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Innovation on the Web: Everything Old Is New Again

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Memphis, TN

The topic given this panel, Government Documents Librarians' Innovation on the Web, appears to me to be old-fashioned librarianship. We are learning how to exercise our traditional roles and formal training in a world for which we had no preparation. On the Web we are identifying, evaluating and describing, organizing information and linking the public to the best sources. We are doing the traditional things we have done in our own libraries for years only now with a national audience.

It shouldn't come as a surprise that Government publications librarians are taking advantage of the Web in a collaborative way. We have always felt a cohesiveness that I don't believe many other librarian specialists feel. In the grand scheme, we are but a small band who love what we do and have sometimes felt a little alone. The Web has brought us even closer together because of this opportunity to share our resources and talents. When one library in the field can do something valuable, maybe even tedious, the other almost 1400 depository libraries don't have to do it! Collaborating and dividing labor is a great opportunity for us.

I am going to visit a few Web sites which illustrate innovative uses of new technology in the broad areas of traditional librarianship. If I had time to show all my favorite sites and give credit everywhere it is due, we would be here a long time, because many people and libraries are doing truly fine things on the Web. But I had to choose and limit, so here are the selected resources.

Traditional Librarian Roles

Identify

Evaluate

Organize

Present to Public

Collaborate

"I am well aware that the reader does not require information, but I, on the other hand, feel impelled to give it to him." *Jean Jacques Rousseau, Les Confessions*

I love this quote because it expresses my feeling about what librarians do and leads so well into the first topic, creating resource guides.

Resource Guides

- Provide Instruction
- Identify, Evaluate and Describe Sites
- Organize and Annotate Class Guides
- Provide Broad Subject Access

Provide Instruction

Guide to Thomas - Larry Schankman, Mansfield University

<http://www.clark.net/pub/lischank/Webmythomas.html>

It's fitting to begin with a guide from one of the best and first documents librarians on the Web. Larry Schankman's Guide to Thomas provides logical steps and divisions for finding information using Thomas. He explains processes, terms, how to cite, and so on, all in one complete guide.

Identify, Evaluate and Describe Sites

U.S. Courts - The University of Memphis

<http://www.lib.memphis.edu/gpo/unclesam.htm>

Since I have to be on this panel and you don't, I get to show my own site. Don't worry, I limited myself to two! I like annotated guides. I want a description of the site, dates included and other pertinent information before I go there. I only have so much room in my head, so I need reminders.

Organize and Annotate Class Guides

Class Guides - Stephen Patrick, East Tennessee State University

<http://www.ETSU-TN.EDU/library/demo>

Stephen has about 20 class guides up with more to come. He has an art background and is responsible for the law library and Government documents, so you see quite a variety of guides here. He collaborated with the professors on all these. Students must use these guides in fulfilling their assignment. This is great publicity for librarian guides as they get students used to looking at libraries' Web pages for more efficient information gathering.

Broad Subject Access

U.S. Resources - Peggy Jobe, University of Colorado, Boulder

<http://www-libraries.colorado.edu/ps/gov/us/Federal.htm>

Numerous libraries have chosen to arrange their pages by broad subject access. At the University of Colorado, Boulder, Peggy has chosen to provide subject access and has added value by briefly annotating the links.

Subject Areas - Barbara Whitener, University of Louisville

<http://www.louisville.edu/groups/library-www/ekstrom/govpubs>

Another library using subject areas is the University of Louisville. A lengthy and well done subject arrangement here is done by Barbara Whitener. It is so up-to-date it has a very timely guide for floods.

Professional Expertise and Personality

Professional Expertise

Creativity

Personal Interests

Some pages reflect the professionalism, personality and creativity of the individual librarian or librarians.

U.S. Depository Ready Reference Sources at Columbia University

<http://www.cc.columbia.edu/cu/libraries/indiv/dsc/readyref.html>

Several libraries have developed electronic reference shelves patterned after our traditional ones but including both print and electronic documents. This one at Columbia shows imagination, professional expertise and ambition. The list indicates if the titles are in print, CD-ROM, electronic or all three, gives the format on the Web and a Columbia crown indicates licensed databases available only locally.

Creativity

Putting Digital Docs to Work - Paul Lewis, University of South Carolina, Aiken

<http://library.usca.sc.edu/library/docs/govdocs.htm>

Paul Lewis advertises the practical use people can make of Government publications, particularly CD's. He used his creative ability and mapping expertise to develop the unusual. His site has a variety of local maps which he developed. This site makes me want to run to the Geography Department for an intern with GIS experience!

Personal Interests

Resources of Use to Government Documents Librarians - Andrea Sevetson, UC Berkeley

<http://www.library.berkeley.edu/GODORT>

As Chair of GODORT, Andrea's responsibilities and interests led her to construct this highly valuable site for documents librarians. This is the place to go for current Government/GPO policy and happenings, for GODORT information and many items of professional interest.

Collaboration

Share the Labor

Build Partnerships

Grants

Several types of collaboration are going on. One of the ways we documents librarians collaborate is to divide the labor.

Share the Labor

Migrating Government Publications - The University of Memphis

<http://www.lib.memphis.edu/gpo/mig.htm>

I consider Migrating Government Publications a "share the labor" kind of creation. Thinking traditionally, I was going to attempt to mark our shelf list when a publication went electronic. (You have to remember this was in the dark ages before catalog records had the possibility of URLs, in 1995). But since I was sure several hundred other people were trying to get a handle on this too, eureka, why not use the Web? That was the beginning of Migrating Government Publications, found here in Superintendent of Documents and title order.

U.S. Government CD-ROMs - Larry Schankman, Mansfield University

<http://www.clark.net/pub/lischankWeb/gpo-ed.html>

We are sometimes asked for a list of the CD's we have. I don't have to make the list because Larry Schankman did, and will update it periodically. Other libraries are providing CD information in other ways. The University of Virginia is working on a searchable list.

Robert Lopresti's DocBase CD-ROM guides are available at the University of Minnesota, Duluth.

Depository Management

Basic Depository Library Documents - Tom Tyler, University of Denver

<http://www.du.edu/~ttyler/bdlldhome.htm>

Under the topic depository technical management, great resources have appeared to make depository processing and office management easier. One of the persons responsible for a management project is on this panel. Tom has an enhanced Superseded List, the List of Classes, List of Depository Libraries, in all some twenty basic depository documents. In a presentation here on Monday, Tom said we could "share the grief and effort of the nitty-gritty of processing." Here is a fine example.

Item Lister - Government Printing Office

http://www.access.gpo.gov/su_docs/dpos/fdlppro.html

We used GPO's Item Lister last week when one of the selectives called for help because they weren't getting the Congressional Record. That title did not show as selected by them on the Item Lister. Previously, we would never have had access to their items selected list and would not have been able to check that possibility and provide help. GPO has much good information of its own up and provides files for others to work with and enhance.

Enhanced Shipping List Service - University of Texas, Arlington, SUNY, Buffalo, GPO

<http://libaix01.uta.edu/shiplist/>

The enhanced shipping list service is a great help to regionals and should help traffic about shipping lists on GOVDOC-L by providing a title search that identifies shipping lists. It is great for identifying separates that get separated from their shipping list. This GPO/university partnership is an example of collaboration to improve depository management, and it is also an example of another traditional librarian role: building partnerships.

Build Partnerships

GPO Access Gateways

http://www.access.gpo.gov/su_docs/aces/aaces004.html

Long before the shipping list partnership, GPO partnered with libraries to create Gateways to GPO Access. Ann Sanders, on this panel, represents a Gateway library so the amount of time this important innovation deserves can be given it.

Infomine - University of California, Riverside

<http://lib-www.ucr.edu/govinfo.html>

Infomine was begun at UC Riverside and is now a collaborative project between all nine UC campuses and Stanford University Government information librarians. More than HTML coded links, this site is a database with a sophisticated search engine looking for librarian assigned indexing terms. This one is a major undertaking and is beyond most of our capabilities, but I'm glad someone can do it.

Grants

Government Information Sharing Project - Oregon State University

<http://www.govinfo.kerr.orst.edu/>

The Department of Education funded this site with the original purpose of demonstrating improved access to electronic Government information especially for remote users and the general public. The Census information found here is from Government CD-ROMs. A fabulous resource.

Federal Web Locator - Villanova Center for Information Law and Policy

<http://www.law.vill.edu/>

I'm sure everyone is familiar with Ken Mortensen's Federal Locator at Villanova. This is a great place to search for agencies and departments without having to know Government structure.

Unsung Heroes and Award Winners

Government publications librarians are doing things behind the scenes to improve the work those outside our profession will be unaware of. These are the sites you won't see mentioned in computer magazines and newspapers columns but are very useful to documents librarians. Other Government publications librarians are way out there, visible and award winning.

Needs and Offers List - Kevin Reynolds, University of the South

<http://www.sewanee.edu/dupontlibrary/GovDocs/govdoc.html>

Kevin is providing a much needed and time-consuming resource for documents librarians.

Home Pages - Grace York, University of Michigan

<http://www.lib.umich.edu/libhome/Documents.center/>

Grace York's pages came up in April, 1995. I first saw them in December 1995 when we first got Web access. I knew immediately I was seeing what librarians should be doing with this new resource, the Web. I couldn't possibly have chosen a single page from her

collection. She has it all. Her Web site was the innovation beginning. She has been my inspiration for creating Web pages, and I make no secret of my hero worship.

Electronic Government information may have forced our hand, but documents librarians have been up to the challenge. They are out there running circles around everyone else in recognizing the instructive and collaborative opportunities of the Web. I've always felt very lucky to be a documents librarian. It takes a special, dedicated person to be good at this. We should all congratulate ourselves on making it through the last few years, sometimes barely hanging on by our fingernails, and we should congratulate ourselves that, more than just hanging on, we have taken a new medium and shown our profession what can be done with it.