

Virtual Snacks with Council – Audio transcript

[Please standby for realtime captions]

Hi everyone and welcome today three of the Federal depository library conference. I will remind you if you have comments or questions, please use the chat box in the lower right corner of your screen. Also a reminder that we are recording this entire conference and we will send that out after the event, along with our satisfaction survey to all attendees. This is our national Council session. Your counsel facilitators are Jin Kirk, Rick Mikulski, and Alan Moye. Before I handed over to them to do an exercise. If you attended the kickoff, you remember we annotated maps to indicate where you are participating from. I am going to explain how this works. You will see on the screen, there is a visual cue, in the upper left corner of your screen toward the top is a gray menubar. You see the red arrow pointing to it on the slide. That is your annotation tool. You click on it wants to activate it. You will notice when you click on it it turns gray. Then you go on the slide and you put your arrow wherever you would like to. Once you are done using it, you can go back up to the upper left corner, and if you click on it again it turns back to white and that means your tool has been turned off. With that, let me handed over to our councilmembers to get us started. I think someone is muted.

Sure. Good morning, all. I am Rick Mikulski, to get started we want to get a quick -- also because it is nice to see where everyone is in the morning. It is a good early morning exercise. Awesome, it looks like we have a pretty nice spread, so far.

I always feel really lucky to be in the West for these midmorning, afternoon meetings, because I always have plenty of space to find my spot. Those of you on the east are doing great putting your arrows in there.

From these map exercises, I have decided we really need to find one from Wyoming. I think that is the only state I have not seen in arrow two.

I haven't seen it this time, but I know I have hung out with Wyoming librarians in person at FDLC.

As a former North Dakota and, I'm glad to see a South Dakota in here, as well. I think we can move on to the next one, Kelly. Awesome. Our goal for this is to make this informal. We have had quite a few forms, the last couple of years, checking in on people. We didn't want to register that again. We wanted this to emulate the usual style of the snacks where those of you who have done this in person will recall, we hang out in the main room and chat and see how everyone is doing and catch up. This is a nice informal way to get a sense of what is happening everywhere across the country. We have three general questions, each of the DLC members, here, will read one. What we will do is put your answer in the chat, and we will read it for the record so people can see and hear it. I will start with the first question of, what has the past year been like in your state or region? As you are typing that first question out, I will share that, here, in Oregon we have been really fortunate., Upon reflection, things have been pretty low-key. We are relatively small. There is only 20 depository libraries. We all get along really well and coordinate your email regularly. I think the biggest news from our state in the last year is that, the state library of Oregon put aside quite a lot of money, I think \$100,000 to fund a cataloging project which they undertook, here, at Portland State. We catalogued , I want to say, about 25,000 on catalogued items in

the regional collection. That project is actually still going. Robert Cole at the state library, and Arlene oversaw that. That has been, sort of, big news here. Do you want to share anything from your past year, while people right into the chat?

This is Alan. Not too much is really going on, here. Of course the big news is COVID which we are altering to deal with. Other than that, I think things have remained status quo. We just went through a catalog upgrade. I don't know if anybody else on the call is part of Carly, but that was pretty major.

Here in Utah it sounds pretty similar to you, Rick. We used some of the downtime and the lower patron numbers of COVID to concentrate on some backlogged cataloging project. We tackled the serial set cataloging at a volume level. Which was about 12,000 volumes all told. That was a good chunk of the spring. All of this is to prepare for a shelving upgrade. Electronic compact shelving for the government information stacks. That project begins next Monday. That is what has been going on at the regional, here, in Utah. Of course, many of the selective's have been affected by COVID and are having their own experience is. If any of them are in the chat, hopefully they will be able to share.

Yeah, in the chat, Jenny notes that in Connecticut they have had strong COVID protocols so it has been okay. I have had computer upgrades which finally allowed her to do her FDLC Academy webinar. Also she has volunteered her regional coordinator to mention more about the state library, specifically. Will says, in Tennessee, we have seen wonderful work for our in-state colleagues. We have monthly virtual meetings with DLC coordinators and share news and discuss best practices. It has been really wonderful to have regular interactions with the amazing professionals in the state. I can echo that as well. I have been really fortunate to have really pleasant state level, and regional level colleagues who have kept in touch the last year. It is nice to be in a field where we are all really agreeable. Renee says, and North Carolina, most selective's are receiving shipments again and getting back to a new normal. If you have started or are about to start big weeding projects. That does seem to be a common theme in the last year, or so, as well. I think with so many of our collections not being immediately accessible this has been a great time to shift and we'd end, sort of, rehouse things. It has been a benefit, I think. A lot of large collection project. I will say, anecdotally from chatting with people, both through the conference and through other outlets. I have not heard any catastrophic stories, the last year. Perhaps I have missed them, but it seems like everyone is doing surprisingly well, all things considered. Another one, here. Jennifer notes that it has been pretty quiet in Indiana. Indigo, which is the Indiana network for documents and information of government organizations, awesome name by the way. That is our group for state and federal government information. We usually meet twice a year, and are making plans for our virtual fall meeting. I am the chair of the committee. Congratulations. I am looking for volunteers to give a webinar partnered with the Indiana state library in the winter or spring. As far as state organizations go, but it's a really good one. In Oregon hours is I always thought that sounds like something that afflicts barn animals or something. As far as names go yours is really good. Jenny mentioned that nothing catastrophic, but there have been a few weeding projects should have checked to make sure none of my New Jersey colleagues were on before I mentioned that. They are an excellent group. I really miss working with them. In Tennessee, they are weeding and reorganizing collections, getting ready to move collections, cataloging backlogs, creating displays and contributing to blogs. This proves my theory that librarians do a really bad job of sitting still. We see an opportunity to do something and we do it. The people in Tennessee are getting a lot done.

Any final thoughts before I hand off the next question? Will says, we are very passionate about our docs in Tennessee. Obviously that is the case. I will give the next question then. I am glad everybody seems to have had a productive and good last year.

Thanks, Rick. This question, actually, is very much related to the first one. Do you have any current news to share? All my news is related to COVID. From Megan, we have for those embarking on weeding projects please keep GPO's needs list in mind. We are assisting the Library of Congress in copies and helping these collections that are incomplete or damaged. She has got a link to the needs list. Jen asked, anybody else in academics staying super busy this fall semester? I can attest to that. One of the things that I have noticed, and I don't think I've said anything to anybody else about it. There seems to be a trend to move toward weeding print. We took on a big project when this first started to get rid of our course reserves. We had a lot of material in print that was not being used. Of course at the beginning no one knew how this virus was transmitted and it was concerned it was easily transmitted in paper and stuff like that. He took the opportunity to get rid of a lot of it. I suspect a lot of places have done the same. Sometimes it is nice to see students use the study spaces again. Yes, I agree with that. Weeding from Jennifer Morgan. Weeding our docs reference and microfiche collections soon. Does anyone have any advice for how to dispose of microfiche. Good question. I would like to know the answer to that. I have tons of it. From Lisa Prichard, I have heard that there are even more students in libraries than before the pandemic. Anecdotally, I would say that is kind of true. I work in a law school, we actually had our first year of students that missed the opportunity to use the library. We suspect that we are seeing the uptick because we have the incoming first-year class, as well as the second years and it is their first time using the library. From Scott Briggs, URI is looking at possibly adding the Sebring library in our collection. Moving too fast, here. From Jen, okay, we have talked with our facilities folks to see if they have recycling options for microfiche. Okay. That might be a good idea. In Oregon, Rick is saying our statewide cataloging project is continuing. Shout out to Arlene. Sorry if I mispronounce that. For convincing the state library to fund this. This is my busiest years and starting in 2018. Lots of interesting library services. Lisa is providing a link about the disposal of microfiche. Thank you. From Jenny, addressing the unaddressed session yesterday. There was a suggestion to remember the newer FDLP libraries when weeding and offering and exchanged help in older items. They are helping in other ways, too. Joanne, we have had a lot of request for primary research this year. I do think, as far as students, the students seemed to have a heightened interest in maybe just being in a different space. I think that is why we are getting a lot of students in. As I said, we have that first year class or second-year class that didn't have the opportunity to use the library and they are curious, if nothing more. We have had an unusual interest in our maps collection. Jen says, how so?

Yeah, so Portland State has a rather large print map collection. It is not entirely catalogued and it has purchased materials. I think about 300,000 print maps. When I started a few years ago, it was a really underused collection. I promoted it, but not a lot. In the last year, especially the last few months since we opened, we have had a lot of people really interested in the print maps. I have no idea why there is a sudden interest, but we have had a lot of students and faculty coming in and pulling maps and checking them out and leaving them strewn about. I don't know if they just want something tactile to hold, but it has been really, as the person in charge of the maps, I have been able to point to people using them. They take up a lot of floorspace. I don't know what triggered it, but I have enjoyed people actually using those materials.

Actually, Lisa, I was going to suggest that might be because of recent articles about feeding map skills. People not knowing how to read maps. And the tactile, I think people, maybe, are just curious about something to touch. Do you allow them to touch the maps, Rick?

Yeah, years ago we had a locked map room which predates me by a couple decades. More recently, we have not allowed people to check out maps, mostly because the maps get snagged by hikers, I guess.

That sounds very Pacific Northwest. We made a decision around 2018 or 2019 that, because the maps were getting such little use, we would rather lend them out and then get used than have them locked and afford them like a Dragon hoards gold. The last, may become a year or so we started letting people take maps out. Unless it is a really rare map. We have a un-catalogued collection of old cloth maps that I will occasionally find. Those go into special collections as soon as I find them. Otherwise, yeah, I make smoke collection references quite a lot when talking about hoarding documents and maps.

You have to know your audience, right? That is a good question. Have the maps been digitized?

Most of our issued maps are online. The USGS has an outstanding online map collection. It lets you, I will dig it out in the chat and put it in there, you can actually look at issued topo maps into the 1890s. Someone put it in there, excellent. Over COVID, when the building was closed, we were able to answer every maps collection with digital materials. When you're depending on the type of work you are doing, you really need to see the full map and to show them next to each other. Quite a few of them are digitized, but I think if a student or a faculty member is doing certain types of project, I do think they need to have the multiple copies of the physical in front of them for reference purposes.

I agree with that, Rick. The digitization, though, really enabled me. When I started our maps were locked down, too. Literally the day after I interviewed for the position, Jamie Hayes visited and encouraged them to unlock the map cabinets. When I discovered they were all available digitally, we opened all of the USGS topo maps to browsing. We can print if something gets damaged or stolen. Which I would otherwise have had more qualms about.

Ronnie says he gets a lot of people looking for aerial photography to track land changes. Okay. Make sure I didn't miss anybody, here. Lisa Prichard says, we have an exhibit featuring USDA aerial photos from the 1950s and 60s right now.

Lisa, I like your comment about it being hard to hike with the online map, as well.

It depends on what kind of service you might get. I don't know if I've caught everybody. Jen says, Lisa, where those used to inform the service from that time period? Referring to the aerial photos, I guess. Ronnie says, I am thinking about providing a better guide to resources. We don't have many aerial photos in our library, so I have two direct people elsewhere. I think I have got all of the comments. If, maybe, we can move to the next one? Are we ready yet?

Yeah, that sounds good. We have done the past, present, and now we will tackle future. Are there any exciting or important upcoming plans in your state or region or at your library?

This is Rick. Those of you who are interested in the Pacific Northwest, I can report a number of our very excellent colleagues have retired in the last few years. They have been replaced by great new colleagues, and quite a few I understand, are also looking toward retirement in the next few years. Keep an eye opened if you are interested in the Pacific Northwest, because a lot of the -- we have a new cohort of librarians coming up, here. As much as I hate seeing former colleagues leave and envy their retirement, it is actually quite exciting. We have had two new librarians hired in the last year, or so, in Oregon. I suspect we will have a few more. In terms of exciting upcoming plans I'm looking forward to that.

Thanks, Rick. In the chat, Kate reports, this is more they wish. The Indiana State Library get lots of genealogists. If folks and other places have thought of ways to interest genealogists in government

documents. Great question, Kate. Feel free to respond to Kate in the chat. We will read it when we get to it. Lisa, in the chat, answers my question about the USDA aerial photos. They were used to inform farm programs, and then used by planters and developers. Thank you. Naomi reports that Southern Oregon University is going through mass retirement. I think several libraries across the country are going through huge staffing changes. I know we have had 10 positions empty and be filled in the last, really, in the last six to eight months post-COVID. Naomi reports their library and just got hired, but we do currently or will have a new librarian position soon. If anybody is looking at Southern Oregon, it is a beautiful place to live. Connecticut State Library has a history and genealogy unit. So Jenny gets to pass on the genealogy question that cat asked earlier. Jennifer reports that plans are underway for Indiana's government information day in the spring or summer 2022. You already have a hashtag, Jennifer? I feel like you are very on top of things. That is great. Cool. The State Library in Tennessee has lost its coordinator, and they are in the process of hiring a new one. One of the FDL is they gave up status has just finished weeding its collection. That is too bad, but probably was a huge project. Good work on that. Scott reports that the government documents librarian retired in June, the position was merged with the metadata librarian. Yet another report of more hats for a docs position. Lisa reports that many of the best resources for African-American history is our federal documents. They have lots of local and state docs that are heavily used, as well, for genealogy. That is a great tip, Lisa, thank you. Renee, also responding to Kate says, there are census schedules on microfilm are very popular. If her library has those she makes recommendation. The library that withdrew and just finished weeding there collection has, actually, taken several years and Jamie Hayes reports that there documents are now in federal depository libraries all over the country. That is fantastic. A great boon for the national collection. Rick shares, there was a great presentation at TLC in fall 2019 about how documents positions are increasingly merged with other positions like government docs and collections management. I remember that one, Rick. It was really great. Allen reports, he has actually had trouble filling positions. That is unfortunate. Jenny, going back to the genealogy question says, older town annual reports often list people by name. People who received various types of social services or aid. Interesting. You can definitely track family members that way. Those of you that have heard me talk about soil surveys before, know that I enjoy them. Soil surveys, depending on the area, can also be used for genealogy depending on how well they document the history of that specific space. Especially the older reports where there were fewer settlers. Thanks, Lisa, I'm glad we both like soil surveys. They list addresses and occupations. Definitely. Rick, I, you know, before coming to Utah I lived in Portland. We did a search for Portland, a house in Portland that we lived in. Portland, actually, renumbered and renamed several streets, at one point. You, actually, have to look up what your address was for a certain year. I forget which. That was an added level of research interest, there, which is super fun with city directories.

I had a question about that not too long ago. I think it was around 1915 that they standardized all the streets.

Thank you for remembering. I did this 10 years ago. It is pretty cool. This is that awkward quiet time while I wait for people to type. See, I knew it would happen. Thanks, Rick, for sharing that link. Anybody planning a big weeding project or a big shifting project or some fun outreach that you haven't been able to share yet? Jenny reminds us that the serial set is gold for genealogy. The serial set is gold for everything, right? Now available digitally, and not behind a pay wall. Thanks GPO.

I have been curious, as a follow-up question to this, since we have had people undertaking these huge projects, is anyone excited for a year of just, I don't want to say treading water, but doing normal work and not undertaking these massive projects? Just letting things be for a little while.

What is normal?

Great question, Alan.

I have forgotten what that could possibly be.

I have had to promise my colleagues that I would not do any large docs projects for at least a year after having made major moves in cataloging efforts the last two years, now. The docs cataloger at my library really wants a normal day's work and not shifting a bunch of stuff.

Allison points out that we shared the link to the wrong group. We have now shared it. Now everyone can see the link. Sorry. We shared it just among ourselves in the panelists chat. Yeah, Scott, I hear you. There are years without project. Scott reports he has more projects on the back burner, that were started before me that I need to finish before I get the time and resources. Yeah. I feel you. I think this era of librarianship is just completing the projects that were started in the generation before us. Jennifer reports that she would like to be able to get back to her research project. She had to use research leave in June to create a new advanced legal research course. She is currently researching uncovering U.S. government documents, court opinions, legislation, legislative history documents, and executive branch documents that discussed race and eligibility for U.S. citizenship from the late 19th century through the mid-20th century. That is fascinating, Jennifer. I hope you have time for it because I would love to see her work.

That does sound fascinating. You said you are using that for an advanced research class? Oh you had to create the course, okay, you want to get back to the project. I see.

Rick provides more information about the presentation. Including a citation to unpublished work. Lori says the University has two campuses with a library on each campus. There Dean has a government docs -- in the movers seem to have given up by the time they got to the end of the collection because the last three rows are quite out of order. Getting those back in order and also -- never a dull moment. Lori, good luck. Brent reports that the Indiana State Library was fortunate to require more shelving space from another division. He is slowly shifting most of the dock collection from 1965 to present others better spacing. Getting extra helpers next year to speed up the process. Brent, that sounds big . You are the original, right? You probably have a very large collection from 1965 to present. Jenny reports, in Connecticut, she was able to catch up on a few project and cleanup Lib guide access. Now they are looking at the website in cleaning it up. Connecticut State Library will move from their own website to using the states content platform, and their I.T. people are still in the building, but they are not part of the states I.T. agency. Interesting. Brent confirms, yes, the collection is big and also planning the government information day conference for 2022. Hoping it will be in person. That would be great, Brent. Look forward to next summer, again, with hopefully and in person AOA to celebrate the 50th anniversary. We seem to have exhausted this question. We do have a bit more time. Feel free to have open discussion in the chat. Rick and Alan and I can continue to hang out for a bit. Really, this is your time to talk amongst each other, and with us. Feel free to share whatever you would like.

To reiterate Jen's point, one of the things we tried to do with this by making it informal is that, as closely as possible generate that informal chatting used to do in person. In terms of things we are excited about the future, I do hope to see you all in person at next year's conference. I miss the mingling in that large room.

Thanks, Jenny. Jenny reports that Suzanne is making a story map of state documents for the 50th anniversary. That is great. Jenny encourages people to submit documents to Suzanne for inclusion in the project. That is great. Lots of people agreeing that the chat box is not quite the same.

I was going to say, this is my first conference. I am new to the Council. I am impressed by the quality of the work that you guys put on, you know, presentations and everything. I do think it would play better in person. I'm looking forward to, maybe, next year having a live conference.

Yeah, Alan. You're genuinely in for a treat for the live conferences. I look forward to the fall conference every single year. My colleagues refer to it as gov dogs week because truly it is, without exaggeration, is my favorite conference of the year.

Okay. Great.

In the chat, Ronnie says, they weren't involved in this project but they are interested in learning more about the digital library of Idaho. They shared a link. I haven't dug into the link too much, yet. If anyone knows more feel free to pop in the chat. Scott does mention, for some of this, this is the only way we are able to attend a conference. That is a great point. We do see higher number of people in the last years. I like that GPO has always had a strong connection to sharing things nationally, virtually. I'm reading Jenny's comment. Submit documents and beat Connecticut's document of 1631, she is challenging Virginia and Massachusetts. We are seeing some New England versus mid-Atlantic colonial competition, there. They have recently acquired the digital comments platform. Those who have an institutional repository, how do you choose what docs go in the repository. I don't think we can do all documents at this time. I'm happy to talk with you off-line about this. We have digital comments, and this is something I'm grappling with right now, both for future conversations and legacy decisions. Here, it really boils down to what the scope of the institutional repository is, which is set by our scholarly communications librarian. I am happy to talk more. Kelly is crossing fingers for fall of 2022 area some people are still looking forward to going back into the office on a daily basis. I know a lot of different people are experiencing different work environments right now. I have been back in the building every day since, basically, the beginning of the summer. Partially in the building since last fall. I know that is not the case in other states.

We, actually, started back in the building last summer. We were anticipating that students would come in. They didn't, you know, not in great numbers. But we were there. What was actually strange was when other people started coming in. We were so used to being the only ones there, you know, if somebody got on the elevator it was a little startling.

When I first, this fall, when I was like this seems Betty. Did I just get used to it feeling like winter break all of the time?

Exactly.

Lori shares that she is involved in the states government interest group. It has been mostly dormant, but a few of us are hoping to revitalize it and make it broader than only focusing on FDLP issues. She loves the idea of government information day. Would love to get more ideas of what other states do. If your state does something similar to government information day or the virtual meetings that will and Provine mentioned in Tennessee, feel free to put it in the chat so that Lori can get some ideas. Sorry, my chat jumped. More conversation about DLC hybrid format. Jennifer gives a shout out to Brent for being

the government information day planner. Brent says Lori should talk to Brent. I second that. I worked with Brent last year, kind of tangential to government information day. He is a great organizer. My chat jumped again. Apologies. Rick is talking about colonial documents, there is a display in the GPO office of the earliest federal documents. Can't recall exactly which the first one is, but I think it was a tax document. Ashley or Kelly, China and if you know.

I can't believe Ashley doesn't know the answer to this.

She might be busy.

I'm getting confused. If you are talking about info, the earliest document was a treasury document. But it was expenditures. You are saying at the GPO office?

Rick, do you mean the display in the building?

Yeah, those of you who have never done the GPO to her, definitely do it if you have not done it. The one in person DLC meeting we had, I think it would have been in -- it must have been in late 2019. Outside of the conference room we were in, there was a display on the wall and it was all blown up images. It was a display of early materials published by the first Continental Congress. I want to say it was a resolution from the first Continental Congress to tax merchants to pay for an army, but I don't remember exact details.

That sounds logical. It sounds like that would be the first one.

Thanks for investigating, Kelly.

Jenny, you made a comment about being, kind of, isolated. I can share with you, you know, as I said we came back last year. Everybody was really careful, wearing masks, everybody got vaccinated as soon as it was available. Recently, one of my coworkers had a breakthrough infection. She was shocked because she said she had done everything that she could to avoid getting this. Luckily she didn't get terribly sick, but it lets you know it is still around, you still have to be careful.

We are nearing the end of our time. I will put a call in for any last discussion points. I want to thank you all for being here, and chatting with us.

Thank you, everybody.

All right, I am just seeing some thanks. Let's wrap up and give you all a short break before the first session of the last day of conference.

Thank you, everyone. We will be back at 1:00 Eastern with our library technical services update.
