

Think like an archivist: A new paradigm for government information

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Poll

Select the option that best describes your government documents unit/department (pick one):

- its own independent department
- part of the Reference department
- part of Special Collections
- its own independent library
- Government documents are part of the regular library collection
- Other: (please describe)

What do we mean by archival thinking?

More Emphasis

Curation

- Where can government information bolster the research needs at my institution?
- Grouping by subject, topic area, or agency-specific materials

Storytelling with Primary Sources

- Uncovering hidden or lost voices
- Engaging with primary sources

Preservation & Conservation

- Promoting democracy by preserving the democratic record

Less Emphasis

Current policy

- Online (*mostly*)

Print reference

- Online (*mostly*)

Information Literacy Instruction

- Government documents in Information literacy instruction

Institutional Contexts

Utah State University

- Academic library at an R1 research institution
 - Outreach and Instruction emphasis as part of faculty position
- Faculty librarian, 2 FTE staff and 1.25 student staff
- Regional collection
 - Bulk dates 1860s - present
 - Approximately 1.4 million documents
- Arranged by SuDoc
- On-site automated retrieval, primarily for serials

University of Colorado Boulder

- Academic Library at an R1 research institution
 - Tenure Track Faculty= emphasis on research
 - Non-tenure Track= emphasis on librarianship
- 2 Faculty Librarians, one focused on instruction, 1 FTE staff and 1.25 student staff
- Regional collection
 - Approximately 2 million documents
- Arranged by SuDoc
- Large off-site storage facility (PASCAL)

Organizational Structures

Utah State University

Division: Special Collections & Archives, Cataloging & Metadata Services, & Digital Initiatives (soon to be realigned with Collections focus)

Unit: Special Collections & Archives

Curatorial Area: Government Information

Functions:

- Collection Development
- Collection Management
- Instruction
- Outreach

University of Colorado Boulder

Chapter: Success and Engagement Strategies

Team: Rare & Distinctive Collections (RaD)

Sections:

- Research Services
- Collections
- Instruction & Outreach

Collecting Areas

- Archives
- Government Information
- Maps
- Rare Books

What are the similarities?

- **Collecting**
 - Actively acquiring historic materials
 - Actively acquiring materials relevant to the Western states (environmental, indigenous and western history)
- **Preservation Stewards**
 - Curating what we want to keep and preserve
- **Instruction & Reference**
 - Primary & secondary resource instruction
 - Reading Room duties

What are the differences?

- **Institutional structure**
 - Research Services/Instruction vs. Collections
 - Functional model vs. Collection model
- **Independence vs. team approach**
 - Sole curator at USU
 - Team-wide contributions to all functions at CU Boulder & a single collections curator with a collection manager's "guild"

Advantages – Collections

- Revitalize collecting gov docs
 - The value of preserving archival material is clearer to administrators. Historic government information collections can be curated just like rare books.
- Government Documents provide context to other archival items/collections
- More funding for acquisitions, preservation, and conservation
- More grant funding or advancement (fundes like to fund the “cool” old stuff)



Conservation & preservation treatment given to Government documents at CU Boulder

Advantages – Outreach & Instruction

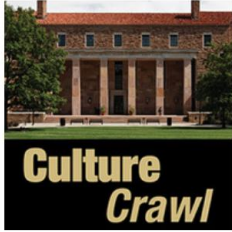
- Better connection to students
 - Touch & Smell
 - Use as primary sources
 - “Gov Docs are so cool!”
 - See the value of government documents - they can connect to historic materials better than modern day materials
- Provides context to other collections
- Use of ephemeral materials
- Connections to colleagues
 - Instruction collaborations
 - More colleagues are aware of the collection and can help promote it
 - Cross-training is now an option
- Events & Exhibits
 - Commemorative opportunities



WWI Handbooks for introductory course, USU Libraries

Government Documents & Archives Examples

Events



Culture Crawl: University Libraries Open House

Join the University Libraries as we participate in a Culture Crawl spanning several cultural heritage sites on CU Boulder's campus.

Visit Norlin Library to explore the space in a way you never have before! View our rare and special collections, join the discussion with the Buffs One Read, meet expert librarians and view special performances.

You will leave this event understanding that the Libraries is a hub for community, connection and creativity on campus!

The Culture Crawl is a campus-wide event celebrating several cultural heritage sites and groups at CU Boulder. Stop by the different locations and take part in immersive activities, performances, games and shows. Every location you visit gives you a chance to win a prize.

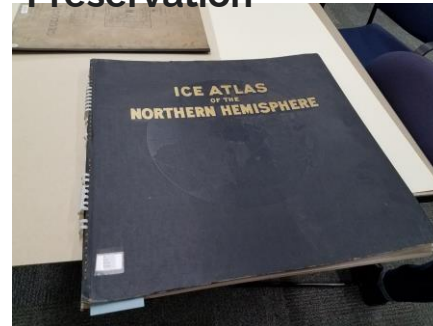
🕒 **Wednesday, October 19 at 2:00pm to 4:00pm**

📍 **Norlin Library, West Entrance**
1157 18th Street, Boulder, CO 80309

Exhibits



Preservation



Acquisitions



Challenges

- Change takes work, time, and a new mindset
 - What does Government Documents mean now?
- Questions of identity
 - No longer distinct part of the library
- Loss of complete autonomy
 - Collection authority
 - Cataloging/Description decisions & workflows.
 - SuDoc corrections and training
- Professional titles
 - Archivist, Curator, Librarian, Head etc...
 - These words matter. If our work changes in this way, do we lose the connection to other government information professionals or to other subject specialists?

Questions for Discussion

- Is your institution considering such a move?
- Do you think this transition would make sense for your institution?
- Does this only work for certain types of FDLs?
- Would it still work effectively if you made small changes, like collaborating more with archives/special collections, rather than relying on a large-scale administrative change?