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Government Documents Displays (and the Displaying of Government Documents): A Case Study

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[The presentation accompanies a Powerpoint Presentation, which slides are referred to throughout this written proceeding. Additional props referred to include: a binder with additional pictures and signage; a picture file; and a sampling of display boxes and binders.

Special thanks to Don Bezanson, Documents Associate, and Jodie Crofts, Senior St. Olaf Student.]


Good Morning. I am Mary Sue Lovett, a Reference Librarian at St. Olaf College. Like most of you, I wear many hats. I am the liaison to a number of academic departments, including English and Art, and conduct bibliographic instruction sessions for them and others, as well as for our First Year Seminars and a few local High School mentoring programs. I spend one-third of my time at the reference desk. Outside the libraries, I serve as chair on a College committee, speak at Chapel, work the chain gang at football games and am one of the official scorers for the men's basketball team. I do not participate in these extra activities solely for the purpose of promoting the libraries, and, in turn, the Document collection, nonetheless the exposure helps.

I am the Government Documents Coordinator. What does this mean? I maintain the Web page; learn something new everyday from GOVDOC-L and our Documents Associate; and use every means possible to incorporate our 27% collection into the classes I teach, and into my everyday contact with students, faculty and the wider community.

St. Olaf is a liberal arts college with approximately 2,900 students. St. Olaf Libraries are "teaching" libraries. What do creative displays and attractive documents have to do with scholarship and pedagogy? Perhaps there is a study somewhere – perhaps in the future. I only know that the collection is used. This presentation represents the work of Don Bezanson, the Documents Associate at St. Olaf, whose user friendly signage and creative touches dare the users to explore the collection.

Let me set the stage. Most students, in particular First Year Students, come from libraries that use the Dewey Decimal system. They enter college and are introduced to Library of Congress Classification—only our music majors seem pleased with this arrangement. Then they are faced with an entirely different scheme; one that includes colons and slashes. At least the opening letters in the SuDocs numbers make some sense. Moreover, thanks to Don, the St. Olaf documents collection looks different; inviting; enticing.

The document collection is located in Rolvaag Memorial Library which houses all of our main collection except most music and science: we have separate science and music libraries. Our Web page directs the users to the catalog, indexes and databases, library information, maps of the collection, and, of course the Government Documents Web page. Most of our documents are cataloged. All of our documents are located on the 3rd floor (the main floor).

<p>St. Olaf College LIBRARIES 1510 St. Olaf Avenue Northfield, Minnesota 55057</p>	
<p>Questions? Need Research Assistance? Ask Us!</p>	
<p>NEW! Send Interlibrary Loan requests online! Try out our new online request form on the Interlibrary Loan Web page.</p> <p>Our Hours Maps of Our Collection About the St. Olaf Libraries</p> <p>Library Departments & Personnel</p> <p>Course-Specific Research Guides Government Documents</p> <p>Halvorson Music Library Archives NAHA Kierkegaard Library Maps & Guides for Carleton & U of M Libraries</p> <p>Library Review Documents DRAFT Copyright Policy</p>	<p>SAGE - Our Library Catalog</p> <p>Indexes & Databases</p> <p>NEW! Electronic Journals</p> <p>Research and Reference Sources on the Internet</p> <p>Other Library Catalogs</p> <p>ST. OLAF COLLEGE Home Page</p>

The main documents collection covers 4,550 square feet. As you enter from the main lobby area, you are first greeted by a display area. The "topical" display area is 12 shelves and bulletin boards along side of 20 shelves for current serials, 13 shelves for new books, and 2 shelves for a permanent GPO display.



This is the current display. At the top are humorous and satirical political quotations (from a book in the reference collection). VOTE is made from pictures of people and other subjects meant to trigger an emotion and reflect an issue. The government documents on display include Campaign Guides, We the People, How our Laws Are Made, and Where's Dan Quayle? ---I must admit, we occasionally may take a liberty in an attempt to coax a student to look further.

Previous displays have included a Valentines Day Display, each letter of the 1960's love symbol cut out of different red fabric surrounded by only documents with red covers. The

caption read: Take a document to bed: exciting; safe; no regrets. Another was a display titled "Dinky Docs" and showcased only the smallest of the documents.

To the left of these are Current Periodicals. I have a binder with me that includes additional pictures as well as some documentation on how the original shelves were converted into this display area.

Across from these the Maps are located in two wooden cabinets alongside two mounted map boards, each 4 x 12 feet. Maps displayed on these boards vary. A student finds the cabinets user-friendly. Notice the largest (oversized) rolled maps in the container to the right, each labeled with SuDocs number and bar-coded. To the right of this is a two-drawer metal cabinet housing PREX maps (set up as a vertical file). The smaller CIA PREX maps are in binders in the Documents Reference area. All microform and CD-ROM's are also in this area.



Each shelf is properly labeled with SuDocs numbers, with occasional "helpful hints" which do come in handy for the patrons. Duplicates of these signs are also in the binder.



Whenever possible, all books have clearly marked SuDocs labels on the binding. In this case the Congressional Debates. Some pamphlets, such as Federal Motor Vehicle Standards and Regulations are in decorated binders.



Much of the collection is shelved in boxes, Airpower, Federal Register, Highway Statistics, Public Roads.



The Bezanson Box Method

Save pictures: from bookcovers; catalogs; magazines (not from your library collection). Don't crop them and file them under: Human Figure, Abstract, Landscape, Solids, Wildlife, Letters & Numbers. Use solid color pieces of book jackets to outline labels or as a background for small pictures. (I have a picture file with me today).

Run #924 adhesive tape (two sided) down the vertical sides of the picture. Make a title label either by word processor or copy or scan the logo from the publication. Most use titles only, and do not include the SuDocs number unless necessary for identification. For a standard 4" wide box, use 4" Scotch #845 book tape, overlapping the top & bottom. Rub the clear plastic down using a Sharpie pen wrapped with a bit of fabric. Pop any air bubbles with an exacto blade

Monthly Energy Review, The Progressive Fish-Culturist



A box may include more than the title. If a journal is continued by microform or otherwise, it is indicated not only in the catalog record, but also on the box. For collections of pamphlets in various sizes, it may be necessary to identify them by series of SuDocs. I have a few boxes with me that show these exceptions, including the Department of the Interior National Parks pamphlets.

In many cases, effort is made to match the pictures to the topic: Survey of Current Business, Women's Bureau.

Some areas are portrait galleries: Congressional Record is Portrait Gallery. Congressional Hearings are a black and white dog gallery, which I don't have a slide of, but do include a picture in the binder.

This gives you a sampling of the St. Olaf Government Documents collection. It's our way to promote our collection, and it serves us and our users well.

After Mark talks about the Clearinghouse and how you can participate, please feel free to ask me questions and stop up to examine some of the props.