weather stations across America.

The secretary of war mandated daily map production, with a typical map prominently showing Myer's signature. A typical map divided the continent into five geographic regions, and then further subdivided the continent into fourteen geographic-environmental groupings based on climate patterns. All of the maps contained extensive detail, replete with data and organized metadata. At the bottom left corner was a "Synopsis for the Past Twenty-Four Hours"; below this synopsis were "Indicators," with observations and forecasts for the geographical regions. Within the map's Gulf of Mexico were "References," a map key for weather symbols. On the far right was a table of major weather factors measured for each military observation station. A map from August 22, 1879, shows readings for a typically muggy New York City summer day: six-tenths drop in the barometer within the past eight hours, an increase of six degrees in temperature within the day, ninety percent humidity, and no rainfall.[29] The specificity, organization, and visual ingenuity within the multifaceted maps attest to Myer's creativity and information design knowledge.

Myer's data modeling and information design made the weather reports possible. In addition, Myer managed significant information dissemination responsibilities to facilitate accuracy and transmission of these reports:

> Presenting working forms of telegraph circuits, organizing transmissions of weather reports, meteorological observations for the purpose of observation and report of storms…together with the map of circuits and proposed forms of reports…the working forms of circuits to be so arranged that the transmission of reports shall be as synchronous throughout the United States as is practicable…and communicating with different stations at different times.[30]

Buoyancy

During his years as chief signal officer, Myer showed resilience in the face of the War Department's political turmoil. Secretary of War William Belknap, who served from 1869–76, was impeached by the House of Representatives in 1876 by unanimous vote, accusing him of receiving money for his post-tradership appointments. Charged with "criminally disregarding his duty and prostituting his office to his lust for private gain," Belknap was the first cabinet member in the country's history to face impeachment.[31]

Notwithstanding this storm, weather information services progressed.

A new agency

Myer's weather data modeling, network administration of transcontinental stations, and overall management of synchronized and reliable government weather information reporting made him an information manager one hundred years before computers and relational databases were developed. A pioneer in the nascent information science field, Myer worked tirelessly to bring government weather information to the people for the benefit of commerce, agriculture, and general diffusion of meteorological knowledge. He received his patent for his "Meteorological-Instrument" just one year before his death. This invention's purpose mirrored the object of his dedication: accurate data collection, organization, and analysis. The invention was his final attempt to improve the scientific interface from which to glean information from the atmosphere.

Through Myer's work, the National Weather Service was born. In 1889, nine years after Myer's death, President Benjamin Harrison made a request in his annual message to Congress that changed the army's weather service forever. Harrison "recommend[ed] the Weather Service be separated from the War Department and established as a bureau in the Department of Agriculture, making the bureau a civilian organization."[32] President Harrison knew good crop production required reliable atmospheric intelligence. The transfer of the weather service to a civilian agency was necessary to serve the civilian population, and in particular, local farming communities.

Tennessee Senator William Bate sponsored the bill, S. 1454.[33] Amended in both houses, S. 1454 was signed into law on October 1, 1890, as "An act to transfer the Weather Service to the Department of Agriculture."[34] The act officially established the National Weather Bureau within the Department of Agriculture on July 1, 1891, as per the amended bill's requirements.

This statute established the National Weather Service that continues to serve the United States people today with timely, accurate weather reports. Had he lived to see the birth of the agency, Myer may have been weather bureau chief. Section three of the new statute outlined the duties Myer had performed so effectively: aggregating reliable weather data, coordinating data analysis, and providing quality weather reports to the people.[35]

National weather reports were, and still are, invaluable to the country's economic and social functioning. Myer's methods of managing government weather data and information leveraged raw weather data to create standardized, credible weather reports about climates across the country. The reports contained a precious commodity: reliable atmospheric intelligence for nationwide broadcasting. Senator Bate identified Myer as the first organizational leader of the Signal Corps and original manager of federal weather information. Bate, understanding the value of federal atmospheric intelligence, reported to Congress on March 6, 1890:

> As to the value of the Weather Service to the country there is no question. It has grown in favor from year to year, and there is scarcely an industry or commercial interest that is not benefited in some way by the reports collected and issued by this service. Warnings of storms . . . are especially serviceable in saving human life, while the annual saving of property in ships and their cargoes alone amounts to many millions of dollars . . . The public confidence in the correctness of these reports has increased and the weather service has become indispensable to the public . . . It should not only

be continued, but so organized as to secure the improvement and extension of its benefits.[36]

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Sharing Government Documents with the People

An Oral History Project

Tanya D. Finchum

Can you imagine what the conversation would have been like if the paths of fabled and legendary GPO cataloger Adelaide Hasse, and Ainsworth Spofford, librarian of Congress, had crossed? It is quite possible that they did because both held major positions within the library world in Washington, D.C., during overlapping years. She was relatively young, and he was more advanced in his career. Perhaps she was as amazed by his knowledge of his collection as rookie librarians are with lifelong government information librarians. The historical record does not indicate that Hasse and Spofford interacted, but what if they did? What if we had their accounts of such a meeting? Wouldn't that be not only interesting, but also insightful as to what their experiences were as information professionals of that time period? If only there had been an oral history program then to gather such accounts from them, there would be much added to the human story of that time period in GPO and Library of Congress histories.

Oral history is a recorded dialogue between two people, one guiding the interview with well-informed questions and one sharing memories and thoughts on particular topics. Personal stories help put events in context and provide a more complete recording of history. Oral histories can complement and add context to archival collections. Only when the perspectives of many individuals are combined can the full story be revealed.

Oral history and government agencies

So what does oral history have to do with the field of government documents librarianship? Many government information librarians are aware of the life histories recorded in the 1930s through the Works Progress Administration (WPA), the U.S. Army historians' efforts to record soldiers' experiences during World War II, and the ongoing Veterans Project through the Library of Congress. The federal government has conducted an enormous number of oral histories to preserve institutional memory from the early days of agencies, to document lessons learned, to increase visibility of an historical office within a large agency, to enhance museum exhibits and historic sites, and for various other reasons.[1]

One will discover, through a simple Google search for "oral history and government agencies," several oral history initiatives within the federal government, from the Library of Congress to the Senate and House of Representatives to the National Marine Fisheries Services. Since 1976, the Senate Historical Office has had an oral history project underway, interviewing a variety of people involved with the Senate from staffers to photographers to pages to senators. The National Institutes of Health present an "In Their Own Words" project that asks researchers to recall the early years of AIDS, and the Environmental Protection Agency website presents a series of oral history interviews with administrators.

The National Park Service has collected a multitude of oral histories from Ellis Island to 9/11.[2] The Federal Trade Commission, the National Security Agency, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, the Bureau of Reclamation, the Johnson Space Center, the Social Security Administration, and the U.S. Census Bureau all have oral history collections. The National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) has completed thousands of oral histories, including "Herstories," an ongoing effort to collect oral histories with women in NASA.[3] Presidential libraries and the Smithsonian also have oral history collections.

Federal agencies have used oral history methodology to record institutional memory and to capture "the rest of the story." While there are many written records concerning government publications, there has not been much work to gather and document the people who work with them, or assist users with locating government information, or champion the cause of no-fee access to government information. Following this line of thinking, why not begin an oral history project featuring the people who have faithfully brought "documents to the people" throughout the years?

Project background

The year 2006 was a transition year for both the government documents community and for myself. I was reassigned from my work in the government documents department to help develop an oral history initiative within the Oklahoma State University (OSU) library, now the Oklahoma Oral History Research Program and a separate department within the library. The Federal Depository Library Program and the GPO were undergoing a massive change as they moved further into the digital age. Coupled with this change and my interest in gerontology, I began to notice many of the profession's "living indexes" were retiring or were nearing retirement. There was much discussion surrounding the tangible legacy collection, and I thought oral histories of members of the government information community could complement the collection. Institutional memory is valuable. Using oral history methodology could lead to a better understanding of the process and the progress of protecting no-fee access to government-produced information.

As I was transitioning from government documents work to oral history work, the idea for an oral history project featuring members of the government documents community who have devoted a lifetime and/or made significant contributions to the field of government documents librarianship began to germinate. As luck would have it, as part of OSU's celebration of one hundred years as a federal depository library, then Superintendent of Documents Judy Russell was going to visit campus in February 2007. Russell had announced her retirement from the Government Printing Office and her visit to campus seemed like an excellent opportunity to launch the project. Before an interview could be conducted, I developed a proposal to be approved by OSU's Institutional Review Board. A primary purpose of the project was to record and preserve the memories of persons who have championed access to government information as a step toward documenting the unwritten history of government documents librarianship.

In regard to a conversation about trying to manage change within an organization Russell stated:

> The analogy that we were using was that we're going through a period of whitewater and just this incredible rapidity of change and the amount of turbulence and that part of what's hard to convey to people is this isn't a brief passage of whitewater that we're passing through, but that for the foreseeable future we're going to be in whitewater… it isn't enough to cling to the raft and close your eyes. You really do have to try to pay attention and steer the canoe, if you will, and take as much control as you can even when there's this incredible amount of turbulence around you.[4]

For nearly 200 years, federal depository libraries and librarians have collected, organized, maintained, preserved, and assisted users with government information. Technology has continued to evolve and the volume of information produced by the federal government has continued to grow. How have members of the government information community adapted to these changes and continued to ensure no-fee public access? How have strategies for learning the collection changed from those who spent most of their careers growing a physical collection compared with those who came to the profession during the transition to digital formats? Little has been written about these people or about how they have maneuvered through the transition from paper to electronic formats. Recording memories of movers, shakers, and shapers of access to government information provides unique perspectives that may be missed by biographers, historians, and scholars.

Project update

The project is in its early stages. The initial goal of this project is to interview librarians and government information workers who have spent a large portion of their careers in the field of government information. This is in order to collect and preserve historical evidence of the history of government information professionals from the paper era to the electronic era, and to provide a venue for increasing awareness of the growth and transition in the government information arena. While I was spearheading the project, I ultimately wanted the government documents community to become involved and take ownership. The primary questions became who to interview and how to get the ball rolling. I first reviewed the lists of GODORT award winners and posted a message to GOVDOC-L asking for suggestions. As the 2009 ALA Midwinter Meeting loomed on the horizon, I planned to gather two or three oral history interviews. I elected to explore the possibility of interviewing Bernadine Abbott Hoduski and Larry Romans. I had heard Abbott Hoduski referred to as the "mother of GODORT," and she was the 1977 winner of the James Bennett Childs Award. Larry

Romans was the 2008 winner of the James Bennett Childs Award, the 1995 winner of the Documents to the People Award, and has served many years as an ALA council member. I corresponded with them, and both agreed enthusiastically to being interviewed. The oral histories were conducted on a snowy afternoon in a Denver hotel room. I interviewed Romans and he in turn interviewed Abbott Hoduski.

Following the success of the Midwinter interviews, I planned a similar approach for the 2009 ALA Annual Conference in Chicago. I chose three more people as potential interviewees: Fran Buckley, Andrea Sevetson, and Grace York. During the Abbott Hoduski interview she had shared memories of interactions with Fran Buckley, winner of the 1986 James Bennett Childs Award and former Superintendent of Documents. Both Abbott Hoduski and Buckley were open to the project, and on a warm Sunday afternoon in a Chicago hotel room, Abbott Hoduski conducted an oral history interview with Buckley. During the Romans interview process he offered to interview Andrea Sevetson, winner of the 2009 James Bennett Childs Award, and the 2002 Documents to the People Award. As it would turn out, Romans was delayed at a meeting and I conducted the interview with Sevetson.

Grace York was the third interview gathered at ALA Annual in 2009. York received the 1998 Documents to the People Award, the 2006 James Bennett Childs Award, and would be retiring from the University of Michigan's Documents Center at the end of the summer. I interviewed York in my hotel room on a very special Monday morning in Chicago, special because York was one of the first members of the government documents community I had shared a cab ride with from an airport to the Federal Depository Library Conference. She was, and continues to be, a delight and as a true "living index" will be missed in her retirement.

The seventh interview conducted to date was with Duncan Aldrich, a former Depository Library Council chair and former GODORT chair. As it would turn out, in July 2009 the Oklahoma Oral History Research Program at OSU would hire its first department head, Mary Larson, who happened to be employed at the University of Nevada-Reno where Aldrich also worked. I corresponded with both Aldrich and Larson, and before coming to OSU, Larson conducted an oral history interview with Aldrich.

Each of these seven interviews adds an individual perspective to the world of government information and taken collectively they begin to create snapshots of history not otherwise recorded. Some of the history of GODORT was shared during the Abbott Hoduski interview when she stated she was the first Coordinator:

> We called it Coordinator because we did not believe in chairs. We figured that this was a democratic organization and that documents librarians are very independent people and they would be coordinated. They would not be told what to do.[5]

In an interview with Buckley, Abbott Hoduski inquired as to how he became actively involved with the government documents community, and in the response he stated he attended one of the first meetings of all regional depository librarians in New York City in 1974 and mentions a person many people in the government information community will recognize:

> When I walked into that room in New York City and looked around I was quite surprised to see Ridley Kessler who was the regional librarian from North Carolina who had gone to high school with me. His mother had been our high school librarian…I thought it was truly amazing that two people from a very small town in North Carolina would both have become regional, not just depository librarians, but regional depository librarians and come together in that meeting.[6]

Comments such as this add color and context to the story of being a member of this community.

While there are unique questions to ask specific participants, a general question guide has been developed along with a Deed of Gift form. Five of the seven interview transcripts have been posted on the ALA GODORT oral histories wiki (wikis.ala.org/godort/index.php/Oral_Histories). Transcripts of interviews with Fran Buckley, Bernadine Abbott Hoduski, Judy Russell, Andrea Sevetson, and Grace York can be found on the wiki, while interviews with Larry Romans and Duncan Aldrich are in the review stage. I envision an ongoing effort to document the history of the field of government information librarianship and in particular, the transition from paper to electronic, by obtaining oral histories from a wide spectrum of the government information community who have participated for years in making government information accessible.

Moving forward

Since beginning this oral history initiative, I have endeavored to keep it on the radar screen of GODORT chairs. While the details have not been completely settled, during the 2009 ALA Annual Conference there was discussion around creating an ad hoc committee, perhaps within the Publications Committee, to shepherd the project into the future as I take a different path in librarianship. It is my hope that someone within the government documents community will step forward and continue the project. Some aspects to be considered include developing a working list of people to interview, processes for transcribing the interviews, and posting them to the oral histories wiki. A recommendation for additional interviews would be to begin conducting oral history interviews with recipients of GODORT awards at the time of the award. A second suggestion would be to give the community a way to suggest additional people to be interviewed, provide rationale for inclusion, or conduct and deposit recordings along with transcripts of the recordings to a central repository.

As members of the community become more involved with the project, there are several ways they will be able to participate: conducting the interview, conducting background research to better inform questions, transcribing, and maintaining a web presence for the project. The amount of time needed for background research will vary depending on the career of the interviewee, the amount of available information, and access to people who can share information regarding the interviewee. While there is a core set of questions to guide the interview, each interview will need to be tailored based on the individual's career and contributions.

A goal is to transcribe from an audio recording and make the transcript accessible. While transcription takes roughly four to five hours per hour of interview, it is important for preservation and accessibility. It also provides an opportunity for the interviewee to review what was said before making it public. The intent is to create in one place the largest single collection of government information librarianship oral histories in the country and a resource of significant value to scholars and researchers. Anyone interested in joining the effort may contact interim project coordinator Cass Hartnett (cass@u.washington.edu) for information.

Tanya D. Finchum, Associate Professor/Librarian, Oklahoma State University, tanya.finchum@okstate.edu.

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GODORT Membership

Membership in ALA is a requisite for joining GODORT.

Basic personal membership in ALA begins at $50 for first-year members, $25 for student members, and $35 for library support staff (for other categories see www.ala.org/Template.cfm?Section=Membership).

Personal and institutional members are invited to select membership in GODORT for additional fees of $20 for regular members, $10 for student members, and $35 for corporate members.

For information about ALA membership contact ALA Membership Services, 50 E. Huron St., Chicago, IL 60611; 1-800-545-2433, ext. 5; e-mail: membership@ala.org.

Review

Public Documents Masterfile. Paratext. pubdocs.odyssi.com. Contact vendor (www.paratext.com) for trial and pricing information.

The opening screen on Paratext's *Public Documents Masterfile* (*PDM*) bills the database as a "comprehensive electronic guide to federal, state, local, and international public documents, spanning over 200 years of publications in a searchable database." PDM offers a single federated search interface to locate citations to United States federal, state, international, and non-U.S. public documents. However, *PDM* is not a full-text answer to all of our historic government documents needs, hopes, and prayers. According to Paratext's promotional materials, librarians can use *PDM* to "locate SuDoc numbers for pre-1976 GPO documents, locate and download cataloging records for government documents from multiple sources, link to your library OPAC to determine local holdings, enable research utilizing non-GPO government documents, promote broader multi-disciplinary use of government documents, [and] provide users electronic access to current and archival government documents." There is also a *PDM* widget that can be added to library webpages or LibGuides for further linkage and use of the product's content.

The database is available to purchasing libraries and their patrons via IP authentication. Upon logging in, users encounter a welcome screen with basic information about the database. A click on Begin Searching takes the user to the basic search screen, which shows a pretty sparse (dare I say, almost Google-like?) screen with a single search box and radio buttons to choose between Singular and Plural Forms, Exact Phrase or Exact Words, and between All of the Words (And) or Any of the Words (Or). There is also a question mark icon next to the search box that leads to a useful help screen, and a Quick Guide link in the upper right-hand corner that leads to a single-page PDF that labels each of the key features. The help screen indicates that *PDM* supports Boolean, wild card (* for multiple endings; ? for a single character) and date range options. The search run from this basic screen appears to be keyword.

The search screen also has tabs to perform an advanced search or a browse. The advanced search screen provides three boxes with drop-down menus with options to search by keyword, title of work, author (agency), or government document number, and to make And/Or connections between terms. Users can also limit by data range on this screen. The browse index allows the user to type in the beginning of a SuDoc number, author or agency, title, Library of Congress subject heading, or Library of Congress classification number.

Executing a search brings up an intermediate display screen with a list of indexes, each with a clickable number representing the number of hits. Mousing over an index name reveals a short summary of the index's contents. Clicking on the results number brings up a list of records from that particular index; clicking the checkboxes to the left of the index titles and then clicking the Select button leads to results from all of the chosen indexes displayed in a single list, ranked by relevance.

The results list view provides brief records with information such as title, call number(s), index source, etc. Users can sort by year of publication, author, title, language, classification, or government document number; download brief records or records tagged for RefWorks or EndNote; or e-mail or save the records. Items marked with a blue "e-source" icon conveniently link to the free online full-text version of the publication. There is also a Show More Search Options link that allows for search refinement by date, and for choosing how many records (e.g., twenty or thirty) to display on a page. The content of individual records varies index by index, but generally they include the title, author or agency, and source information, as well as some combination of subject headings, call numbers, or standard numbers (e.g., LCCN, ISBN/ISSN).

Each record also has a MARC view. Most of the basic elements are there, though I noticed that OCLC numbers are not included. Currently, only record-by-record downloading is available. It appears the user simply copies the MARC records from the screen. That's not optimal for the large library embarking on a retrospective cataloging project, but potentially very useful for "on-the-fly" situations. Paratext is considering offering batch downloads for cataloging.

As one might expect, there is a little overlap in the results returned from the multiple indexes. The "GPO Monthly Catalog Indexes 1895–1976 with Page/Entry Numbers and Depository Status" and "Cumulative Title Index 1789–1976 with SuDocs Numbers" are digital versions of the government information librarian's old friends, the *Monthly Catalog of the United States Government Publications* and the *Cumulative Title Index to United States Public Documents,* *1789–1976*. The "Pre-1900 United States Public Document" indexes are, according to the database description in the mouse-over, an "aggregation of the three earliest indexes to U.S. government documents, by the editors Benjamin Poore; John Ames; and John Hickox, respectively." Note that, for now, the *Cumulative Title Index* includes SuDoc numbers by the *Monthly Catalog* index and most of the pre-1900 indexes do not. Paratexts' latest e-mail update assures subscribers that SuDoc numbers are coming to the *Monthly Catalog* index soon—which will be a huge improvement because, as it stands now, one still needs to take the entry number to the print *Monthly Catalog* to find the SuDoc number for items not indexed in the other indexes in the database.

It is unclear where the database's producer got the content for other indexes: Post-1976 GPO Documents; Department of Energy Records, 1930–present; Non-U.S. and International Agency Public Documents; State and Provincial Public Documents; ERIC Documents; and Non-GPO Public Documents Held by the Library of Congress. Paratext indicates that they work with a variety governmental and non-governmental sources, but they do not reveal how much original indexing is done by the company itself, and how many records they acquire elsewhere and enhance.

All in all, *PDM* is probably most useful to libraries with large, uncataloged historic collections. There is a lot of really neat information in here, and I don't know of any other project that widely indexes state, foreign, or international documents. On the other hand, it is the sort of resource that may confuse the average self-service patron due to the lack of complete full text, many clickable numbers and check boxes, and somewhat minimal help screens. In other words, be prepared to instruct users on this product.

PDM does have a neat feature whereby it links to the OPAC when it can match a citation by SuDoc number, and that can clearly be beneficial. However, as some libraries do not index the SuDoc field in their OPACs, this feature turns out to be more useful to some libraries than others. For these others, its main purpose would be basic citation verification.

This is a niche product that will never be among a library's most heavily-used online resources, no matter how many widgets we insert into library resource guides. I like it better and better the more I play with it, but I will wait for a better budget year to move it from my "would like to have" list to my "must-have" list.—*Annelise Sklar, Librarian for Political Science, Law & Society, and State, Local, & International Government Documents, University of California, San Diego, asklar@ucsd.edu.*

Review

Military Doctrine: A Reference Handbook. Bert Chapman. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 2009. $44.95. ISBN: 978-0-313-35233-1.

Military Doctrine documents the framework for desirable strategic practices intended to guide the military in achieving its objectives. While often written for internal or political use, military doctrinal literature provides a public window into the security priorities of the nation and the operational needs and goals of the military itself.

Formal military doctrine considers factors such as contextual information about threats to national security and prestige, the organizational structure of the military, operational considerations including technological capabilities and the chain of command, political priorities, and lessons learned from previous engagements. Sources of military doctrine include strategy documents, manuals, regulations, and white papers.

Military Doctrine: A Reference Handbook starts by providing an historical overview of post-World War II U.S. military doctrine as it has shifted to accommodate changes in perceived threats, political realities, and resources available to the military. This informative overview includes major doctrinal developments for each branch of the armed forces, and focuses on the documented sources of doctrine.

The handbook then describes resources for researching current and historical doctrine as it is presented in publicly available primary sources, and in secondary literature such as research concerning the ongoing development of doctrine. A significant portion of the handbook is devoted to resources for researching U.S. military doctrine, with subsequent sections providing an overview of English-language materials for other major military powers, and for international governmental organizations (IGOs). Additionally, the handbook reviews the areas of scholarly literature, indexes and journals, and gray literature. Brief annotated bibliographies, with representative samples of secondary monographic literature, periodicals, and dissertations, are intended to give the reader a sense of the scope of these materials.

Much of the handbook describes materials available on the Internet. U.S. military resources are, when possible, referenced with persistent URLs. Digital libraries and collections of particular use to the study of military doctrine are also highlighted. The handbook is extensively footnoted, and refers to literature on the publishing and collecting of these works, along with supplementary military doctrinal literature. The sections on think tanks and conference proceedings would have benefited from more elaboration, as these are both sources of research that may be particularly unfamiliar to novice researchers.

Military Doctrine is indispensable for a researcher starting to work with military materials, whether in military history or in areas related to security and policy. Guidance for accessing and using materials is comprehensive. The focus on specific works related to military doctrine gives the researcher immediate suggestions, while information about the institutes that produce and collect these works provides avenues for further research. This handbook is also useful for librarians who need to locate, describe, and understand representative works related to military history, particularly for the U.S. military. In particular, the first two sections, on U.S. military doctrine history and resources for the post–World War II era, are useful for anyone wishing to have a better understanding of the development of military tactics and logistics, and the enormous array of factors that affect military operations.—*Shari Laster, Government Documents/Reference Librarian, University of Akron, laster@uakron.edu*

Index to Advertisers

GODORT 2010 Midwinter Meeting Highlights

Midwinter Meeting attendees were initially greeted by a sunny, dry New England January, with dirty curbside snow banks—the only signs of the season. Mother Nature then treated us to freezing rain and huge slush-puddles. Despite soaked socks and cold feet, conference attendees enjoyed a fine meeting and Boston's seemingly endless cultural and culinary attractions. Politics and history were very much alive as the historic Massachusetts election to fill Senator Ted Kennedy's seat occurred on the Tuesday following Midwinter. The Boston Convention and Exhibit Center (BCEC) is an incredibly large yet functional facility, with catwalks providing bird's-eye views of the exhibit floor. The Gale buses—"coaches" as drivers repeatedly corrected riders—were plush and modern, with wireless Internet, making for a luxurious ride to the far-away BCEC.

Chair Amy West convened efficient **GODORT Steering and Membership meetings**, insisting that as much routine work as possible be conducted beforehand via ALA Connect, and that agendas be linked to the GODORT schedule on the wiki. Kirsten Clark was generous enough to serve as acting secretary, and in what may be a GODORT first, all three meetings adjourned early. Happily, the GODORT Strategic Plan was discussed, voted on, and approved, with GODORT Steering tasked with overseeing the plan's timely implementation via our existing committees. Saturday's **GODORT Update**, organized by SLDTF chair Suzanne Sears, offered an in-depth look at the history of the round table's web presence (John Stevenson), a clear and helpful overview of ALA Connect, (Starr Hoffman), and a detailed look at the GODORT wiki (Kirsten Clark). GODORT fun began Friday night with a happy hour at M.J. O'Connor's pub.

The **Ad Hoc Committee on Communications** (Valerie Glenn and John Stevenson) met in person for the first time and reaffirmed that the ALA GODORT website, the public image of GODORT, should be designed to require minimal editing and should serve as an index to GODORT and its information. Other recommendations included that the wiki host current information and content, serving as a repository for GODORT resources such as minutes, agendas, and free online publications; that draft minutes be finalized on the wiki within a month after the close of a conference; that ALA Connect be used as a workspace and discussion tool; and that the GODORT@ALA.ORG listserv (GODORT-L) be phased out in favor of ALA Connect as a discussion/notification mechanism. All GODORT members need to be informed about how to receive e-mail notification of new postings to ALA Connect. A report from our **GODORT councilor** (Mary Mallory) may be found in this issue of *DttP*.

Task Force meetings were hopping, with **Federal Documents** (Kirsten Clark) being the main venue for discussion of the more than sixty-page Ithaka S+R report, "Documents for a Digital Democracy." Report authors Roger Schonfeld and Ross Housewright provided an overview and answered questions posed by attendees. Cindy Etkin (for Ric Davis) provided an update from the Government Printing Office. **State and Local Documents** (Suzanne Sears) shared tips on getting money for state/local documents digitization projects. Dreanna Belden highlighted the University of North Texas Portal to Texas History (texashistory.unt.edu). SLDTF will work with the Education Committee on librarian competencies regarding state and local documents. **International Documents** (David Oldenkamp) discussed topics for GODORT fee-based, Internet courses, possibly using Moodle, an open-source learning management system used successfully by other ALA units. There were updates on Custom Search Engines (CSE) for IGO publications and the California Digital Library (CDL) Web-at-Risk digital archiving project, which has been used to capture and archive born-digital California documents and publications from IGO country offices. Vendors shared announcements, including an e-Library MARC records status report from the World Bank.

Awards Committee (Dan Barkley) completed its task, sharing the list of 2010 awardees at Steering II. Winners are: Sandee McAninch, University of Kentucky (James Bennett Childs Award), Greater Western Library Alliance/TRAIL; Maliaca Oxnam, Project Coordinator, University of Arizona (LexisNexis/Documents to the People Award), Liza Duncan, New York State Library (Bernadine Abbott Hoduski Founders Award), Lindsay Braddy, University of Missouri—Columbia (W. David Rozkuszka Scholarship), and William V. Ackerman, "Indian Gaming in North Dakota," *American Indian Quarterly*, spring 2009, 33, no. 2 (Margaret T. Lane/Virginia F. Saunders Memorial Research Award).

The **Bylaws and Organization Committee** (Judith Downie)—those brave keepers of the Policy and Procedures Manual (PPM)—received Steering's okay to remove forms and templates from the body of the PPM, linking them instead as appendices. The "Who Has What?" section will be overhauled and a Steering Committee chapter will be added. A draft section on external liaisons will be added, along with other PPM improvements. **Cataloging Committee** (Gregory Wool) appreciated Laurie Hall's reports from the Government Printing Office (GPO). Hall spoke of: (1) an upcoming kickoff meeting for the development of a new persistent URL infrastructure; (2) the coming digital upgrade of the pre-1976 GPO shelflist, which began January 4 with a test sample of Y3s; (3) several library positions currently being advertised; (4) the recent summer internship program; (5) the Cataloging Record Distribution Pilot; and (6) the proposed provider-neutral record. Susan Pinckard reported on the Committee on Cataloging: Description and Access (CC:DA) session, which included a Library of Congress (LC) update. LC catalogued 170,000 titles in the past year, is testing cataloging with the new Resource Description and Access (RDA) rules, and deployed thirty-eight staff to reduce a backlog at the Copyright Office. The Committee discussed the Ithaka Report and a possible draft response on the cataloging-related sections.

The **Conference Committee** (Carol Hanan) discussed plans for the awards reception at the Annual Conference and whether it is necessary for the committee to hold a meeting at Midwinter. **Development Committee** (Steve Hayes) discussed strategies for GODORT's fundraising efforts, and expects to send out a formal "ask" letter within a few months. After being briefed by the GODORT treasurer, the group considered its coordination with other GODORT committees. **Education Committee** (Linda Spiro) met jointly with GITCO for its first hour, facilitating a discussion on "Tools for Training and Knowledge Sharing," including resources as diverse as Camtasia, Jing, and WebJunction. Education agreed to convene a joint work group with GITCO and Publications to plan the implementation of online GODORT training modules. **GITCO** (Shari Laster) received an FDsys update from Salene Dalecky of GPO, then discussed possibilities for collaboration with the new ACRL Interest Group on Numeric and Geospatial Data Services in Academic Libraries.

The **Legislation Committee** (Laura Horne-Popp and Jesse Silva) brought forth resolutions on (1) Transparency and Openness in the Federal Government and (2) Supporting Digital Information Initiatives at the GPO, as well as a memorial resolution for Grace-Ellen McCrann, City College of New York. All were approved at the GODORT Membership Meeting and forwarded to ALA Council. The **Membership Committee** (Samantha Hager) decided to continue its "GODORT Buddy" pilot through Annual 2010 and will work with SLDTF to update the wiki list of state, regional and local groups/associations focusing on government information. The **Publications Committee** (John Stevenson) is working with the Web managers to revise the job description for the GODORT website administrator. Their goal is to recruit a replacement for Starr Hoffman, whose term ends with the Annual Conference. *DttP* revenue is down somewhat due to a gradual decline in subscriptions and the loss of advertisers, as well as other well-known economic factors. There was consensus that future GODORT publications, including *DttP* and new monographs, should be in digital format. Because the GODORT logo contest did not result in a winning entry, it was agreed that the old logo be "vectorized" for better use in digital contexts. Tanya Finchum has done a stupendous job with the GODORT oral histories (a Publications Committee project), and Cass Hartnett has volunteered to serve as interim coordinator of the project until a successor can be found. The committee looks forward to working with both GITCO and Education on the development of fee-based online courses.

The **Nominating Committee** (Marilyn von Seggern) was pleased to have its slate accepted at Second Steering. The slate consisted of *Assistant Chair/Chair-Elect*: Kirsten Clark; *Secretary:* Sue Kendall; *GODORT Councilor:* John Stevenson*; Awards Committee:* Hui Hua Chua, Jian Anna Xiong, Aimee Quinn; *Bylaws Committee:* Kathy Brazee Bayer, Shari Laster, Barbara Miller; *Nominating Committee:* Sarah Erekson, Sonnet Brown; *Publications Committee Chair/Chair-Elect:* Helen Sheehy; *Federal Documents Task Force Assistant Coordinator/Coordinator-Elect:* Antoinette W. Satterfield; *Federal Documents Task Force Secretary:* Justin Joque; *International Documents Task Force Assistant Coordinator/Coordinator-Elect:* Edward Kownslar, Chelsea Dinsmore; *International Documents Task Force Secretary:* Julia Proctor; *State and Local Documents Task Force Assistant Coordinator/ Coordinator-Elect:* Marie Concannon; *State and Local Documents Task Force Secretary:* Sarah Erekson.

The **Rare and Endangered Government Publications Committee** (Andrew Laas) discussed their ongoing interest in the digitization of federal government publications from 1932 to 1962. They may be able to assist the

University of Kentucky in creating an online inventory of Works Progress Administration publications as a part of the Association of Southeastern Research Libraries' IMLS-funded project. The committee agreed not to proceed with further work on its Wilcox-based project, as it is too expansive and not particularly workable. REGP is planning a fun Washington, D.C., library tour for the Annual Conference.

Your past chair had a particularly fun conference, getting a chance to hear Al Gore speak on climate change and even walking away with an autograph. The only drawback to Boston was a persistent little ditty that kept running through my mind. With apologies to the Kingston Trio, who made famous the song "Charlie on the MTA," about a man trapped for life in the Boston subway, I leave you with this verse:

> Did they ever return? No,
> they never returned!
> And their fate is still
> unlearned (poor old
> GODORT)
> They may ride forever 'neath
> the streets of Boston
> They're the group that never
> returned!

Respectfully submitted,
Cass Hartnett

ALA GODORT Councilor's Report—Midwinter Meetings

January 17–19, 2010 Boston Convention and Exhibition Center Boston, Massachusetts

On track with the new ALA Council Midwinter schedule, President Camila A. Alire presided over Council activities Sunday and Monday, and President-elect Roberta Stevens presided on Tuesday while Alire appeared on the *Today Show* (see camilaalire.wordpress.com/). Details on money matters were provided by James G. Neal, chair of the ALA Budget Analysis and Review Committee (BARC); Daniel J. Bradbury, chair of the ALA Endowment Trustees; and treasurer Rodney M. Hersberger. ALA's finances indicate that, in spite of the economic downturn, the organization is solvent and operating in the black. Also affecting revenue is the fact that ALA membership is down about 1,800 members. Their informative, detailed reports, and others mentioned in this report are found at tinyurl.com/yeoz5u6.

During the Membership Information Session, Paul D. Meyer of Tecker Consultants facilitated discussion during which enthusiastic councilors formed small breakout groups and provided written comments on worksheets on the vision, goals, and objectives of the ALA Strategic Plan 2015 (Draft Version, December 2009). The worksheets were collected and comments will be reviewed and considered during revision. Over 2,500 ALA members sent comments on the association's Strategic Plan draft, which is on the ALA website at tinyurl.com/ybtddzc. Under the Goal Area: Advocacy and Public Policy, Objective 5 will be slightly revised to read "Advocate for intellectual freedom, privacy, literacy, fair use, preservation of cultural heritage, equity of access, and **permanent, no-fee access to government information**." Any GODORT member who would like to comment on the plan should e-mail Paul D. Meyer, pmeyer@tecker.com. According to Keith Michael Fiels, ALA executive director, the plan will go to the ALA Executive Board in April, and then to Council for ultimate review and adoption in June 2010.

The Council I session began with the standard series of reports, including ALA Nominating Committee and the Nominations for the Council Executive Board election. Sarah Kelley Johns and Molly Raphael are candidates for president, and Alan Kornblau and James Neal are candidates for treasurer in the spring 2010 election. Candidates for the ALA Executive Board were introduced. Five candidates for the two available Executive Board positions gave presentations and participated in a Q&A near the end of Council II. Winners of the Executive Board elections were announced at the beginning of Council III. Kevin Reynolds, ALA Committee on Legislation (COL) member and long-term active GODORT member, was elected to a three-year term as was J. Linda Williams, an ALA life member, who has been particularly active in the American Association of School Librarians (AASL) and Library Leadership and Management Association (LLAMA).

President Alire announced the availability of advocacy toolkits for at least two types of libraries, and President-elect Stevens announced her programs for 2010–11. Stevens reported that frontline fundraising and using popular authors as advocates for libraries are two key areas to be emphasized during her presidency. She also anticipates a project on "why I need my library," that will revolve around children. Executive Director Fiels offered highlights from his extensive report, and he selectively covered Executive Board actions and the implementation of Council actions since the 2009 Annual Conference. These are detailed in separate reports. Fiels reported that forty-nine states are now using the online advocacy tool Capwiz, and its impact is already apparent. Plans for ethics education are nearly complete. Transparency concerns of members are being addressed. Audio recordings of Council will be posted on the Council website. The "Policy Reference File" (PRF), previously known as the "Current Reference File," is online and searchable by keyword, as is the "Policy Manual." Perhaps the most exciting moment was when Spectrum scholarship initiatives were described. Alire indicated that the case statement for the Spectrum Presidential Fundraising Initiative (SPFI) will be completed soon. Alire, Stevens, and Jim Rettig, the latter two in their roles as president-elect and immediate past president, are working with the SPFI Advisory Committee, which plans to raise $1 million in support of the Spectrum scholars. Betty J. Turock has donated $100,000 to the Spectrum program on behalf of the Turock family. This gift will be used for scholarships for library and information science degree candidates from traditionally underrepresented groups. She and her family have provided other gifts to the program, including the Betty J. Turock Scholarship in 2001. A Council document that may be of interest to GODORT members was distributed—*Libraries Getting America Back to Work: A Legislative Proposal to Save Libraries and Help Job Seekers*, from December 2009, and *E-Participation Update*, dated January 4, 2010.

As a result of the new schedule, ALA-APA Council was shortened to one half-hour. Officer and committee reports included the ALA-APA Certified Public Library Administrator Program (CPLA) Certification Review Committee, and the ALA-APA Committee on Salaries and Status of Library Workers. The *ALA-APA Salary- and Status-Related Policy Statements*, January 2010, was disseminated as background information. ALA-APA's structure is receiving attention to ensure its viability into the future.

On Monday, during Council II, Council and special committee reports were succinct, and Council moved quickly through its agenda. Janet Swan Hill, chair, Policy Monitoring Committee, and Kenton L. Oliver, president, Freedom to Read Foundation (FTRF) kicked off the proceedings, and Oliver introduced new director Barbara M. Jones of the ALA Office of Intellectual Freedom (OIF) and the new executive director of the Freedom to Read Foundation. Jones received a rousing welcome of applause; her appointment was effective December 13, 2009. Hersberger presented the Treasurer's Report at this point, and listed the Programmatic Priorities for FY2011, that include the following: Diversity; Equitable Access to Information and Library Services; Education and Lifelong Learning; Intellectual Freedom; Advocacy for Libraries and the Profession; Literacy; and Organizational Excellence. These were approved by Council.

Following tradition, memorials were done during Council III in honor of Ken Davenport, Sallie Farrell, John Charles Fox, Eliza Atkins Gleason, Mary Alice Hunt, Effie Lee Morris, John Clifford Mortimer, James "Jim" Raymond Przepasniak, Walter Reandeau, J. Michael Rothacker, and Judith Serebnick. Tributes to Jeanne Sugg, Tennessee state librarian and archivist, upon her retirement, and Sonia Sotomayer, associate justice of the U.S. Supreme Court, were also approved.

Committee chairs provided only major highlights from their reports. The COL report, presented by Mario A. Ascensio, chair, and that of the ALA Google Book Settlement Task Force, given by Jim Rettig, chair, will be of interest to GODORT members. COL submitted two resolutions for consideration on government information themes, which Council endorsed. These included: (1) Resolution on Transparency and Openness in the Federal Government, and (2) Resolution to Support Digital Information Initiatives at the U.S. Government Printing Office. I, as GODORT councilor, endorsed these in principle for the round table. I also asked Ascensio if the report on the Government Information Retreat, held at the 2009 ALA Annual Conference, would be distributed soon to retreat participants and to Council for its consideration. A response to this query will presumably be forthcoming, and Lynne Bradley, ALA Washington Office, suggested that a second retreat was under consideration. Rettig reported that another hearing on the Google Settlement will be held in February 2010, and that ALA will issue a press release at the time of the hearing outcome. He pointed out that government publications are considered public domain works, and that the task force's role is informational and educational.

Other resolutions were passed during Council proceedings. Three of note were the Resolution Declaring and Promoting 2010 as the Year of Cataloging Research; Resolution in Support of 2010 Spectrum Presidential Initiative (there are 680 Spectrum scholars to date); and the Resolution on Rebuilding Libraries and Archives Damaged or Destroyed by the Earthquake in Haiti. Two resolutions were either tabled or sent to committee for further discussion and review. The Resolution Concerning the Dratted ALA Event Planner was tabled, and the Resolution to Endorse the Statement "Librarianship and Traditional Cultural Expressions: Nurturing Understanding and Respect," was referred to committee. Fiels had provided a quick review of the action plan for improving the event planner, including the fact that the ALA librarian will work with the developers to ensure that entries, headings, etc., are standardized. Fiels also announced that the 2010 Midwinter Meeting, had a registration of regular members of 11,095 compared to 10,220 for the 2009 Midwinter Meeting in Denver, Colorado.

National Library Advocacy Day will be held Tuesday June 29, 2010, 11 a.m. EDT on Capitol Hill. Registration information is available at and members may register at connect.ala.org/node/93580.

Respectfully submitted,
Mary Mallory,
GODORT Councilor

Greetings from Your Colleagues in the Congressional Papers Round Table

Linda Whitaker, MA, CA

For the past year, Cass Hartnett and I as past chair and chair of our respective round tables have had a series of wide-ranging, passionate conversations about the issues and materials that bind us. We posed questions, challenged assumptions and current practices, looked at national trends, and generally pawed the ground wanting progress on all fronts. What drives this dialog is the conviction that we can't do what we've been doing and expect our collections (and perhaps ourselves) to emerge, on the other side of this or any other funding crisis, intact. Looking ahead to unexplored potential, we ask ourselves, "*What if?*"

Our talks are ongoing. They include but are not limited to:

1. Rethinking some government documents (gov docs) as **records** in any format, any level of government, published or unpublished, **created at taxpayer expense** (this includes the papers of elected officials).
2. Connecting the rhetoric of libraries as the "bastions of democracy" with the notion that gov docs is less a specialty and more of a **general responsibility.**
3. Understanding the increasing rarity of, and the demand for, local and regional gov docs.
4. Seeking out and understanding government **records management retention schedules** before weeding collections (e.g., NARA, state libraries).
5. Understanding the implications of the Electronic Records Archives (ERA) initiative.
6. Acting/thinking as archivists for the long-term stewardship of collections (the idea of a **useful past**; access and research value versus preservation; appraisal; deaccessioning; the ethics/management of **backlogs and "hidden" collections**).
7. Tracking researchers' requests and connecting that with areas of government that are undercollected, underrepresented in your state/region.
8. Identifying and activating gov doc constituencies **inside** the library system—law, political science/specialty librarians, rare book and manuscript librarians, IT librarians.
9. Moving from **passive to active, collaborative collecting** inside and outside the library.
10. Creating **in-house access** tools that span congressional collections, political papers, documents, and databases (i.e., library webpages with content contributed and linked by gov doc librarians, archivists/special collections librarians, political science and law librarians).

If you haven't read Cass Hartnett's presentation on behalf of GODORT at the Society of American Archivists meeting in August 2009, it is posted on the Congressional Papers Round Table site (www.archivists.org/saagroups/cpr/projects.asp). There are additional resources here that may be of interest to government information librarians. I asked her to address topics and practices that impact political archivists. Cass has asked me to return the favor at the ALA Annual Conference in June. Who knows, gov docs librarians and archivists **together** may save Congress yet!

Linda Whitaker, Chief Archivist and Librarian, Arizona Historical Foundation, www.ahfweb.org, linda.whitaker@ahfweb.org.

Join Us in Washington, D.C.! GODORT Events at the 2010 Annual Conference

The 2010 GODORT Reception and Awards Ceremony will be held on Sunday evening, June 27, at the U.S. Naval Observatory (USNO). Due to policy procedures, the USNO must have the names and birthdates of all attendees seventy-six hours before the event. GODORT is simplifying this process by providing a short survey on SurveyMonkey that will collect the needed information, in order to submit all names to the USNO at the same time. Please visit www.surveymonkey.com/s/2010godortreception and answer the questions to register (and remember to register all friends and colleagues who wish to attend). This will be a great venue to honor our award recipients, so please plan on attending and watch for further information on times and directions to the USNO.

Please join us as we recognize this year's award winners:

- Sandee McAninch, University of Kentucky (James Bennett Childs Award)
- Greater Western Library Alliance/TRAIL; Maliaca Oxnam, Project Coordinator, University of Arizona (LexisNexis/Documents to the People Award)
- Liza Duncan, New York State Library (Bernadine Abbott Hoduski Founders Award)
- Lindsay Braddy, University of Missouri—Columbia (W. David Rozkuszka Scholarship)
- William V. Ackerman, "Indian Gaming in North Dakota," *American Indian Quarterly*, spring 2009, 33, no. 2 (Margaret T. Lane/Virginia F. Saunders Memorial Research Award)

GODORT Program

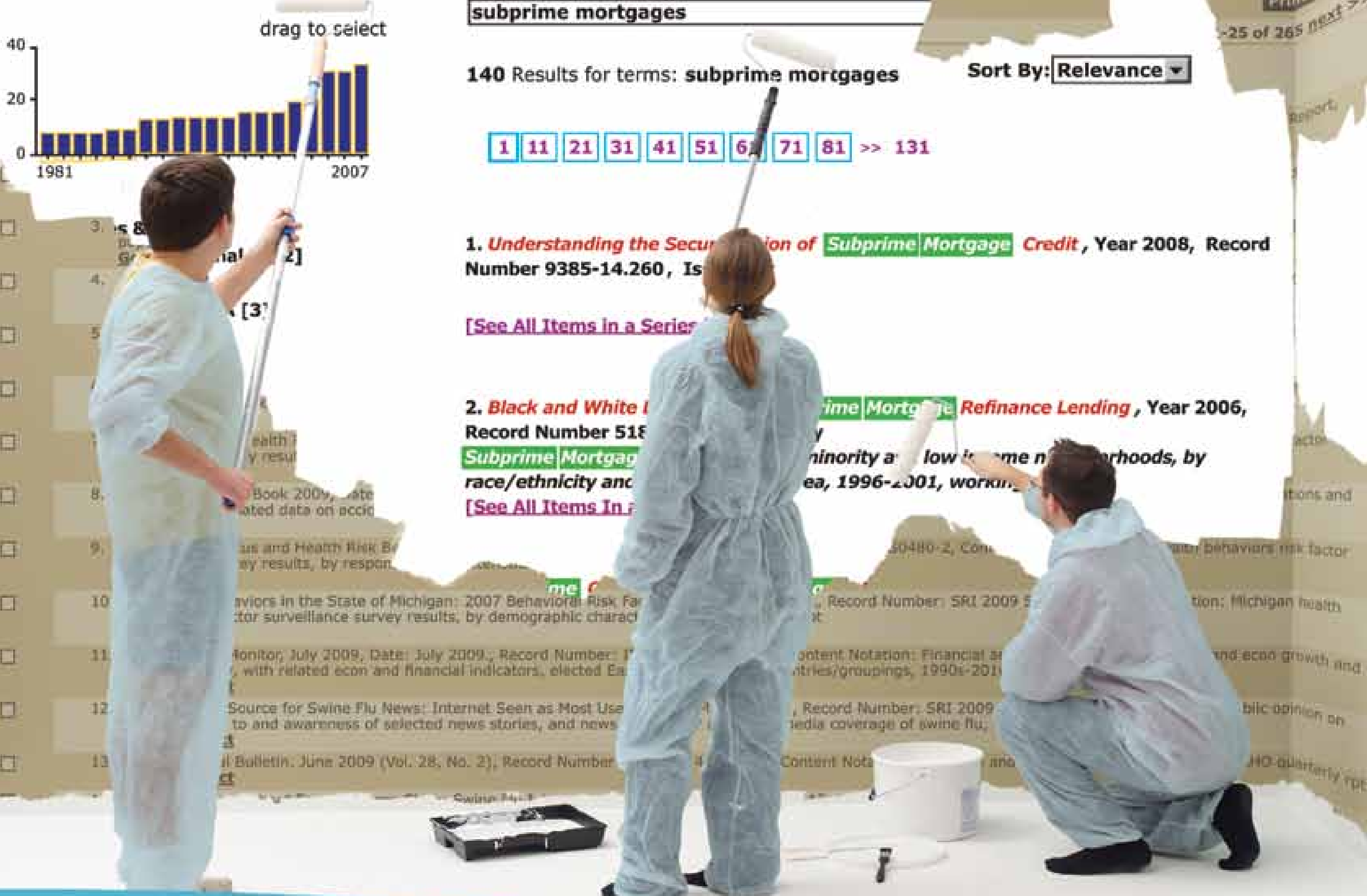
Monday, June 28, 2010

Archivists and Librarians: Together we Can Save Congress

"Saving Congress" sounds like a task for citizen-activists and reform-minded politicians, but saving the information output of our national legislature if the goal of a dedicated cadre of librarians and archivists. Librarians may focus their efforts on the published record, while archivists concentrate on congressional papers, but in these times of heightened political engagement, changing barriers to access, and trends away from reference specialization, our need to work together has never been greater. Nothing short of the legacy of Congress is at stake.

Speakers: Cass Hartnett, University of Washington, and Linda Whitaker, Arizona Historical Foundation.

A complete listing of GODORT activities at the Annual Conference is available on the GODORT wiki.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