

For the Benefit of All

Digitizing Hearings
from the 60s, 70s and 80s

Sonnet Ireland
Head of Federal Documents
University of New Orleans
DLC 2011

Earl K. Long Library, University of New Orleans

University opened its doors in 1958, located on the southern shore of Lake Pontchartrain in New Orleans, La.

Library became a depository in 1963 and began receiving documents in 1964

91% selection rate

Documents added to the collection since 1976 are in the online catalog.

What We're Doing

Digitizing hearings and making them freely accessible online in the Louisiana Digital Library:

Link <http://louisdl.louislibraries.org>

Click on Collection Name (under Browse Collections By)

Click on United States House and Senate Committee Hearings and Publications

(You can also Google us or the hearings)

Why Hearings, in particular?

Since depositories can range in the focus of their collections, we wanted to digitize something that would be the most useful for the most people.

There are hearings on all sorts of topics, making it a good choice for digitization.

Hearings also make up a fifth of our federal documents collection.

Why the 60s, 70s and 80s?

Since our depository began in the 60s, we do not have much material before that time.

As for the 70s and 80s, we've found that most of the documents available online are from the 90s on. We are working to digitize items that are not already freely available online.

The Process: Choosing the Hearings

1. Pull hearings from the shelf
2. Sort them into two piles: those in the catalog, those not
3. Those not in the catalog are returned to the shelf. Those in the catalog go on to the next step.
4. The hearings in the catalog are then checked for availability online.
5. Finally, information is gathered: e.g. item numbers

The Process: Digitizing the Hearings

1. The hearings are disassembled: usually cutting along the binding
2. The hearings are then hand-fed into a feeder scanner that scans both sides at once into pdf format
3. Once the document is scanned, we go through each page of the scan and fix any errors.
4. Optical Character Recognition (OCR) program is run on the document, allowing for keyword searching.

The Process: Saving and Uploading

1. The document is then saved to the hard drive and uploaded to ContentDM with such details as the SuDoc number, subject terms, etc.
2. After several hearings have been scanned, they are backed up on an external hard drive and burned to a CD.
3. The hearings are also backed up by OCLC offsite.
4. Once uploaded, the records are modified in the catalog and the reference URL is added to the record.

The Process: What Comes After

Throughout this process, we use a spreadsheet to track the documents. Once scanned, we try to accumulate about 200 documents.

At 200, we turn that spreadsheet into a list for offering to our regional depositories. At this point, we go through the procedure for offering items up. We also use this as an opportunity to promote our online collection.

Whatever is not requested, we discard.

Demonstration

F.A.Q.

Why do you pull the hearings from the shelves and go through them manually?

Our catalog isn't perfect. Sometimes items are listed as microfiche when they aren't and vice versa. Pulling them from the shelves gives us a better idea of what is and isn't in the catalog. It also gives us a chance to fix those errors in the catalog.

F.A.Q.

Why are you only scanning the documents that are in the catalog?

Since work is being done by others to catalog older materials. Our goal is to go through our collection and digitize what has been cataloged. Once we finish that, we will go back to the start of the collection and scan everything. Whatever hasn't been cataloged by someone else, we can catalog ourselves.

F.A.Q.

Why all the back-ups?

Murphy's Law. If our system comes crashing down, the documents are backed up in so many ways that access should not be lost.

F.A.Q.

How can we use your database?

Any way you want. You can add our database into your resources...or you can even use our reference URL in your catalog if you wish. We're doing it for everyone to use!

The Future

We have currently slowed our digitization, as we are preparing to move the collection from the third floor of our library to the first floor.

The pace of the project will depend on whether or not we have a student worker in our department.

Once the hearings are complete, we hope to add more hearings to the database through N&Os lists. We may also consider digitizing other parts of our collection.

Questions?

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What is being scanned?

Any hearings in our collection that are already cataloged but not yet found digital elsewhere. Since we became a depository in the 1960s, we do not have many (if any) before that time.

What can I find in the collection?

Right now, we are actually going in SuDoc order. This is what you will find a lot of agricultural hearings in the digital collection right now. Our goal is to go to the shelves and scan the items in the order they are found. All that are not cataloged are re-shelved for digitization at a later date. Once we make our way through the entire hearings collection, we will start again at the beginning and scan everything that is left, whether it has been cataloged or not.

To access hearings:

1. <http://louisdl.louislibraries.org/>
2. Under Browse Collections By, click on Collection Name
3. Scroll down towards the bottom, and click on United States House and Senate Committee Hearings and Publications
4. You may then click on the link More Information about this Collection or on the link Browse Items in this Collection

You may also Google U.S. Hearings UNO.

You can also Google specific titles, but our items do not show up at the top. Add **UNO** to the search, and it will be easier to find.