A Tiger's Tale: Boosting All-Electronic Document Usage at a Liberal Arts College – Audio transcript

[Please standby for realtime captions]

Will one to our session about document usage. We will get started in about five minutes. In

Welcome back. Our presenter is Carl Olson from Towson University University. Go Tiger! My alma mater. But your questions in the chat box.

Thank you all for coming here today. Thank you for your patience as we close out the conference. This presentation grew from a site visit my GPO staffers remarked that they hear from depository libraries making use of the Perl referral tool, but they hear relatively very little of what librarians do with the information. Perhaps because of great many a complaint had to go on the back burner and the last year. This is a modest little story. Towson University is not any exception in this regard, but this is a modest little story about we learned about document usage at our university and some ideas that we have for moving forward. With boosting document usage. So what I'm going to talk about first is the little background on Towson University use adversity. I'm going to talk about how we use LibGuides for access to federal documents. Going to give you the results of a little quick logic that I did on usage through the LibGuides. Then I'm going to talk about our major source of documents, which is PURL records on loaded in the Towson University catalog. I did on analysis and I'm going to do desk talk about some suggestions that are sort of in the discussion phase. I hope to put them together. I know this is a little dense, but I will go through it fairly quickly. Towson University was founded in 1863 as the Maryland normal school. Based on the French normal exterior. It was joined the at DLP and 1979. We bumped along as kind of like a fairly low, between five and 14% selective depository. Then due to some major renovations, we left the FDLP in 1999 and finally completed the session of our documents in 2004. We maintained a document liaison because that remains one of my duties for quite a long time but then the opportunity arose to rejoin by 2011 we rejoined as an all electronic depository. The University of Maryland, College Park is our regional depository. It loads PURL records into the catalog of the members of the University system of Maryland. The day that we rejoined, we had 72,000 PURL records come in. In 2016 we migrated from in-house library guides to join with the LibGuides company. By 2020, there was a pandemic Lockdown, and we fully reactivated on July the seventh, 2021. That was our 10th anniversary as a depository anniversary. But they happily informed us that the years don't need to be consecutive. This is our 30th anniversary as a depository. We currently have 169 and 886 PURL records in our catalog. As opposed to 20,675 nonretaliatory electronic books that we purchased, not including PDA and aggregators from different companies.

Since the pandemic began, major access to our documents had been for the catalog and the LibGuides. The major focus of the federal government information LibGuides is to meet the GPO requirements for access to the FDLP core and selections. I've included links to proprietary databases that have in their collections, such as the military and government collection and colonial state records and so on. To get a handle on document usage, 25 comes with usage measuring tools. You will find a link to the list of assets that are included and all of Towson University's library LibGuides. This measures the usage guides and individual assets. Just looking at the federal government information LibGuides on a monthly basis from 2016 to September 2021, we find a certain's bites occurring about February or September over the

years. This is mainly owing to -- I took the opportunity to conduct a graduate student orientation that is held in the library, which includes some library instruction sessions. And I took the opportunity to highlight federal and Maryland featured a documents and also in the geography environmental planning department, called incorporated places in Maryland from 2019 three 2020. You can sort of see the spikes that go along with that. So I took the opportunity to put a lot of the incorporated places and Maryland websites, like the Maryland manual and the map Explorer and so on in the federal document LibGuides? At that time, we got approved to become a Maryland state all electronic depository? Been a member for a long time, but we became an all electronic depository in 2019. Most of those Maryland incorporated places in Maryland websites I moved to the Maryland state LibGuides. And so there is somewhat lower activity, you can see right here through the pandemic year. But then in July of this year, you get a strong revival as a student start returning to campus. This sort of gives you a close-up view of the year from September 2020. Here again in July, you see the return, and the GSA orientation and the classes of course did not take place. But there was nevertheless a spike. I wanted to take a closer look at that. The first thing I did was look at the asset list, the asset list in LibGuides can be filtered for various usage by typing .gov in the URL build, you can limit to all of your assets. We have thousands of them. And just limit to what you have from government sources. Then you are able to sort by different criteria, including the mapping, how many guys are actually listed, how many guides are included and how many different LibGuides, and there are 25 by topic and for classes in academic subjects. And when sorting by mapping count, we find that help the person 2020 is the most widely placed resource. CD see wonder is second and RX Norm is third. There's a very strong nursing program, which for obvious reasons, began an accelerated program of study. It was during that last summer, the summer of 2020, that I met with our help professions library and, who had just added CDC wonder and RX Norm around 2020. We talked about boosting document usage by spreading them more to assist with help professions students. This gives us a clue that Reading subjects across course guys to where the students can actually find the misuse of them may attract more usage than gathering them all in one federal guide.

Statistics and 25 could also track individual assets. Looking just at Congress.gov and tracking the individual assets over a period of time, we find that there was an initial spike in health 618, introduction to public health, is only of moderate interest. But when we look at Congress.gov and the seminar 102, which is introductory to freshman writing course, this one dealing with the U.S. Constitution, we can find some more consistent usage over time. The main thing to bear in mind is that there are lots of different ways and to include different assets. If you take Congress.gov, you can included in one course and at a different description and to tweak some other aspects of it. So it will show up in LibGuides is almost a separate sort of asset. One has to aggregate all of the different iterations of Congress.gov. And I put the numbers together to get a real sense of it.

So my first report called for updating the at the LP live guide and preparing usage on topic guides for an aggregate of subject guides by academic program and then course guides by individual assets and topic guides, such as topic guides to the archives are searching for statistics. In this column, I have the different resources that are in the federal government information guide, and that I took how much usage was there, by subject guide and by course guide and to the far right, how much there was use among the topic guides. 105 assets in the federal LibGuides, and I pretty much limited my search to those. And this is sort of the tabulation that I came up with. The topic guides generally are very seldom used to access documents. Students mainly think in terms of their subject or the class or their topic for their papers. And so subject and course guides are of course overwhelmingly meeting the students where they live, and especially in their inclusion in library instruction. Looking at which resources were the most widely used, as you might imagine already, pub med.gov and pub med central for the two resources most widely used. When I take these out, we get thousands of hits on subject guides. The

windows are included. But every here on the right, federal resource usage in LibGuides, minus pub med, and we get a couple of hundreds and we actually get course guides edging out subject guides. Course guides mainly in biology and English when you take out pub med and pub med central.

Is damage in the great majority of our documents come to us from the monthly lot from the University of Maryland at College Park. So here on the federal government guide, I have a page on accessing documents from catalog USMAI, which is the central turnkey system for the University of Maryland system. Directs users to go to your library catalog on the homepage , go to advanced search, and used the advanced search features to isolate documents from the general collection.

So going to the home page, clicking on advanced search in the library catalog get you to that default. And by under the location menu when you selected that government documents either print, microfiche, and online, there is a separate category for just government documents online research for sale high-speed rail, the results we get would be about 49 different documents, each with the Pearl on the brief record. We currently own about 49. Heading the list are hearings, followed by CRS reports, and the PURLS open it up either in Adobe Acrobat -- hearings to come in various sizes. We soon found ourselves, as I mentioned we had 170,000 documents versus about 20,000 e-books. And so we had to address separate resource for electronic books that excludes online government documents. And true to form, there are about three that deal with high-speed rail that are not government publications. Excuse me.

It was about that time, about the middle of the summer that I began looking at the Pearl analysis as a lockdown project. I've been collecting spreadsheets of retrievals using the IP addresses to the library itself., Located within the library itself. We have about 350 public access computers, and so I had dust by truncating the major IPS IP addresses I was able to get quite a bit of usage for the University system, which then I had to go through and edit those until I got just Towson University University. This was updated in June of 2019. The required truncating IP addresses and cleaning up constrain yourself and then also removing double-click retrievals. Very often people double-click and they are little sleepy and the double-click rather slowly and that registers as to hits in the referral tool. After cleanup, I identified 214 hits from about 17 monthly reports.. Ashley Gollancz has a way of splitting column so you are able to read both the timestamp in separate columns and also SuDoc Stamm and SuDoc numbers in separate columns. So when we are looking at the timestamp, we find that the afternoon and evening hours, that's when the library is most crowded. It is no surprise that this is when the majority of documents are used. We do have also a 24 seven access room that is available near the entrance to the library, and students can have a card access to it after hours . So you do see some people keeping vampire buyers at those times. Looking at monthly patterns and document assets, we find that February and November are the most of the time that we see the most retrievals. February is when they want to get started on the project's early November is when they are catching up on projects they should've started several months beforehand.

If we look just by the agency , just by SuDoc classification we find the congressional material is a topical and readable and attractive to students reading the opening statements can have a lot of dense information. The next largest category is sort of the Department of Defense, this was 2018 was the world Ward 1 and Tina Terry that remains a popular history topic. After that, we get interior department maps and reports. There may also be a clustering effect here. I'm sorry. I am skipping ahead. I am getting ahead of myself. When we look at interior department publications and environmental areas, interestingly enough, we get Library of Congress classifications. When we look beyond the SuDoc Stamm , the agency and series, it is difficult to take in in a glance, but we got into finer detail. We find that, yes,

indeed, the most frequently used and access documents are the Y3.2 , the 9/11 commission report was a very popular series. Let me give you a closer look at it. The 9/11 commission report is very popular for topics and reports. It is often assigned in class is. The Library of Congress 14.23 are the CRS reports. I 19 point 81 are the USGS maps, there may be a clustering effect because the individual maps. And when you click the Pearl link, go straight to the USGS map Explorer homepage and then the user has to search for whatever they were looking for. And then there are scientific investigation reports. As I mentioned, we have a department of environmental planning and geography. A lot of special environmental topics are also popular. Okay. Looking further I thought it would be interesting to see what agencies solve usage to a list of agencies that are in our catalog but have not been selected in the sample.. We see some opportunity here to market our documents a little better. There is no usage, for example, of veterans affairs department, Veterans Affairs. But we do have a veterans outreach office on campus. I don't see much usage for the Railroad retirement Board? Don't have an engineering program or anything like that. This can give us a good clue on how to test on where there may be opportunities to market our documents more effectively. But there also may be an opportunity to weed our documents now that we have been a depository for 10 years or so. Our conclusions, the most obvious is that the documents are underutilized or possibly under desired. If it turns out that they are log jamming searches for searching something else. We do find that use correlates to research topics and to library instruction. That seems to be the most effective means of marketing documents. And we find that we have work to do to either weed are better promote what we have in our catalog to include -- match with our curriculum.

As I mentioned, I have already spoken to the health sciences Library and, that did have an effect on usage in the health professions. As an early step, I went through the LibGuides, the federal documents sites, and whenever possible, I changed them to a PURL so that when -- their usage would be registered by the referral twirl instead of just linking to the actual homepage. This is an easy thing to do because a lot of the core documents collections do have PURLS assigned by GPO. It was a fairly simple matter to go through the governments information page and change got info.gov to its corresponding Pearl. Also, since federal commission report for the more popular ones, it did create a new page right here that resides on the topic page right alongside federal government information. So here I created boards, commissions, selected final reports of U.S. national commissions. I highlighted the major reports on substantial crises, such as the financial crisis of 2010 or 2007 , and the 9/11 commission report . Also, the major push will have to be, I believe, moving and including federal documents and course guides and subject guides well beyond just the federal government page. That seems to me very little to our students. They understand that the course guide for their course, if they find documents there, they will make use of them. In the future, there is a new information literacy course being planted tentatively for fall of 2022. I am hoping to have a government information module or at least teach one class section for that course. It is still taking shape. We'll see. I am looking at that closely. There are new video tutorials, and we are looking at creating those on documents by subject area that can also be included in subject area guides or class guides.

That is about all I had for you. Let me see if I can guess I'd be happy to

One question from Jen. You at other librarians use your assets?

, The lip guides don't require a login, they only require a like it if you were going to edit them. It is like every other LibGuides. If somebody goes to a proprietary database that we subscribe to, then it will ask you to prove that you are a Towson University student , but as far as going to one of our LibGuides and using a government source, that should not be a problem.

[Captioners transitioning]

what percentage of do download?

The nearest since I have is they lag about two or three months behind the catalog, the CGP, that's the sense I get when I went and looked at how many CRS, links to individual reports we had versus how many CGP had and I think it was, I think it was pretty close, like 80%, 90%. That's the best since I can give you right now. Thank you, Andrea.

Any other questions for Carl?

Can we get permission to reuse some of his content? If it's up to me, I would be willing to say yes now, but I will talk to one of my colleagues, sort of the coordinator for Lib Guides, sort of the den mother for organizing the Lib Guides. I will speak to her about sharing that stats from the Lib Guides, the sort of working page on the Lib Guides, when you log in to edit, the top bar will say things like statistics and you are able to, when clicking on statistics, it will give you the option to search for an individual asset.

And shoutout to Ashley Dollen for her tutorial. That's how I accomplished most of this. Looking at the -- I'm sorry. Where did that go? Do I tailor the pearls in the catalog and do we have everything that the consortium has? We pretty much do and they distribute it. For a long time we didn't accept it because we thought it would log jam our searches and that's what happened. But when we rejoined, we thought that was the best way to get access to the documents and include them in our catalog. We accepted it but we added a linmer so people could scene out documents if they were getting too much and they were not useful.

It's good to know about the St. Louis fed and the budget of the United States, that could probably go in there along side the one from GPO. If you are here in class, I would go live but I don't think I have that option here. Thank you for your kind words and I hope you find some of this useful.

Okay, thank you so much, carl for presenting. We have a break until 4:45 when we come back here for a wrap up and closing session, thank you.

Thank you, Kelly.

[The event is on a recess. The session will reconvene at 4:45. Captioner on standby.] .