

Synopsis of Testimonials Submitted to SOAR

As part of the Fall 2002 Depository Library Council's Recommendation #8, we submit to you a distillation of testimonials received regarding the benefits of participating in the Federal Depository Library Program. These testimonials were received from a solicitation posted on GOVDOC-L. Rather than submit each comment in its entirety, we edited comments to reflect the most important points made in each testimonial. We will supply complete statements upon request.

Comments:

- It is an honor to be a federal depository librarian. The benefits realized by the [hosting] institution including the free publicity, the political good will of the Congressional delegation, ability to offer a service to the community and being at the forefront of technology can't really [have] a cost placed on that.
- The two biggest benefits I see to being a depository library is receiving free information and getting formation and training for librarians. In our situation, some of the materials support our curriculum, especially in such areas as criminal justice, public administration, and business.
- It's always good to remind administrators and ourselves that we provide a huge benefit to the surrounding community by having trained depository librarians and a public collection of government information. The Administration likes to be able to tick off a list of ways that the community benefits from the University, and this [being a depository library] is a very good PR thing to be able to say. As depository libraries, we make up part of the fabric of all social institutions defending our democracy holding it accountable. Whenever possible I like to remind [the] Administration that running a university is a higher social mission than running a business and we can and should look at more than just "the bottom line."
- Can you imagine life with no FDLP? There are a number of benefits. Providing patrons/constituency with the information they want or need can only be a PR boost. Much in the Program is not readily available in commercial form.
- Another benefit is the economics of the Program. My library would not be able to afford the time, money, staff, etc., to track down, acquire and process similar resources as now provided by the FDLP. To paraphrase a current TV commercial where the comparison is made regarding the cost of certain items, the value of a good documents collection and the information contained therein is "priceless."
- Having a centralized process for acquiring, disseminating and providing technical support for the materials is also beneficial. We [the library] do not have the staff or the money needed to hire trained staff to acquire materials on our own.

- I am sure that others will be able to come up with additional benefits. I just know that our patrons would not be as well served in their information needs if we were not an FDLP member.
- In these times of tighter budgets, the FDLP maintains a steady stream of useful information to the library. We have drastically cut our book budget in recent years in favor of online databases but the FDLP keeps producing. The FDLP is a wonderful program and I hope it's around for another 100 years.
- I think for medium and large academic libraries one of the greatest benefits is the free receipt of high quality research grade reports from agencies like the USGS, NASA, NOAA, Smithsonian, Bureau of the Census, Justice Statistics Bureau, and the Bureau of Labor Statistics. An additional benefit is the receipt of high quality non-technical items such as national park brochures, social security administration pamphlets and the like.
- I have only been a depository librarian for a year but I can already see many advantages. We collect 50% of the documents [issued]. We get about 10,000 items a year, free of charge. Our book budget would not allow us to buy anywhere near that amount of material.
- We are doing a continuing study and my strongest argument is the problem of knowing what's available. Without the FDLP how do we track publications? My personal motivation: I'm not the kind of person who could be a watchdog for government but I make sure our watchdogs have what they need!
- One huge benefit is the wealth of materials we receive which we would not be able to afford otherwise. We're a 15% depository.
- Earlier this spring I wrote a white paper about public access to electronic government information for our Visiting Committee. I included a piece about our library and why we remain in the FDLP. The benefits of staying in the FDLP include:
 - Providing better access to Federal government information to the community and citizens of the Congressional District
 - Receiving tangible information at no cost
 - Raising the Library's service levels by being required to follow the FDLP policies
 - Receiving regular updates of government information issues from the GPO, other government agencies, and other entities.
 - Retaining the ability to have input in the policies and procedures of the FDLP
 - Being in a community of government information professionals who share their troubles and triumphs with the staff.
 - Raising the level of visibility and status of the entire Library locally, regionally, and nationally
- The staff in my library finds the "Recommended Specifications for Public Access Workstations" to be EXTREMELY useful in persuading university personnel outside of the library of our needs for up-to-date equipment. The automation librarian always uses this standard when making request for new equipment and software for ALL public workstations. And just

yesterday the library's director was able to get money for assistive technology software for disabled patrons based on the 2002 standard.

- Another reason for being a depository is having a skilled cadre of librarians who understand government organization structure, the information publishing practices of governmental agencies, and the multiple contexts in which these agencies produce this information. Depository librarians also understand the volatility inherent in government agency publishing practices and can explain to their users why agencies produce or don't produce certain kinds of information as part of their institutional mandates.

Compiled by the Depository Library Council Operations Committee, SOAR
Subcommittee
10/02