

Blurred Lines: Assessing Inter-shelving Practices within Government Resource Collections

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Presented at Federal Depository Library Conference, October 18-20, 2021

History and background

- Since becoming an FDLP in 1965, UNC Wilmington's Randall Library collected as much as 76% of GPO offerings
- Recent projects in General and Reference collections uncovered numerous FDLP print titles that had been cataloged and shelved outside of the library's Documents collection
- Our aim was to survey other FDLP libraries to determine common practices in shelving government documents, in order to improve collection management of the FDLP and NC state items in our library

Methods

- Identified libraries to include public academic, private academic, and public libraries in North Carolina
- Emailed each library a survey of 10 questions
- Compiled statistics to identify common practices and trends

Responses

21 Libraries were contacted and 13 responded for a response rate of 62%



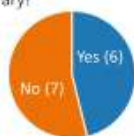
Results

Nearly all libraries surveyed maintain a separate document collection for FDLP items:

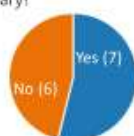
- 2 out of 3 Private Academic
- 2 out of 2 Public Libraries
- 8 out of 8 Public Academic

But libraries diverged on shelving practices for their document collections, with roughly half of libraries choosing to shelve select state and federal titles in non-document collections

Do you shelve any **federal** documents at all, with another collection in your library?



Do you shelve any **state** documents at all, with another collection in your library?



There were 7 differing approaches to shelving state documents among respondents, including:

- One library that inter-shelves their NC docs with their Federal docs
- One library that shelves their NC docs within their North Carolina Collection
- One library that keeps their NC docs stored in remote storage along with federal docs, while they keep some NC titles in the Reference collection using LOC call number

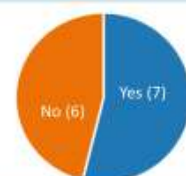
Identifying inter-shelved documents:

Of the libraries that responded, all indicated that there is a method to identify documents inter-shelved with other collections

Results

8 libraries responded by saying they shelved donated FDLP items in their collection, that were not in their Item Selection Profile

Does your library have a collection policy for documents?



Takeaways and lessons learned

- It's important to maintain an online and/or print manual for documenting cataloging procedures, useful FDLP websites, and login information for DSIMS, askgpo, etc.
- Documentation of policies and decisions related to the management of the collection is necessary to avoid inconsistencies and lost items during collection changes, especially with staffing turnover. Only about half of libraries surveyed have a written policy
- Communication across all departments – Serials, Reference, Collections, Cataloging, Acquisitions, Archives, Circulation – is essential if your library plans to shelve documents across multiple collections
- It may make sense for some libraries to inter-shelve documents with non-documents. For example, placing NC General statutes with State documents, or conversely, placing the US Code within a Reference collection. About half of libraries surveyed inter-shelve items