

**Proceedings of the 2nd Annual
Federal Depository Library Conference, 1993
May 19-26, 1993**

Effective Library Networking: Local Depository Networks

Remarks by Jim Walsh
Head of Government Documents and Microform
Thomas P. O'Neill, Jr. Library
Boston College
Chestnut Hill, MA 02167

Introduction/Overview

About one week prior to the April 22nd panel discussion, Margaret, John, Jim, and I contacted each other via the telephone and e-mail and developed an outline for the panel discussion. Through this impromptu communication, we discovered that there were a few things--some common threads--that were consistent among the four government documents consortia. They were and are:

- we all share information among our member institutions;
- we all publicize what we have; and
- we all do a variety of things to achieve the first two items and to improve and increase access to our individual collection or a member's collection.

There was this feeling that the four of us do the same thing. Our government documents consortia/interest group/organization were identical. Our plan was to have the first speaker give his/her presentation and the remaining three speakers would follow with "ditto."

Seriously, we realized that as much as we were alike, we were also very different. How we achieved the same broad goal, providing better access to government information, was how we differed. At this point, this paper will provide you with a brief, general profile of the four groups. This will give you a picture of how we are alike and how we are different.

When looking at the four government documents groups, we see that:

- one is located in a rural setting and covers a very large geographical area; one has all of its member institutions located in two adjoining cities, but its outreach is to rural counties and also covers a large geographical area; one is in urban setting and services three urban counties; and one is primarily located within a large metropolitan area, but has member institutions which are outside and some distance from the metropolitan area:
- the groups range in size of membership from 4 to 12;

- three consist entirely of U.S. Government Printing Office depository libraries, while one is a mix of depository and non-depository libraries;
- the type of the parent institution (e.g., state library, county library, city library, large university or small college library; law library; land grant institution; etc.) is varied and diverse;
- the age/establishment of each depository library covers a range of years: from the mid-1850's to as recent as the 1980's;
- the percentage of item numbers selected varies considerably from one group to the next and within each group;
- the length of time that each government documents organization has been in existence is also different; and
- two of the groups are part of a larger organization or consortium, while the other two groups are independent local or regional documents organizations.

Regardless of how each group may differ from the other, we all strive to achieve the same goal: provide more government information to more people. We just do it in different ways and in different settings. In addition to being a resource to the general public, we also agreed that the local, state, or regional government documents organization is a valuable resource for the new (i.e., 1-3 years experience) documents librarian. The government documents organization serves as mentor program for new professionals and provides them with the opportunity to become more involved and take an active part in promoting government documents and government information.

With that introduction and brief review and comparison of the four government documents groups, a detailed description and discussion of the first of the four groups, the Government Documents Interest Group and its parent organization, the Boston Library Consortium, follows.

Boston Library Consortium (BLC)

The BLC was founded in 1970, and consisted of five institutions. Since its inception, the goal of the BLC has been to strengthen services to users of member institutions. This is done through: mutual access to research materials at member institutions; publication of the Union List of Serials; projects to develop and preserve the collections of member institutions; and development of professional library expertise through mutual consultation.

Today the BLC consists of 12 institutions:

Boston College
 Boston Public Library
 Boston University
 Brandeis University
 Marine Biological Laboratory/Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution
 Massachusetts Institute of Technology
 Northeastern University
 State Library of Massachusetts
 Tufts University
 University of Massachusetts-Amherst
 University of Massachusetts-Boston, and
 Wellesley College.

The membership profile, by type of library, is as follows: state library (1); public library (1); special library/research laboratory (1); and college/university library (9). Included in the 12 institutional members there are three law schools, two medical schools, two land grant institutions, one veterinary school, and one scientific/biological/research laboratory. Ten of the twelve institutions are located in three counties (Middlesex, Norfolk, and Suffolk) within the Boston metropolitan area. Woods Hole is located in Falmouth, on Cape Cod, and UMASS-Amherst is located in western Massachusetts (approximately 100 miles from Boston).

The resources that are available through the BLC are impressive and extensive. The following is just a sampling of some of those resources:

COLLECTIONS: 18.6 million volumes; 17.8 million pieces of microfiche; and 129,100 serial titles;

EXPENDITURES: \$27.8 million, library materials; \$14.7 million, current serials; \$48.5 million, salaries/wages; and \$89.5 million, total library expenditures; and

PERSONNEL (FTE): 613 professional staff; 944 nonprofessional; 387 student assistants; and 1,944 total staff.

The organizational structure of the BLC consists of the Executive Director who reports to the Executive Board, which is comprised of library directors from the member institutions. The BLC has a series of standing committees and interest groups, which are less formal and less structured than the committees. GoDIG is an interest group.

In addition to sharing resources, the BLC also presents workshops and training sessions for staff members; publishes the Union List of Serials and the BLC User Guide; provides a computer/internet gateway that provides access to the BLC members' on-line catalogs; and coordinates a list serve (BLC-L) for the consortium. The Boston Library Consortium has been an invaluable resource for 23 years to each member institution and the students, faculty, and staff at each institution.

Government Documents Interest Group (GoDIG)

The Government Documents Interest Group (GoDIG) is a part of the organizational structure of the BLC and benefits from the services and activities that it provides. GoDIG operates under the policies of the BLC. The purpose of an interest group is threefold: to address topics of ongoing interest; to provide an informal forum for sharing information and expertise; and to discuss issues of concern to member libraries.

GoDIG meets all of these goals and has the more specific goal: to improve and increase access to government information to users of BLC member institutions. This section will provide an overview to the history, activities, publications, and future projects of GoDIG.

Just as a profile was provided for the BLC member institutions, a similar profile for the GoDIG members follows:

- There are 11 U.S. Government Printing Office depository libraries. Two GoDIG libraries are not depositories;
- Of the 11 GPO depository libraries, one is a regional and 10 are selective depositories;
- Of the 10 selective depositories, the percentage of the item numbers selected range from a high of 85% to a low of 8%; and
- The dates of establishment of the 11 depositories cover 120 years, from 1859 to 1979, with four being established before 1910.

Due to the type and size of each institution, the age and size of each depository, and the collection development needs of each institution and depository, the government documents collections vary considerably in size, scope, and content.

GoDIG has been in existence for three years. It held its first meeting on April 18, 1990, and has met twice a year since then. The location of meetings rotates among the member libraries. This provides us with the opportunity to see the operations and computer services of other documents collections, in addition to agenda items that are addressed during the meeting. We exchange ideas, information, and materials in a number of ways (e.g., meetings, telephone, e-mail, fax, BLC delivery van, etc.). In its relatively short existence, GoDIG has been a very effective reference and collection development network.

Some of the activities/projects that GoDIG has undertaken and/or accomplished are listed below:

- contacted by Counterpoint Systems, Inc., which demonstrated its Federal Register on CD-ROM to members of GoDIG. We had the opportunity to provide the information needs and expectations that the library community has for such a product;
- established a list serve, GODIG-L, which is available to all members of the Boston Library Consortium;
- received 1990 Census STF 1A and 3A profiles for Massachusetts, its counties, and the 16 planning districts for Boston from the Massachusetts State Data Center and the Boston Redevelopment Authority. The original copies were disseminated among GoDIG members for duplication and distribution; and
- compiled and distributed the GoDIG Library Directory: A Listing of Boston Library Consortium Government Documents Collections. The first edition was published in 1992. Please see Figure 1, located at the end of this article, for a sample page from the GoDIG Library Directory.

Currently, GoDIG is working on the second edition of the GoDIG Library Directory. It is expected to be published in late 1993. We have also begun the work on compiling a union list of microform sets that are available at member institutions. We hope to have this available sometime in 1994. GoDIG will continue to meet on a regular basis and address and discuss the issues that affect our collections and departments as separate institutions, as members of the Boston Library Consortium, and as depository libraries.

Conclusion

GoDIG has provided BLC documents/depository librarians the forum to meet on a regular basis. It is an opportunity for us to exchange ideas and materials and discuss issues and voice concerns. GoDIG is an enrichment vehicle for the individual librarians, each documents collection, and the Boston Library Consortium as a whole. Since its inception in 1990, GoDIG has certainly been a useful and valuable resource for the government documents librarians of the Boston Library Consortium.

University of Massachusetts at Amherst

University Library Government Documents Department
University of Massachusetts-Amherst
Amherst, MA 01003

Selective depository (85%) Land Grant designation, 1907
Depository Library No.: 0254 1st Congressional District

Telephone/Communications:

VOICE: (413) 545-2765 FAX: None

EMAIL: edu%William.Thompson@library.umass.edu (INTERNET) [Bill Thompson]

Staff:

William R. Thompson, Head, Government Documents Department
Leonard Adams, Documents Librarian

Collections:

Federal (extensive); State (moderate); International (moderate); Foreign (limited); Local (limited)

Depository for:

Government Printing Office; Massachusetts publications (1975); NASA (1972); DOE; Census Bureau (1965); DMA (1970)

Automation:

CD-ROM: Monthly Catalog; various U.S. Government Depository CD-ROM products
ONLINE CATALOG: LS/2000

Acquires:

ERIC; Rand; ACDA; patents and trademarks; Congress; United Nations; UNIDO; UNICEF; economic commissions; ILO; FAO; UNESCO; WHO; IBRD; IDA; IAEA; GATT; Council of Europe; European Communities; NATO; OAS; OECD; OPEC; WMO; International Court of Justice; IMF; Massachusetts town reports; Massachusetts publications (microfilm)

Subject Specialties:

Agriculture; education; health and vital statistics; demography and population; political science; rural development

Notes:

Public access; no fee; collection circulates; ILL

Publications:

None

Public Transportation: The only public transportation to the University of Massachusetts-Amherst is via Peter Pan Bus Lines.