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# Discards, and Needs, and Offers – Oh My!

## What's One to Do?

Cynthia Etkin  
U.S. Government Printing Office  
Depository Library Council Meeting  
Crystal City, Virginia

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## Two Processes

*Closely related, but with different purposes*

1. Discarding unwanted depository materials from collections
2. Offering materials to other libraries, particularly those who have expressed a need



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# We Have Consensus – Nobody likes these processes

- Not:
  - Depository coordinators
  - Depository staff
  - Library directors
  - Regionals
  - Selectives



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## What does the law say about this?

- 44 United States Code 1912:
  - [Regionals] within the region served will provide ...assistance for depository libraries in the disposal of unwanted Government publications.
  - [Regionals may permit their selectives] to dispose of Government publications which they have retained for at least five years after first offering them to other depository libraries within their area, then to other libraries.



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## Guidelines Developed By the DLC, circa 1973

- Guidelines were a “recommended level of conduct”
- Responsibilities of regionals included:
  - Attempting to complete their retrospective collections of major serials, annuals, and other research materials by means of gifts, exchange, or purchase, including microforms
  - Screening all lists of documents withdrawn from selective depositories to insure their future availability in the region
  - Providing guidelines to selective depositories for preparing disposal lists of unwanted documents



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## Memorandum Issued, 1995

To resolve the problem that was stated as:

“This is a procedure that is onerous for depositories. Compiling lists of materials is labor intensive. It is difficult to find space for storing documents to be discarded for months until the lengthy procedure is completed.”



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# 1995 Memorandum to Regional Librarians

- Grants regionals greater flexibility, more latitude, and more discretion in the weeding process
- Allows regionals to permit discard of material by visiting the library and “eyeballing” rather than requiring listing
- Allows regionals to issue “needs” lists in lieu of lists of unwanted materials from selectives
- Allows regionals to eliminate listing of microfiche
- Allows regionals to identify materials that always need to be listed and materials that do not need to be listed
- Permits the development of an “automatic discards” list in conjunction with the Superseded List



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# What does the FDL Handbook say?

The principal responsibility of a regional depository library is to ensure the comprehensiveness and integrity of Federal depository resources in the state or region.

*The above statement appeared as guidance to regionals in the 1974 Instructions and drew heavily on the recommended Council Guidelines ...*





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# Your thoughts on the discard process?

- With §1912 as your only requirement, if you were starting with a blank slate and had to design a discard/needs & offers process what would it look like? (4)
- Are there any issues that impact you as a regional depository library that you want addressed in a revised discard and/or needs & offers process? (1)
- Are there any issues that impact you as a selective depository library that you want addressed in a revised discard and/or needs & offers process? (0)



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# Comments Received

- Current system creates pressures to “dumpster” unwanted materials rather than getting them to people who need them
- If we get no takers from N&O I’d like to give them to a bookseller
- Set up E-bay account to sell discarded materials & proceeds go to GPO
- Let libraries sell discarded materials and have proceeds go toward digitization
- Regionals identify agencies for which they have no or few publications. Create agreements with selectives that have them, to hold them locally or send them to regional
- Regionals inventory 3000 item numbers most frequently collected by their selectives. This will identify gaps for a needs list.
- Authorize all but 2 selectives to withdraw specified SuDoc stems for specified years. Divide the backup responsibility so that every selective participates in the creation of the comprehensive collection.



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## What are regionals doing re: discards?

- Five states don't have written guidelines
- About 1/2 the regionals don't limit the size or number of lists that can be sent to them
- Three states require libraries to follow a calendar – limiting the disposal lists to certain SuDoc classes each month
- Eleven states don't exempt microfiche from listing
- A number of states don't require listing CDs or DVDs



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# What are regionals doing re: discards?

*(Continued)*

- Three states ask selectives to contact them prior to weeding and regionals offer to visit
- Ten regionals have procedures that are intended to reduce the amount of listing required – they identify materials that do not need to be listed, e.g., date ranges or SuDoc classes
- Most states use Web pages or electronic discussion lists to distribute lists. One state uses a wiki and another one uses Facebook.



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## Possible Alternatives to Detailed Lists

- Visits by regional
- Laptop and cell phone method
- Checking regional's OPAC (if collection cataloged)
- Reducing information provided on lists
- Titles on list already reviewed by regional don't have to be listed by other libraries for specified period of time
- Regional permits selectives to send to another regional that is collecting retrospectively (check OPAC)



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# Where can I find discard procedures?



Text Size - +

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<http://community.fdlp.gov>



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## Fact or Myth

Task	Fact	Myth
Regionals must collect retrospectively		✓
Selectives must submit lists to regionals		✓
Selectives must obtain their regional's permission to discard most materials	✓	
Regionals must retain all formats of all titles		✓
Regional's permission is required for selectives to substitute online for tangible publications	✓	



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## Myth: Regionals must collect retrospectively

- However, regionals ...
  - Must retain at least one copy (not all formats) of materials sent to them through the FDLP
  - Must subsume pre-regional designation holdings into their regional collection and these holdings cannot be discarded
  - May choose to retain all formats
  - May choose to develop a comprehensive collection by collecting retrospectively so as to meet user needs





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## Best Practice

- Regionals work with selectives to determine what is best for the region
  - Consider the needs of those you serve
  - Consider the resources of the libraries and the obligations of the processes
  - Implement what is best for all depositories in the region
  - Compromises may be necessary
  - Revisit the process, evaluate its success, and revise if necessary
  - Consult with LSCM staff if you have any questions



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## Remember – 2 Processes

Depositories are still required by §1912 to discard only after permission received from regional and after first offering them to other depository libraries within their area, then to other libraries – Needs & Offers.

This leads us to the next part of the streamlining project – developing an automated tool for the Needs & Offers process.



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## Questions? Comments?

Think of something later ...

- Post to GPO Discussion Forum on the FDLP Community Site
  - <http://community.fdlp.gov/forum/forum?f=55>
- E-mail Cindy Etkin
  - [cetkin@gpo.gov](mailto:cetkin@gpo.gov)