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- 2024 GODORT Award Winners

# DttP

## Documents to the People

Summer 2024 | Volume 52, No. 2 | ISSN 2688-125X





*DttP: Documents to the People* (ISSN: 2688-125X) is published quarterly in spring, summer, fall, and winter by the American Library Association (ALA), 225 N. Michigan Ave., Suite 1300, Chicago, IL 60601. It is the official publication of ALA's Government Documents Round Table (GODORT).

*DttP* features articles on local, state, national, and international government information and government activities of GODORT. The opinions expressed by its contributors are their own and do not necessarily represent those of GODORT.

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**Subscriptions:** *DttP* is accessible to ALA/GODORT members on a per volume (annual) basis. For subscriptions, prepayment is required in the amount of \$35 in North America, \$45 elsewhere. Checks or money orders should be made payable to "ALA/GODORT" and sent to the Distribution Manager.

**Contributions:** Articles, news items, letters, and other information intended for publication in *DttP* should be submitted to the Lead Editor. All submitted material is subject to editorial review. Please see the website for additional information: <https://journals.ala.org/index.php/dttp/about/editorialPolicies#focusAndScope>.

**Indexing:** Indexed in Library Literature 19, no. 1 (1991) and selectively in PAIS 33, no 1 (2005). Library, Information Science & Technology Abstracts (2004). Full text also available in HeinOnline 1, no.1 (1972).

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Get to Know . . .

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# DttP

## Documents to the People

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**About the Cover:** Brown, Nanna Louise. "A Summer Child." Photograph. South Haven, Michigan, 1902. From Library of Congress: *Miscellaneous Items in High Demand*. <https://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/2002710125/>.

## Closing the Gun Show and Online Sales Loophole: A Historic Step in Curbing Gun Violence

Jennifer Castle

In a significant move to bolster public safety, the United States has taken decisive action to close a dangerous loophole that allowed firearms to change hands without proper scrutiny.<sup>1</sup> The Department of Justice's recent announcement not only marks a pivotal moment in the fight against gun violence but also instills a sense of reassurance in the public.

For years, the so-called "gun show loophole" has been a contentious issue. At gun shows and through online sales, private transactions have occurred without the rigorous background checks required of licensed dealers.<sup>2</sup> This gap in regulation has allowed firearms to end up in the wrong hands, posing a serious threat to public safety. The Biden administration, demonstrating its commitment to public safety, has long acknowledged the urgency of this issue. With the publication of a new rule in the federal register, the government is taking a historic step to close this loophole.<sup>3</sup>

Under the new regulation, it won't matter whether guns are sold online, at gun shows, or in brick-and-mortar stores.<sup>4</sup> The rule specifically targets individuals who sell firearms predominantly to earn a profit, requiring them to be licensed and conduct background checks. This means that private sellers can no longer evade scrutiny by exploiting the lack of oversight in certain venues. The rule also provides a clear definition of who is "engaged in the business" as a firearms dealer, expanding it to include any person who regularly sells firearms for profit. This comprehensive approach closes the "gun show loophole" and ensures all relevant sales are subject to background checks.

Attorney General Merrick Garland emphasized the significance of this regulation, stating that it would save lives.<sup>5</sup> Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives Director Steven Dettelbach echoed this sentiment, highlighting the dangers posed by the unregulated sale of firearms and the black market that thrives under current loopholes.<sup>6</sup>

In announcing the new measures, Vice President Kamala Harris pointed to the 25th anniversary of the Columbine High School shooting, a tragedy that was exacerbated by the gun-show loophole.<sup>7</sup> She defended the administration's actions against potential political pushback, asserting that it is possible to support the Second Amendment while also implementing measures to prevent gun violence.<sup>8</sup>

A 2017 national survey estimates that approximately 22 percent of guns owned by Americans were acquired without a background check.<sup>9</sup> Under the new regulation, thousands of

individuals who previously sold firearms without a license will now be required to obtain one. This crackdown on unlicensed dealers will increase safety for law-abiding citizens and prevent firearms from falling into the wrong hands. The new rule builds upon the bipartisan Safer Communities Act of 2022.<sup>10</sup> By expanding the definition of who must obtain a license and conduct background checks, it addresses both the "gun show loophole" and the "fire-sale loophole."<sup>11</sup> The latter pertains to how firearms dealers liquidate their inventory when going out of business.

The response to this regulation has been overwhelming. During the three-month consultation period, nearly 388,000 comments flooded the Regulations.gov website.<sup>12</sup> Americans from all walks of life recognize the importance of closing this loophole and preventing gun violence. This regulation, expected to take effect in 30 days, is not just about paperwork; it's about safeguarding lives.<sup>13</sup> Let us hope that this historic step will contribute to a safer and more responsible firearms market in the United States.

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# From the Chair

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Benjamin Aldred

**A**s I write this, GODORT is in the midst of change, a shift in the structure of service that should hopefully make it easier to fill our volunteer slots and improve the overall functioning of the round table. So why does it matter to shift from 60 people in 80 available volunteer positions to 60 people in 60 available volunteer positions? There are a few reasons, and being mindful of them may help us chart our way forward.

First, the role of the round table has changed as ALA has changed. When GODORT was founded, ALA revolved entirely around two annual conferences, and GODORT primarily organized itself around meeting at those conferences. GODORT planned events for knowledge exchange, social connection, and even political organizing within the bounds of the ALA conference. At present, ALA no longer has two governance conferences, and with LibLearnX concluding after 2025, there may only be one conference each year. But as this has happened, GODORT has shifted to meet more frequently outside the bounds of these conferences. The focus has changed between Friday chats, virtual conferences, virtual committee meetings, and the increased availability of communication platforms like ALA Connect.

Second, the round table size has changed as the size of ALA has changed. ALA membership dropped precipitously in the early 2010s as the ongoing effects of the financial crisis were felt in library staffing models. Fewer employed librarians meant fewer members, and round tables shrunk accordingly. There were significant losses, especially of dedicated government documents librarians in many institutions, with the responsibility being combined with other tasks. This shrinkage has meant that GODORT's numbers have shifted the percentage of volunteers needed in the organization. GODORT committees and task forces are places to learn and lead, a chance for those with the interest and expertise to share what they know and develop

their skills. But we shouldn't need everyone in those roles. A good metaphor for this from the world of government information is the calculation of the civilian labor force; just as the Bureau of Labor Statistics accounts for retirees, children, and people unable to work in the short or long term, GODORT needs to account for people who are new to the profession, retired members, and members who may not be currently available for volunteering. These are all valuable members of the GODORT community, but in considering how we structure volunteering, we need to have realistic expectations of the size of our workforce.

Third, what GODORT does has changed. Over the last few decades, GODORT has continually expanded what we do to support multiple populations. We've developed innovative ongoing projects, like the Voting and Election Toolkits and the upcoming History Day LibGuide. We've supported new services, like taking over the Help! I'm an Accidental GovDocs Librarian series and ramping up GODORT's social media presence. We've also developed new ongoing partnerships, like the Kenya Flash Memorial Lecture Series. These new projects need a dedicated group of people to keep them going, and some benefit from more focused collaboration, especially when the tasks overlap.

So, with these things in mind, GODORT will undergo some changes. Hopefully, in the end, we'll still have plenty of room for people to share their expertise and get more involved in the community, and GODORT will be prepared for the next half-century of change.

**Benjamin Aldred** (baldred2@uic.edu), Assistant Professor, Reference and Liaison Librarian, University of Illinois Chicago.

# Get to Know . . .

## Denise Jones

**D**enise Jones, like many of us, did not take a direct path to specialize in government information. She originally wanted to be a school librarian, but an internship at a pharmaceutical company's library set her onto the special libraries track. She eventually took a position as the librarian at a newspaper. "I was the first professional librarian they'd ever had, so I set up a controlled vocabulary and I started online searching for them." Later, she got a job as the research manager at a large newspaper, where she used state documents extensively and developed a solid understanding of state government organization. She moved into her current position as the State Publications Clearinghouse Liaison at the State Library of North Carolina (SLNC) twelve years ago. At SLNC, Denise handles the acquisition of state documents and manages the distribution of documents to the six state documents depository libraries in North Carolina.

With the transition from print to online publications, she has to work a little harder to maintain awareness of new documents. She enjoys reading the many state publications about wildlife, such as *Wildlife in North Carolina*. SLNC holds documents going back to colonial times, and one of Denise's favorite publications is the NC Supreme Court opinions. "There are some really interesting stories," she said, "especially pre-Civil War, and they reflect the way society was." SLNC has a "scan on demand" service, too. "If you find something in our catalog that doesn't have a link to a digital version, you can request to have it digitized," said Denise. After being reviewed, the item will go into the queue to be digitized. "It's a way to find out what people would like us to digitize rather than having to guess."

Collaboration and cooperation are integral aspects of Denise's work. The state Division of Marine Fisheries contacted Denise because it was required to set up an online library of its holdings. She worked with the agency to catalog and host its extensive historical collections. The State Library is also collaborating with the North Carolina Museum of Natural Sciences to host its scientific publications and it is digitizing all of the state statutes from the beginning using grant funding in conjunction with the Legislative Library.

Denise enjoys the variety in her job, where she interacts with academic libraries and state agencies as well as the general

Gwen Sinclair

public. "I have a range of people that I interact with. I do enjoy having those contacts and folks I can call on for help." She devotes a significant amount of time to professional development. Naturally, she is active in the North Carolina Library Association and ALA and she also attends meetings of regional library associations. She added, "I'm a member of the Community College Library Association. They are unsung heroes. They don't have the funding that the big universities have and they are doing a lot with less." She also attends meetings of the GODORT State & Local Documents Interest Group and the State Documents Collaborative Group consisting of librarians who manage state depository systems. Denise especially values the opportunities to network and learn from colleagues in these organizations. She is a big believer in the value of networking. "Whenever I've taught a library school class, I try to impress upon them the importance of joining an organization, but joining is not enough. You've got to get out there and volunteer and participate, and that's when you're going to get benefits," she said. Her advice to a new government information librarian is to ask others for help. "People want to help! You don't have to do it on your own. There is no shame in asking for help."

Outside of the library, Denise enjoys spending time with family and walking her two dogs, and she has high hopes for her garden this year. She is also an avid reader and enjoys historical fiction and nonfiction. A visit to France inspired her to read *The Paris Library*, and she was able to visit the American Library in Paris last spring, where she had the opportunity to view the library's historical scrapbook.

Denise would like to learn more about the technical aspects of digital preservation and artificial intelligence, two fields that are rapidly changing and becoming more important in libraries and archives. "There's always something to learn. I look at something and say, 'I'll never get used to that,' and then I do, and then something else comes along," she laughed.

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# Documents without Borders

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## For the Culture

Dory Shaffer

**M**y frequent focus in these columns trends toward science, technology, mathematics, and engineering because I work as a librarian at a technological university where engineering is by far the largest program on campus. However, the world of international government documents is so much larger than the STEM scope I frequently write within. International agreements, declarations, and international governmental organizations (IGOs) whose mission is to protect and share culture proliferate. Culture, being one of human's most treasured attributes, is celebrated, researched by scholars and students, and sought out by many for personal enrichment. Outside of organizations/institutions promoting culture in the U.S., like the National Endowment for the Humanities,<sup>1</sup> many of these groups will benefit from international government information sources. In this column, I will discuss a few such organizations and institutions, including United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO),<sup>2</sup> world heritage centers, and partner and regional organizations. I will also provide ideas for further exploration.

Among international cultural institutions, UNESCO stands out as a prominent force. UNESCO<sup>3</sup>—with its mandate to promote international cooperation in education, science, and culture—serves as a beacon for preserving cultural heritage and fostering dialogue among nations. Its initiatives encompass a wide array of activities, from safeguarding intangible cultural heritage to promoting literacy and education worldwide. UNESCO's online presence is quite robust, including their own library and data center.<sup>4</sup> Through this portal users can peruse many of the statistics and reports that go on to be used in academic research and media coverage on topics like freedom of expression, culture, and public policy. Further, in their CORE Data Portal,<sup>5</sup> one can look up transparency reporting, information that can be used to understand how resources are utilized and for what projects. Much of the data is available as user friendly maps and charts as well as downloadable formats for analysis.

In my view, at the heart of UNESCO's cultural endeavors lie the World Heritage Centers,<sup>6</sup> which play a pivotal role in identifying, preserving, and promoting sites of outstanding universal value. These centers serve as hubs of expertise, facilitating collaboration among nations to ensure the safeguarding of cultural and natural heritage for future generations. Through

initiatives such as the World Heritage List and the Intangible Cultural Heritage List, UNESCO fosters international recognition and appreciation of diverse cultural expressions.

Beyond UNESCO, a multitude of partner and regional organizations collaborate on cultural initiatives, each contributing expertise and resources to the global effort of cultural preservation and exchange. These organizations, often working in concert with U.N. organizations (I would be remiss not to mention U.N. Tourism<sup>7</sup>), tailor their programs to address specific regional challenges and opportunities. They can be regional IGOs like the African Union's Division of Culture<sup>8</sup> or smaller national organizations. Their cumulative effect of enriching the global tapestry of cultural diversity should not be ignored. On cultural issues, especially challenging ones, I recommend beginning with what is shared by those who practice the culture themselves as well as from more familiar organizations. These people are often in a "position to know," as information literacy researcher Mike Caulfield would say,<sup>9</sup> and have just as much or more authority to speak on cultural issues.

For scholars, students, and enthusiasts alike, international government information sources offer a wealth of resources for exploring and engaging with cultural heritage on a global scale. From databases documenting cultural artifacts to repositories of scholarly research on heritage conservation, these sources provide invaluable insights and perspectives on the diverse cultural landscapes of our world. To further explore the rich tapestry of international government information related to culture, individuals can delve into specialized databases like those mentioned here, consult publications from IGOs and partner organizations, and take things a step further by participating in cultural exchange programs facilitated by international institutions to learn from those who are in a position to know. By engaging with these resources—individuals can deepen their understanding of cultural diversity and contribute to efforts to preserve and promote cultural heritage.

While my professional focus often gravitates toward the realms of science and technology, the world of international government information offers a vast and diverse array of resources for exploring and engaging with cultural heritage. From UNESCO's efforts to safeguard world heritage sites to the myriad initiatives of partner organizations, the available information is rich. By tapping into these resources, researchers,



students, and interested patrons can widen their perspectives on culture and all the aspects of life it impacts.

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## Notes

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# Analysis and Redesign of the California State University, Stanislaus Library's Government Resources LibGuide

Lauren Hall

## Background

The California State University, Stanislaus Library has been designated as a Federal Depository Library since 1964. During this time the Government Documents Collection at CSU Stanislaus has undergone massive changes, including a large weeding project prior to a complete library renovation that began in 2018, which forced the library to move to a small portable location on campus while the renovation was completed.<sup>1</sup> Library staff have also continually evaluated the item selection profile for federal government documents to select more electronic item numbers and move the library to an electronic suite of government publications. Given that the library has been moving toward providing greater access to government information and publications online, the library needed to redesign their Government Resources Guide to better describe its Government Documents Collection and to provide researchers with a starting point for accessing government information online. In addition, the recent GPO decision to move toward an all-digital Federal Depository Library Program (FDLP) provided an even greater impetus to develop a robust Government Resources LibGuide that would be meaningful to both the campus community and the broader community, which the library serves as an FDLP Depository Library.<sup>2</sup> The University Library is also a selective repository for State of California government publications and wanted to provide better access to online resources provided by California government agencies. Therefore, in July 2022, it was determined that the University Library's Government Resources Guide would be redesigned to create a meaningful guide with links to both federal and State of California government resources that users could

access as a starting point for finding and navigating government information. The decision to redesign the guide also arose at a time when changes in staffing occurred in the Technical Services Department of the University Library, which allowed for a librarian to redesign and maintain the guide. The redesign also coincided with the re-opening of the library following the renovation and the initiative to open the space to students and reintroduce our services in response to the renovation and the COVID-19 pandemic.

This article discusses the analysis of the original guide as well as the redesign and implementation of the new Government Resources Guide utilizing Springshare's LibGuides platform. The process of analyzing the guide included assessing use, content, and navigation. Through analysis, the librarian determined that the guide needed new pages, better organization, improved navigation, and a more aesthetically pleasing design. A new design was created based on this analysis and promoted to students through an event in the university quad.

## Analysis of the Original Government Resources LibGuide

Prior to July 2022, the Government Resources LibGuide, which is the gateway for providing access to government publications and information sources, was underutilized and lacked relevant resources for individuals seeking access to government information. According to internal Springshare data, over a period of three years from July 2019 through July 2022, the Government Resources LibGuide was viewed only 330 times. This lack of use was especially telling as during this time the use of electronic resources increased due to the COVID-19

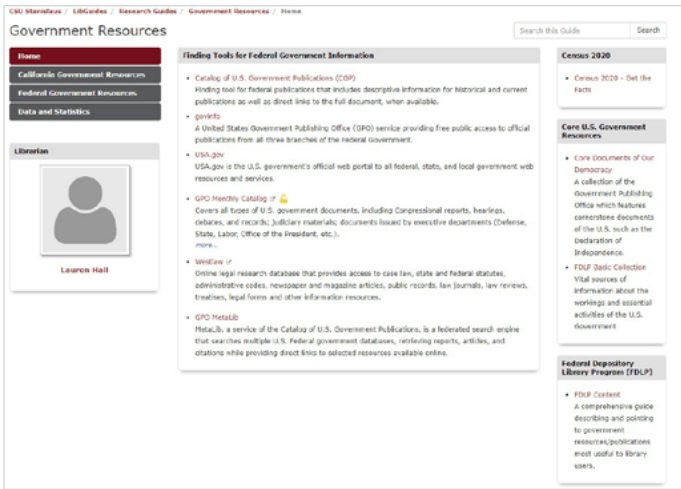


Figure 1: This image depicts the homepage of the CSU Stanislaus Library's Government Resources Guide in July 2022, prior to the redesign of the guide.

pandemic because students and faculty had to rely more heavily upon online resources. The librarian tasked with redesigning the guide first analyzed the original design to determine the issues with the guide and then developed solutions to create a more meaningful guide for the library's users. The librarian concluded that the guide only provided easily found government websites, lacked useful navigation, lacked engaging images, did not contain information about government publication collections at CSU Stanislaus, and did not have a homepage that clearly stated the purpose of the guide. The following is a brief discussion of problems that were diagnosed with the original guide.

A major problem found with the guide was the content on the homepage. As exemplified in Figure 1, the homepage lacked engaging images, had no descriptions regarding the purpose of the guide, and only provided links to federal government information sources when the purpose of the guide was to provide an access point for both federal and State of California government resources. The homepage also offered no introductory information to the government collections at CSU Stanislaus. Therefore, it did not provide an adequate introduction to a guide for both federal government and State of California government information.

In addition to problems outlined on the homepage of the guide, as exemplified in Figure 2, the California Government Resources page linked to only a few basic websites, such as the California State Senate website, which are easily accessible to the public via a simple web search. There was no information regarding various California government agencies or the different branches of government. For example, the California Government Resources page provided no information about the judicial branch in California. This page also contained links

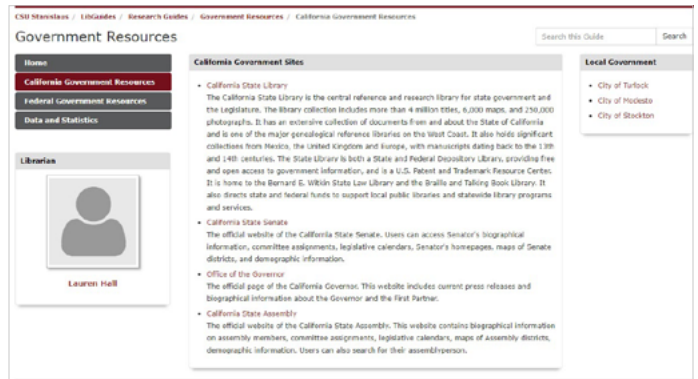


Figure 2: This image depicts the California Government Resources page in July 2022, prior to the redesign of the guide. As depicted, it links to minimal government resources.



Figure 3: This image depicts the Federal Government Resources page in July 2022, prior to the redesign of the guide. As demonstrated, it links to minimal government resources.

to three local government websites; however, CSU Stanislaus serves a six-county geographic area, so highlighting more local city and county governments was needed.

The problems found on the California Government Resources page were also mirrored on the Federal Government Resource page. As shown in Figure 3, this page only linked to basic government entities that can be easily found by a researcher and offered no substantive information. Furthermore, having the federal government information resources split between the homepage and the Federal Government Resources page was confusing and added unnecessary complexity to navigating the guide.

In terms of the Data and Statistics page, as shown in Figure 4, it was unclear whether this page presented information from federal or state government entities unless it was clicked on. The navigation did not make it clear that the page contained links to federal government resources for data and statistical information and therefore should have been a subpage of the Federal Government Resources page. While the guide did contain pertinent links to federal government websites and sources for data, it lacked useful navigation to demonstrate that this information was a subset of federal government resources.

The Government Resources LibGuide lacked helpful navigational cues, offered no information regarding the specific

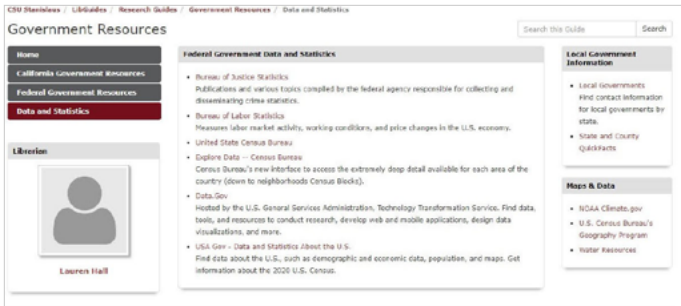


Figure 4: This image depicts the Data and Statistics page in July 2022, prior to the change in navigation of the guide. As shown, the navigation does not give a clue as to whether it is federal or State of California data resources unless clicked on by the user.

government publication collections at CSU Stanislaus, had federal government information spread over three separate pages, and lacked curated information of interest to researchers. The guide provided links to only minimal sources and lacked engaging content that researchers would find both useful and appealing. It was determined that the ambiguous navigation and lack of curated content ultimately led to the guide being underutilized. Furthermore, the guide failed on basic design principles such as consistency and standards across pages. As Nielsen stated,

Users should not have to wonder whether different words, situations, or actions mean the same thing. Follow platform and industry conventions. Jakob's Law states that people spend most of their time using digital products other than yours. Users' experiences with those other products set their expectations. Failing to maintain consistency may increase the users' cognitive load by forcing them to learn something new.<sup>3</sup>

The Government Resources LibGuide was not consistent with standards seen across website homepages from a variety of industries as homepages typically contain introductory information about the website and its associated company and act as a portal to access other pages on the site. While in this case it is an online research guide instead of a company website, the theory still applies that the homepage of the guide should provide basic information about the guide as well as an introduction to the government information resources available via the CSU Stanislaus Library. The homepage needed to act as a portal for the other pages on the guide. Upon conclusion of this review, it was determined that redesigning the guide's homepage and navigation menu would create consistency with user expectations for website navigation. The library also needed to establish consistency in naming standards to avoid ambiguous language on the guide.

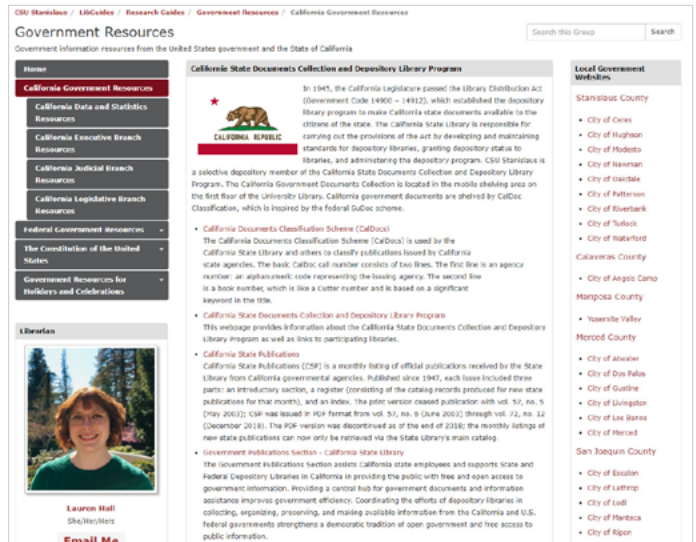


Figure 5: This image depicts the new navigation menu for the California section of the Government Resources guide. The guide now features a California Government Resources landing page with subpages for data and statistics, the executive branch, the judicial branch, and the legislative branch.

## Development of the New Government Resources LibGuide

Following the analysis of the original design, the librarian worked to resolve issues and improve the usability of the guide. The librarian aimed to improve the usability of the guide by creating a logical organizational scheme through adding subpages for content and organizing these pages based on level and branch of government. The librarian also created a welcoming and aesthetically pleasing homepage, utilized friendly URLs, and added significant content to each page. The following is a brief discussion of the redesign process.

The first step in redesigning was to change the navigation of the guide. To create a logical organizational scheme, the Data and Statistics page became a subpage of the Federal Government Resources page since this dealt solely with data and statistics resources from federal government departments and agencies. Subpages for executive, judicial, and legislative branch resources were also added for both the main Federal Government Resources page and the California Government Resources page. An example of the navigation with subpages can be found in Figure 5. Subpages based on the branch of government were added to limit clutter, which is a deterrent to student use of guides. As Ouellette found, clutter was a consistently noted problem with low student use of subject guides.<sup>4</sup> The library sought to balance clutter against providing useful information by creating a simplified navigation menu with subpages broken down by the specific branch of government. The addition of new subpages to further divide content allowed for more government resources to be shared

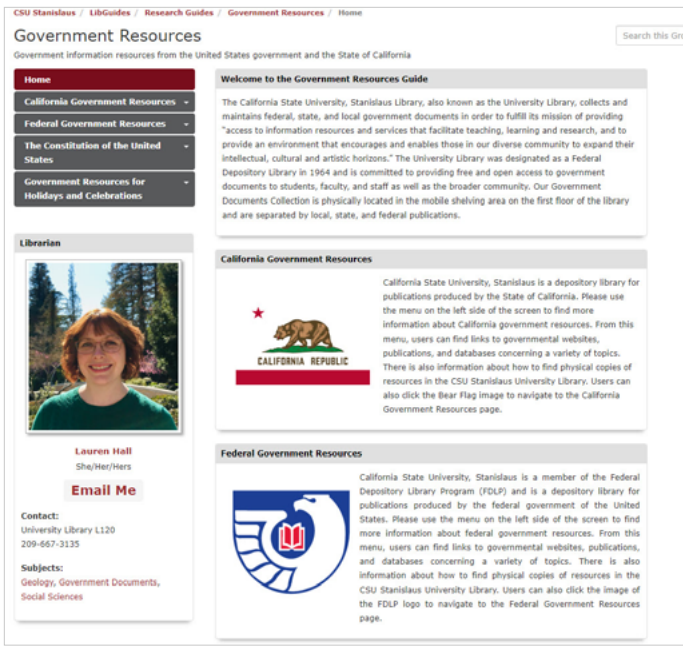


Figure 6: This image depicts the redesigned homepage of the guide. It now includes a welcome message and description of the guide as well as a description of each section of the guide with graphics that link to that section.

with users without cluttering just a few pages with myriad links. Each page was also given a descriptive name to help aid in navigation. For example, the page with information pertaining to the California legislative branch is called California Legislative Branch Resources. The use of main pages and subpages allowed for the creation of an easy to navigate menu that is similar to the organization of other websites across industries.

The next step in redesigning the guide was to make a welcoming and aesthetically pleasing homepage. To accomplish this, the original content found on the homepage was moved to the Federal Government Resources main page as this was a duplication of federal government information. A welcome message was added, as were separate sections providing a brief introduction to federal and State of California government information. Graphics for each section were also added. As exemplified in Figure 6, the FDLP logo was added for the federal government information section and an image of the California state flag was added to the California government information section. These images were hyperlinked to the Federal Government Resources and the California Government Resources main pages so students can click on the image to be taken to the main page for that section for more information. This provided another element of navigation in addition to the menu on the side of the guide.

Each major section of the guide was also given a main page or landing page. These landing pages welcome users to

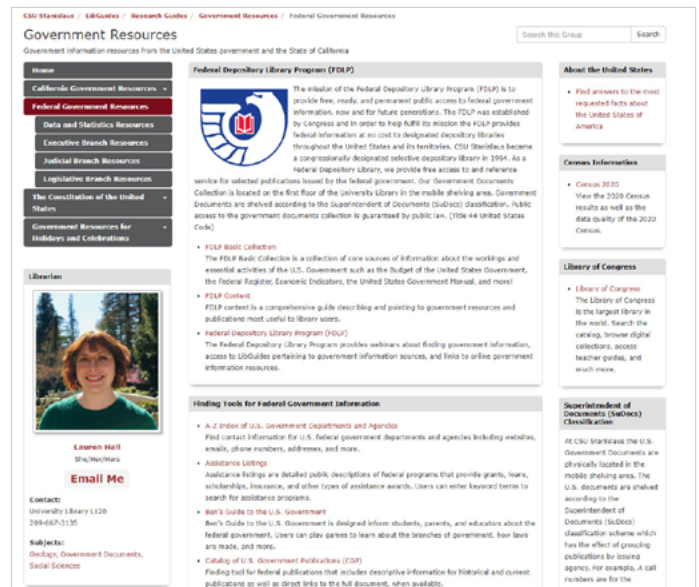


Figure 7: This image depicts the landing page for the Federal Government Resources section of the guide. It now contains more robust and useful information as well as a pleasing graphic in the form of the FDLP logo.

the section and provide information about each resource type. As shown in Figure 7, the Federal Government Resources page provides information about the Federal Depository Library Program, SuDoc Classification, links to the FDLP Basic Collection, and identifies other resources that are good general starting points for finding government information. A similar layout and explanation is used for the California Government Resources page.

The third step in redesigning the guide included creating friendly URLs for the pages in the guide so that they had short and easily identifiable URLs. For example, the URL for the California Data and Statistics Resources page is <https://library.csustan.edu/government-resources/california-data>.

The final step in redesigning the guide included adding content to each page. Government resources were added using the link feature in Springshare's LibGuides so that issues can be more easily examined using the Link Checker tool. To identify resources to add to the guides, the librarian used their knowledge of government agencies, viewed FDLP-created LibGuides and LibGuides from other libraries, and conducted Google power searches to find publications and information about specific topics. The strategy of conducting Google power searches was especially useful for finding data portals from federal and State of California government agencies.

The redesign of the Government Resources guide was completed by the beginning of September 2022 and the new design was promoted as part of the Library's Constitution Day celebration.



Figure 8: This image shows the packets of information given to students for Constitution Day in September 2022.

## Promotion of the New Government Resources LibGuide

As Ouellette found, students often do not use research guides because they do not know they exist.<sup>5</sup> To combat the low usage of the LibGuide and to demonstrate the new design, the guide was publicized via a promotional handout given to students in the university's quad during a weekly event that showcases organizations on campus. Every Wednesday, CSU Stanislaus has an event called "Warrior Wednesday" where organizations on campus set up booths in the quad to talk about the services they provide. The library used the Warrior Wednesday event on September 14, 2022, to celebrate Constitution Day since Constitution Day fell on a Saturday that year and the university does not have many students on campus on the weekends. To promote the guide and commemorate Constitution Day, the librarian created a giveaway packet with a pocket Constitution, candy, and information about the FDLP program (Figure 8). Included in the packet was a business card promoting the redesigned guide with a QR code linking to the guide. A graphic of the business card design can be found in Figure 9. A business card was utilized because it can easily fit in a goodie bag or be handed out on its own. They are also cost-effective to produce and are a good size for distributing a QR code link to online resources. Forty-one goodie bags were distributed during the Constitution Day promotion and the guide received 49 views on the day of the event, indicating that several students linked to the guide via the QR code handout.

## Results of Redesign and Promotion

Building upon the successful initial promotion of the guide at the Warrior Wednesday event, the Government Resources



Figure 9: This graphic depicts the business card used to promote the Government Resources guide. The QR code is used so students can use a mobile device to link to the guide.

Guide has shown consistent usage. From September 2022 through September 2023, internal Springshare data shows that the government resources guide garnered a total of 1,845 views, a significant increase in usage than the three years' prior to the redesign. The design of the guide led to it being awarded the inaugural Federal Depository Library Website of the Year Award in October 2023. This award resulted in significant guide views with 1,820 views during the month of October 2023. From November 2023 through March 2024, the guide had a total of 2,062 views. The number of views received by the guide demonstrates that it is being found and utilized by not only CSU Stanislaus users, but individuals seeking government information in general.

Finally, the success and continued usage of the guide is also because of continual curating and promotion. Special topics are regularly added to the guide and promoted on the library's website and social media. For example, in November 2023, a page was created for National Aviation History Month that specifically highlighted government resources for air mail history and the history of women in aviation and aerospace. This new addition to the guide was promoted via a QR code on flyers on book and exhibit displays in the library and on the library's Instagram. The promotion of this page and the addition of the information led to a total of 817 views in November 2023. The library also plans to continue updating the guide with relevant links to websites and publications as they are found and add new pages to the guide for special interest topics in order to maintain use and interest in the guide.

The redesign of the Government Resources Guide has been a tremendous success for the CSU Stanislaus Library and its users as well as for the broader government information-seeking community. Through analyzing the guide for usability and content issues and correcting these issues through improvements in navigation and page layout, the library has been able to create

an incredibly useful portal to online government information. As the FDLP transitions to an online only program, librarians can use the CSU Stanislaus Library's Government Resources LibGuide as a model for sharing and promoting government websites and publications.

We invite you to view the CSU Stanislaus University Library's Government Resources Guide at <https://library.csustan.edu/government-resources>.

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# Smokey Bear and Fire Suppression

Susanne Caro

**S**mokey Bear is the most recognizable government mascot in America. His story has a dual nature, that of a fictional, anthropomorphic bear partly developed by the National Ad Council and of a real black bear found orphaned in New Mexico. As a spokes-bear for the National Forest Service, the life of the real bear and the cartoon mascot have been documented in official publications, reports, and archives. Because of the partnership of the National Ad Council many of the promotional materials were not distributed through the Government Printing Office and fall into a gray category of government information. In 2024 Smokey turns eighty years old and his story is retold; the story of a mascot and the more complicated story of wildfire suppression.

Smokey's story starts as early as 1910 when extreme fires in Idaho and Montana burned 3 million acres, killing eighty-six people and destroying several towns.<sup>1</sup> This wasn't the first large or deadly fire in U.S. history: an 1871 fire in Green Bay, Wisconsin, killed 1,500. That same year 750 were killed in a fire in Humbolt, Wisconsin.<sup>2</sup> It was in 1910 that Congress earmarked funds for fire suppression and the Forest Service took significant steps for that purpose. The federal perspective had a focus on preventing the loss of timber by developing a system of lookout towers, trails, fire breaks, and phone lines to quickly coordinate firefighting efforts. The use of fire to reduce undergrowth and fuels that could make a fire worse was not considered acceptable. The technique had been practiced by farmers and ranchers to clear land, and by indigenous peoples as part of their traditional land management. In a 1910 annual report, this practice of forest management with controlled burns was described as "unthinkable . . . for a future production of timber."<sup>3</sup> As a result, traditional, indigenous uses of forests were prevented.

## Establishment of the U.S. Forest Service

The United States Forest Service, an agency within the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), which had been formed in 1905, was in part created to prevent the exploitation of forest resources and the environmental damage caused by unrestricted

logging. The agency rarely used fire to improve forest or rangeland conditions due to expense and the need to have "absolute control" to prevent damage to young trees wanted for harvesting.<sup>4</sup> Fighting fires required a budget for temporary employees. More than 1 million dollars was spent on these temporary workers in 1911.<sup>5</sup> An issue of *The Forest Patrolman* reminded Deputy State wardens to extinguish fires within twelve hours of ignition, including working all night and morning as those were optimal times. The firefighting units were made up of twelve people.<sup>6</sup> The need for seasonal fire crews was a result of the large areas of land each ranger had to supervise.

Regular Forest Service employees had vast areas under their supervision and those tracts of land grew from 107 million to 150 million acres in 1907. That year there were 1,210 rangers, guards, and supervisors present at the local level and it was estimated field officers were charged with patrolling 132,236 acres each.<sup>7</sup> In 1911 H.R. 11798, also known as The Weeks Bill, allowed the Secretary of the Interior to make agreements "with any state or group of states to cooperate in the organization and maintenance of a system of fire protection on any private or state forest lands within such state or states."<sup>8</sup> These agreements were, in part, for state aid in fire prevention and suppression activities. By 1913 the national forest areas had grown to 180 million acres.<sup>9</sup> In 1924 the Clarke-McNary Act led the federal government to purchase land in the eastern portion of the country that could produce timber. The bill also increased funding for fire prevention and suppression to 2.5 million dollars. The 1926 Agricultural Appropriation Bill House Report 1034 justified an increased budget for Forest Service employees stating that each forest ranger or guard had to watch over 50,000 acres (80 square miles).<sup>10</sup>

With the New Deal came more forestry workers from the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC). Starting in 1933, CCC provided workers who could engage in twenty-four-hour fire control activities. By 1937, the program boasted an average of 1,000 camps in game refuges, national, state, and private forests, and 4,000,000 "man-days" (eight-hour workday) of work



fighting fires.<sup>11</sup> Training was provided to the men, but the work was still dangerous. The Blackwater Creek fire of 1937 was the fourth deadliest in Forest Service history, killing fifteen crew members and injuring thirty-eight others.<sup>12</sup> Forest fires could cost lives, jobs, and further degrade soil. The Dust Bowl had stripped millions of acres of topsoil just a few years earlier, the economy was still recovering from the great depression, and fires threatened logging jobs. In 1937 Franklin Roosevelt stated,

Foresters and the men of the CCC are doing their part in the battle to protect and increase our forest wealth, but they are waging a stubborn war against fire. Behind this simple statement there is a tragic story. Nine times out of ten the thing that starts a forest fire is man's carelessness or his indifference. It is hard to believe, but twenty-five percent of all our forest fires are incendiary in origin. Another twenty-five percent are caused by smokers. We are destroying our forest wealth through fire alone at the rate of \$51,000,000 a year.<sup>13</sup>

To help promote the effort to reduce the number of fires, Uncle Sam declared on a poster “Your Forests—Your Fault—Your Loss.” The image was created by the original creator of the iconic Uncle Sam poster, Montgomery Flagg.

During World War II there was a shortage of firefighters due to the draft, yet an increased need for timber for the war effort continued the need to stamp fires out quickly. In addition, fire was weaponized by the U.S. and Japanese militaries. The U.S. attempted to use bats from Carlsbad Caverns, New Mexico, to deliver incendiary bombs in Japan. The Japanese released 9,300 balloons with incendiary devices, of which 25 reached the Washington coast. One balloon reached Michigan and another was found in Mexico.<sup>14</sup> Forest rangers received training on dealing with firebombs; fire suppression as a form of national defense.

The methods for fighting fires also took on a military aspect. The creation of units of parachuting fire fighters began in 1939 and by 1940, the first “smokejumpers” Rufus Robinson and Earl Cooley parachuted into the Nez Perce National Forest. The 555th Airborne Battalion, an African American unit of paratroopers known as the Triple Nickles, was involved in Operation Firefly to extinguish fires and dispose of Japanese firebombs.<sup>15</sup> The message from the Forest Service to the public was similarly war-like and echoed that of other propaganda warning of not aiding the enemy by being careless with fire and equated a carelessly tossed match to enemy sabotage. One bookmark carried the statement “Sabotage; Our country is in greater danger today than ever before in history. So are our forests. One

careless match or cigarette—no matter who throws it—can do as much damage as an incendiary bomb to thousands of acres of precious timber and valuable watersheds.”<sup>16</sup> This statement accompanied an unflattering, stereotypical image of a Japanese soldier holding a match.

As the war continued, the Forest Service looked for new, graphic ways to encourage the public to prevent fires—less accusatory than Uncle Sam and less militant than “careless matches aid the Axis.” They wanted an image with broader appeal. Walt Disney’s *Bambi* was released in 1942, and in 1943 the main characters were loaned for one year to the Forest Service for use on a poster. The poster was popular with children, who received copies and bookmarks through their school or public library.<sup>17</sup>

## The Creation of Smokey

Encouraged by the popularity of the *Bambi* poster, the Forest Service was looking for a new animal mascot to encourage the public to prevent forest fires. One of the original artists for Smokey was Forest Service illustrator Harry Rossoll, who also worked on a number of different possible mascots including “Joe the Beaver” and a bear in dungarees and an army hat. When Rossoll was drafted into the Navy in 1944, the image was forgotten. Later, a squirrel character was also suggested, but on August 9, 1944, the Forest Service decided that a bear would be the best fit for the role.<sup>18</sup> This date is considered Smokey’s birthday even though his first poster would not be released until 1945. The Forest Service worked with the War-time Advertising Council, a nonprofit organization founded by members of the marketing profession during WWII to create public service campaigns for the war effort. The advertising agency Foote, Coone, and Belding would also be part of what was then called the Cooperative Forest Fire Prevention Campaign (CFFP) and their artist, Albert Staehle, would create the first Smokey poster. The Forest Service did not and does not pay for the advertising. The work by Foote, Coone, and Bell and the materials are donated.<sup>19</sup>

Smokey’s campaign took off like wildfire, with 30 million pieces of fire prevention materials distributed between 1944 and 1976.<sup>20</sup> The first Smokey poster in 1944 shows the bear pouring water on a campfire; the next poster in 1946 introduced a bear cub. Smokey already appealed to children, and the addition of the cub reinforced that connection. The bear’s first slogan, “Care will prevent 9 out of 10 forest fires,” echoed Roosevelt’s speech. The message was not accusatory but a call to action to prevent fires. Unlike the Flagg poster, which implied the wasted value of trees and blames the viewer, Smokey suggests mindfulness on the part of the viewer and protecting the lives of the creatures in the forest. The 1948 pamphlet “Campaign

to Prevent Forest, Woods and Range Fires” featured a praying Smokey with an assortment of woodland animals with their offspring. This theme was continued in a 1953 poster of Smokey appealing to the heavens as two cubs pray over a grave.

Smokey Bear was a successful spokes-animal, and in 1952 the Smokey Bear Act was passed placing his image under copyright controlled by the Secretary of Agriculture. This prevents use of his image for commercial purposes, and money earned from Smokey Bear merchandise is used to fund wildfire awareness. In addition to government-provided publications, businesses could sponsor a Smokey comic in the local newspaper. In 1972 royalties from Smokey merchandise were more than \$179,313.17 from forty-nine licenses.<sup>21</sup> Licenses were granted to businesses that were in-line with or promoted Smokey’s message. One of the first licenses granted was to Ideal Toy Corp, who created a rubber-faced bear that came with a form children could fill out to join the Junior Rangers. These were mailed to Smokey, and the high volume of mail resulted in the bear receiving his own ZIP code.

Smokey was intended to appeal to all ages, and the materials distributed had this in mind but the greatest effort in terms of publications and products was for children. Having a character and message that resonates with children was recognized as a way to communicate in a “manner they will carry for life.”<sup>22</sup> As the Smokey campaigns evolved, more educational materials were made available. The 1948 campaign had posters, stamps, buttons, display cards, and newspaper ads for sponsors. The fire prevention efforts for 1952 saw the Forest Service launch the “Only You Can Prevent Forest Fires” campaign with Junior Ranger kits. Children received a Junior Forest Ranger membership card, a signed photograph of Smokey, stamps, and a Smokey Bear song sheet. Children could also become members of the Smokey Bear Reading Club. Kits could be obtained at the Smokey Bear Headquarters in Forest Service Division of Information and Education, Washington, D.C., or from state forestry agencies.<sup>22</sup> Catalogs of Smokey and fire prevention materials were regularly offered. Smokey’s 1982 campaign offered coloring pages, workbooks, comics, teacher’s resources, pens, pencils, posters, balloons, board games, and other materials.

Efforts to spread Smokey’s message utilized different media, including a film trailer with Eddy Arnold singing the Smokey Bear song, which was “shown at many of the theaters, particularly those away from the metropolitan area.”<sup>23</sup> The song “Smokey The Bear,” written by Steve Nelson and Jack Rollins in 1952, led to confusion regarding Smokey’s name with the inclusion of “The” to match the meter of the music. Films and television programs were listed in the *Department of Agriculture Monthly List of Publications and Motion Pictures* and could

be borrowed from the Forest Service. Children could tune into a radio program where announcer and voice actor Jackson Weaver gave Smokey his voice. Radio kits were available to stations and sometimes included recordings of famous guests such as Walter Cronkite. Rod Sterling featured in a *Twilight Zone*-style PSA, and John Wayne asked audiences to “Please Prevent Forest Fires.” Celebrities who joined Smokey for birthday celebrations included Betty White, Steven Colbert, Barbara Mandrell, Mickey Hart of the Grateful Dead, B. B. King, and Laurindo Almeida.

Current efforts to spread the message of fire prevention include the website [Smokeybear.com](http://Smokeybear.com). This site is focused on children ages five to thirteen and educators. Moving beyond posters and costumes, the current Smokey Public Service Announcements use computer generated images that range from realistic to cartoonish. In addition to traditional posters and booklets, the public can now tweet to Smokey and watch YouTube videos.

## The Real Smokey

On May 5, 1950, the Carson National Forest Supervisor’s office received a call for assistance with the 1,000 acre Los Tablos Fire in the Capitan Mountains of New Mexico. The Taos Pueblo Snowballs were assembled, and twenty-five members boarded a bus for the long drive south. As the Snowballs were finishing their work on May 11, the Capitan Gap Fire was reported nearby.<sup>24</sup> A Fort Bliss army crew was also working the fire line and reported seeing a bear cub to the Snowballs. The Fort Bliss crew had not been able to pick up the frightened bear as he still had sharp claws and teeth. Reports from that time and recollections of crew members describe finding the bear in or near a hot, rockslide area the fire had burned over. There were many people on the fire lines the day Smokey was found. Soldiers, high school students, and the famous Mescalero Red Hats were present.<sup>26</sup> Many people saw the bear, but Snowball crew member Adolph Samora recalled “[A crewmember] picked it up and placed it in my arms. The cub had blisters all over his hands and feet.”<sup>25</sup> The crew wrapped the bear in their jackets and took him to safety.

Game warden Ray Bell flew the bear, then called Hotfoot Teddy, to Santa Fe for treatment by veterinarian Dr. Ed Smith. It was the Bell family who cared for the bear and as he recovered the public could see him at the Department of Game and Fish. A popular image of the bear in front of a Smokey poster with Judy Bell was published in newspaper around the country. The story of the bear cub rescued from the fire gained national attention. An article in the June 8 edition of the *Alamogordo News*, stated “The tiny injured bear, playing in a cardboard box in the Department of Game and Fish office in Santa Fe speaks more

eloquently than any poster the need to ‘Prevent Forest Fires.’”<sup>27</sup> Orphaned and injured, the little cub became the living embodiment of Smokey Bear. Smokey had found his origin story. The ad agencies did not use images of the cub in public service announcements, but his story was adopted as that of the mascot and featured in comics such as *The True Story of Smokey Bear*.<sup>28</sup>

Once recovered, Smokey was sent to the National Zoo in Washington, D.C.. However, commercial airlines would not allow a bear in the cabin of a plane, or a human escort in the cargo hold. A private company, Piper Aircraft, offered to fly him, and Smokey had “his own seat in the ‘cabin,’ the plane was personalized and adorned with a mural of Smokey with his paw in a sling and ranger hat on his head.”<sup>29</sup> There were hundreds of people awaiting his arrival in D.C. on June 27, 1950, including Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts.<sup>30</sup>

## Life at the National Zoo

Although the cub was not used in advertisements, the fact that there was a real version of the bear children saw on posters and other promotional materials made Smokey very popular and he was receiving 13,000 pieces of fan mail each week. This was partly due to requests for Junior ranger kits, of which there were 500,000 in 1956 and a total of 3 million Junior Ranger members by 1957.<sup>31</sup> The quantity of mail was enough for the bear to be given his own zip code (20252) in 1964, and three assistants to answer mail. His diet at the zoo included a variety of fish, peanut butter sandwiches, and honey sandwiches on special occasions. The sandwiches sometimes contained medication.

Smokey the mascot appealed to children, and children who visited to the National Zoo saw a real black bear. Much to the disappointment of fans, the real Smokey did not talk or wear pants. Mrs. Betty Wynkoop of Purcellville, Virginia, sent a letter to the Forest Service suggesting a display of Smokey’s uniform in an enclosure by Smokey’s habitat at the zoo. In 1956, the Forest Service took this recommendation to Dr. Theodore H. Reed, director of the National Zoological Park. The enclosed display by Smokey’s exhibit held the expected ranger hat, dungarees, and a shovel.<sup>31</sup>

In 1962 a female black bear named Goldie arrived to be a companion for Smokey. In press releases she was referred to as Smokey’s wife. Goldie was another orphaned, New Mexican bear. Found by loggers in the Cibola National Forest near Magdalena, she lived at the Ghost Ranch Museum for a year before arriving at the National Zoo. She was accompanied by Ray Bell on the flight, a Cessna loaned by the New Mexico State Land Office. The zoo had hoped the bears would eventually produce offspring, but this did not occur.<sup>32</sup>

In 1971, the pair were joined by “Little Smokey,” an orphaned bear cub from Cloudcroft, New Mexico. He flew to Washington, D.C., in the cargo hold of a commercial flight. The addition of this bear, sometimes referred to as Smokey’s adopted son, was intended to take on the role of Forest Service spokesperson. Little Smokey was found in the Lincoln National Forest by Ray Bell, who was by then retired from the Forest Service.<sup>33</sup>

In 1960, a Smokey Bear Museum had been created by community members in Capitan, New Mexico. Efforts for his return to New Mexico and criticism of his habitat at the National Zoo followed but were denied until the 1974 Congress passed a bill to return the bear to Capitan when he died.<sup>34</sup> On May 2, 1975, Smokey Bear officially retired, passing on the trademark hat to Little Smokey who now took on the title of Smokey Bear II. At this point, the original Smokey had lived at the National Zoo for twenty-six years. Suffering from arthritis and possibly still suffering from long lasting effects of his burned paws, he could barely walk. His retirement was short-lived, and he died on November 9, 1976. His body was returned to New Mexico, and he is buried in the Smokey Bear Historical Park in Capitan.<sup>35</sup>

## Legacy

There is debate whether Smokey’s campaign to prevent forest fires has helped or hindered natural ecology. In 2001, Smokey’s slogan was changed to from “Only You can prevent forest fires” to “Only You can prevent wildfires.”<sup>36</sup> This was in recognition of the important use of controlled burns. Research also showed that aggressive suppression of fires was allowing dense build-ups of flammable materials and more intense, destructive fires. Low-intensity fires set naturally and monitored or purposefully set as part of land management reduce the amount of fuel and therefore can reduce the severity of a fire without destroying mature trees.<sup>37</sup>

While controlled or prescribed fires are beneficial, Smokey is concerned with unintentional fires. Climate change, urban encroachment, and high usage of forested areas all increase the chances of devastating fires. Starting a fire by tossing a cigarette or not extinguishing a campfire can have terrible consequences. Droughts, especially in the west, and “persistent heat set the stage for extraordinary wildfire seasons from 2020 to 2022 across many western states, with all three years far surpassing the average of 1.2 million acres burned since 2016.”<sup>38</sup> With more people enjoying natural areas the chances of an unintentional fire increase. In 2022, the National Park Services areas “received 312 million recreation visits, up 15 million visits (5%) from 2021.”<sup>39</sup> In 2022, there were 61,429 human-caused fires that burned 3,370,169 acres.<sup>40</sup>

Although the number of fires in 2022 was high, this number could be far worse. After the launch of Smokey's campaign there was a reduction in fires. According to the 1968 publication *Smokey's Record*, the Smokey Bear programs had "saved America more than \$10 billion in losses that did not occur."<sup>41</sup> When Smokey turned 50 in 1994, Representative Glenn Poshard of Illinois stated,

The Forest Service estimates that human-caused wildfires have been reduced by approximately one-half since Smokey Bear was introduced in 1944. This is despite the fact that more than 10 times as many people visit our national parks and forests today as in the 1940's. I have to admit, that is quite an accomplishment for a bear.<sup>42</sup>

In addition to reducing the number of fires, the licensing of Smokey merchandise has raised millions of dollars to support fire prevention education. In 2022, Smokey's licensing program resulted in \$1,134,000 for fire prevention education.<sup>43</sup> As long as most fires are caused by humans, there will be a need to remind people to be careful, only you can prevent wildfires.

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Library.

## Notes

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# Review

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**The Declassification Engine: What History Reveals About America's Top Secrets.** Matthew Connelly. New York: Pantheon, 2023. 540 pgs. \$22.00. 9781101973677.

Though more than a decade in the making, the History Lab and Connelly's book was extremely timely in the age of former President Trump's classified documents fiasco. Focusing on declassified (so, by nature, classified) documents, Connelly takes the reader through time in a historical account of how America has traditionally and nontraditionally used and shared information with the public and among the upper echelon of need-to-knows. This question, and the varying accounts of America's positioning toward freedom of information, inspired his 2014 project, History Lab. With support from his institution and colleagues at Columbia University, as well as foundational support from a MacArthur grant, History Lab sought to apply algorithmic mathematics to swaths of declassified documents to determine how and why to declassifying documents. Connelly maintains that with a continually decreasing budget line and staff ratio at the National Archives, the nation's archivists cannot possibly handle the number of documents marked as any level of classified. Moreover, as the interest in declassification among top leaders goes down and the number of secret clearances goes up, the public interest in access to government transparency and free information stands still as millions of documents remain classified with no real reason as to why. Even Connelly's own lawyers warned him his work on declassified—mind you, declassified—documents could lead him to be questioned under the Espionage Act.

*The Declassification Engine* immerses the reader in the history of American leaders' responses and opinions toward public information, starting with the very open Federalists and Constitution writers. The American Republic, inherently interested in transparency, published its decisions and findings widely almost immediately after the period of meeting deemed necessary. Early colonists were acutely aware of the power associated with the sharing of information and wanted to afford all citizens this right—besides, of course, any women and men of color. Early attempts went as far as to bar any Black men from working at the post office, as there was rampant fear that, as they traveled from place to place, they could share and disseminate information more freely.

Connelly then takes the reader through the greatest hits of America's secrets and how, under Pearl Harbor and President Roosevelt, the modern equivalency of a national secret was created for the public's good. Compounding the conspiratorial events of Pearl Harbor, archives would later reveal that Winston Churchill recorded American politicians as gleeful upon hearing the news at a White House dinner. What began at Pearl Harbor exploded with the creation of the atomic bomb and the new idea that some secrets just simply couldn't be shared. From there, the concept of complete public access to government information devolved quickly, along with the creation of full-blow secrecy organizations like the CIA and the NSA. While America's leaders pushed archives and information out of civilian hands and toward the military-industrial complex, the waters muddied further. The president of the United

States no longer has the only permission to push the button.

National and international secrets became intertwined, and the surveillance state, easily acceptable for our enemies but much less so for our civilians, was born. Once documents between many government institutions were kept at varying classification levels, and secret clearances among a specific tier of people were closely monitored, it became more straightforward for the government to classify information automatically, with no end game toward declassification. It is simply easier—for the military and the NSA, that is, not so much for the National Archives or any archival or record professional tasked with cataloging or organizing such information. Moreover, as more and more information became confidential, it began to overwhelm any attempts at organization. What was once considered the most critical and marked "classified" is now applied to billions of documents with no apparent reasoning, effectively demeaning the entire classification. While he may not say so directly, the reader is left to build up to the present-day dilemmas of Trump vs. President Biden's classified document scandals, and why, for example, Trump's bathroom full of stolen boxes can be considered differently than Biden's forgotten garage full.

Connelly's project and algorithmic tool could ultimately be declared a success. History Lab found glaring anomalies in what was and wasn't classified. Decoded code words were used heavily to denote specific types of classified information and named vast swaths of information that could easily and safely be declassified automatically. He and his team went before several government

agencies to plead their case, getting resounding support from places like the National Archives, the CIA, and the State Department. His main goal was to continue the study and create, with government buy-in, a tool that could be used in real-time to classify or declassify information more routinely. He met his final roadblock at one of his last meetings, the

Intelligence Advanced Research Projects Activity, which had the power and the funding to create the tool on an accurate scale. In opposition to so many of the state leaders they had heard from previously, they just weren't interested. They agreed it would be useful, overwhelmingly so, but they still shrugged. Therein lies the perfect conclusion to our modern

dystopia of information access to the American people, in Connelly's exact wording: "The fact that we cannot assign a dollar value to democratic accountability was precisely the problem. . . . The conclusion is inescapable."—*Alexandra Acri Godfrey, agodfrey@os.pasen.gov, Librarian of the Senate of Pennsylvania, Senate of Pennsylvania*

# 2024 GODORT Award Winners

## James Bennett Childs Award



Marie Concannon

The recipient of the 2024 James Bennett Childs award is Marie Concannon, Head of Government Information and Data Archives at the University of Missouri, Columbia. The Childs Award is a tribute to an individual who has made a lifetime and significant contribution to the field of documents

librarianship and is based on stature, service, and publications.

The Awards Committee noted that the support letters for Marie's nomination focused on her dedication to the profession and lifetime of service. Her role in government documents practice has been exemplary. Her work with the website *Prices and Wages by Decade* has been beneficial not only to the government information community, but to the wider community as well. The guide provides more than 19,000 links leading to retail prices and wages found mostly in government publications that may not be easily discoverable without the guide.

Marie has served GODORT in many capacities and was a member of the Depository Library Council from 2012 through 2015. The Awards Committee commends Marie on her career of dedication to the promotion and accessibility of government information.

## Bernadine Abbott Hoduski Founders Award



Celina McDonald

GODORT is awarding both state and federal recipients of the 2024 Bernadine Abbott Hoduski Founders Award, which recognizes documents librarians who might not be known at the national level but have made significant contributions to the field of state, international, local, or federal documents.

Celina McDonald, government documents librarian at the University of Maryland, is the federal recipient of the 2024 Bernadine Abbott Hoduski Founders Award. She served on the Depository Library Council from 2017 through 2020 and

currently serves on the HathiTrust U.S. Federal Documents Advisory Committee. In her role as regional depository librarian, Celina holds regular office hours for government information librarians in Maryland, Delaware, and the D.C. area.

At the national level, Celina testified before the U.S. Committee on House Administration at the "Transforming GPO for the 21st Century and Beyond: Part 3—Federal Depository Library Program Congressional Hearings" in 2017. She served as a member of the ALA Committee on Legislation Subcommittee on Government Information from 2012 to 2017 and 2018 to 2022, including co-chairing the committee in 2015–2016 and chairing in 2016–2017. She has also offered several FDLP Academy training webinars.



Patricia Kenly

Patricia Kenly is the state recipient of the Bernadine Abbott Hoduski Founders Award for 2024. Patricia is the Business Reference Librarian and Government Documents Coordinator at the Georgia Tech Library. A mainstay at Georgia state library conferences, including the annual Georgia Libraries Conference

and the Georgia Depository Libraries meeting, she presents regularly on government information issues and resources, especially science topics and technical reports. Equally valuable are her frequent informative contributions to the U.S. Depositories in Georgia listserv and her well-researched LibGuides on government information topics.

Patricia's career service includes active membership in GODORT, committee work, and officer positions in several professional library organizations. She has chaired the Georgia Government Information Interest Group (GIIG) and served on the Georgia State Depository Plan Committee. For many years she has actively participated on the Government Information Committee of the ACRL Science and Technology Section.

## ProQuest/GODORT/ALA "Documents to the People" Award

The 2024 ProQuest/GODORT/ALA "Documents to the People" Award goes to Kennesaw State University Libraries and the Bentley Rare Book Museum for their collaboration on the





Laurie Aycock



Kristina Clement



Elizabeth Friedly



JoyEllen Williams

Constitution Week event, “Life in the Times of the Constitution.” This event presented a unique opportunity for these organizations to showcase the depository collection to the campus community by facilitating hands-on exploration of newspapers and books from the eighteenth century. The event, complemented by a curated display of government publications related to the Constitution and that era, succeeded in bringing government publications to life, creating a memorable and enriching experience for all participants. The event was hosted by Laurie Aycock, Kristina Clement, Elizabeth Friedly, and JoyEllen Williams.

The ProQuest/GODORT/ALA “Documents to the People” Award is a tribute to an individual, library, institution, or other non-commercial group that has most effectively encouraged the use of government documents in support of library service. This unique program for Constitution Week bridged the gap between the past and the present, bringing to life the documents that have shaped the nation, for more than 50 attendees. The cash stipend for this award will allow the library and museum to expand the event’s scale, increasing students’ engagement with primary source documents and broadening its impact even beyond the campus.

## NewsBank/Readex/GODORT/ALA Catharine J. Reynolds Research Grant



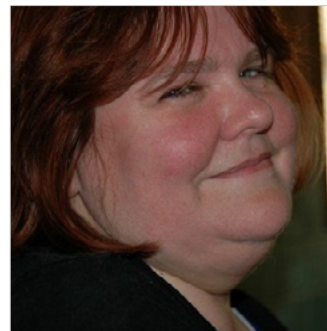
Aimée Quinn

The recipient of the 2024 NewsBank/Readex/GODORT/ALA Catharine J. Reynolds Research Grant is Aimée Quinn, Librarian at Northern Arizona University, Yuma, for the project “The Demise of Government Information in the Time of the 45th President.” This award provides funding for research in the

field of documents librarianship, or in a related area that would benefit the individual’s performance as a documents librarian or make a contribution to the field.

This article, co-authored by Bernadine Abbott Hoduski, Fred Stoss, and Tom Adamich, examines the realities of threats to government information policy and process as a result of the 45th presidency. The authors in particular examine changes in agency processes in managing the release of government information through a case study analysis of the closure of EPA libraries. With the grant funds Aimée will visit larger FDLP libraries with collections that her library does not have and that are unavailable online in order to expand the in-depth historical budget analysis of the EPA and EPA libraries during this era. This is critically impactful research for the history of Federal Depository Library Program (FDLP) and U.S. government libraries, for government information librarians as well as for public policy researchers, historians, and the general public. Receiving the Reynolds Award will allow Aimée to complete this research and publish the work.

## Margaret T. Lane / Virginia F. Saunders Memorial Research Award



Dominique Hallett

The book *What Can U.S. Government Information Do for Me?*, edited by Tom Diamond and Dominique Hallett (pictured), is the recipient of the Margaret T. Lane / Virginia F. Saunders Memorial Research Award. This award is given annually to an author or shared among collaborative

authors of outstanding published research (e.g., books, articles, occasional papers) in which government information, either published or archival in nature, forms a substantial part of the documented research. Published by McFarland in 2023, *What Can U.S. Government Information Do for Me?* embodies the spirit of the award by advancing understanding of government information resources and their impact on the library and information science field. It goes beyond the traditional understanding of government documents and showcases the diverse range

of resources available, from data sets to research reports, and from legal materials to statistical publications.

This book helps empower librarians to better assist patrons in their information-seeking endeavors and enriches the learning experiences of students by introducing them to a wealth of government information resources that are often underutilized. The book also encourages the ongoing dialogue within the library and information science community about the importance of government information.