Recommendations of the Depository Library Council to the Director, Government Publishing Office
2014

Introduction

This document presents the recommendations of the Depository Library Council from the December 2014 DLC Virtual Meeting: Focusing on Service.

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Depository Library Council Recommendations

2014 DLC Virtual Meeting: Focusing on Service, December 2-4, 2014

Recommendation 1: GPO Collaborate with Discovery Vendors to Expose Full Text of FDsys

Council recommends that GPO collaborate with the major discovery tools (EDS from Ebsco, Primo from ExLibris, Summon from ProQuest, and WorldCat Discovery from OCLC) to develop a sustainable model of exposing all FDsys content to their respective search engines.

Justification

- Discovery tools go beyond the indexing and searching of metadata; they also search the full text of a large swath of journal and book content. Although records for government publications (including CGP records) are often indexed in these discovery tools, the lack of full text searching of government content and the presence of full text searching of other content creates a "backgrounding" effect for the government content, making it much less discoverable than it was in the days when all searching was metadata searching.

- Discovery tools generally do not function by doing a broadcast search out to a source, nor do they merely harvest metadata through technologies such as OAI-PMH. Rather, they prefer to have the full content (indexing and full text) in a single search "pot" to expose all content to their search algorithms.

- Discovery tools are becoming popular with libraries and user communities. Not being available to a discovery service in 2015 is nearly as bad as being left out of Google's index in 2005. Therefore, it is important for GPO to be proactive in delivering data to discovery tool vendors, lest important yet undervalued resources wind up stranded and invisible to the standard tools of researchers. GPO's data must be where the end users are.

- This method would involve not just a one-time loading of full text FDsys content, but an incremental (weekly or monthly) addition of new content.

GPO's Response to Recommendation 1

The U.S. Government Publishing Office (GPO) agrees that making FDsys content and metadata accessible through major discovery tools would be highly-beneficial in increasing public access to FDsys content.

In order to create a standard, streamlined, and compliant method for organizations to crawl or harvest content and metadata from FDsys, GPO has developed FDsys sitemaps. GPO believes that the FDsys sitemap implementation is the best method by which to expose major discovery tools to FDsys content and metadata.

FDsys sitemaps are updated as soon as new content is a made available on FDsys and are currently used by numerous Governmental and non-governmental organizations to harvest content and metadata from FDsys (e.g. Library of Congress, EPA, Office of the Federal Register, LOCKSS, GovTrack). FDsys sitemaps are also used by major search engines (e.g. Google) to index FDsys content and metadata. This implementation provides access to content and metadata in a single search "pot," thus exposing it to various search algorithms. More information about the FDsys sitemap implementation is available at http://www.gpo.gov/help/index.html#sitemaps.htm.

In response to this recommendation, GPO will:

- Outreach to vendors of major discovery tools, as named by the DLC, in order to inform them about the FDsys sitemap implementation;

- Provide written instructions on using FDsys sitemaps;

- Offer support contacts for questions or troubleshooting;

- Announce the availability of this information to the FDLP community as well through the FDLP News and Alerts email service;

- Host a webinar for the FDLP community and vendors of major discovery tools on FDsys sitemaps.

Recommendation 2: Commitment to a Semiannual Meeting Schedule Including In-Person Events

Council commends the Government Publishing Office (GPO) on the success of the December 2014 Depository Library Council Virtual Meeting. To support the continuing viability of the Federal Depository Library Program (FDLP) in light of this success, Council recommends GPO return to its pattern of convening semi-annual Depository Library Council meetings in a public forum for the benefit of the depository community, with at least one of these being an in-person meeting. The in-person meetings would ideally be regularly scheduled at a time of year that best accommodates the depository community and GPO while avoiding the possibility of cancellation due to Federal government shutdown.

Justification

- For almost 40 years, the Depository Library Council (DLC) met in person each spring and fall to discuss FDLP issues in Council meetings as well as with the GPO and the community at large. Twenty-two years ago, the GPO began holding Federal Depository Conferences concurrently with DLC meetings to further enhance learning experiences for the depository community.

- In 2011, GPO announced that it would scale back in-person meetings to one each year. In 2013, the government shutdown forced GPO to postpone the fall meeting, resulting in an 18 month gap between in-person meetings. Based on the announcement that the next DLC meeting/FDL conference will be held in fall 2015, it appears that another 18 months may pass between in-person meetings.

- Council recommends resuming a semiannual public meeting schedule that includes at least one face-to-face DLC Meeting/Federal Depository Library Conference each year. Regular face-to-face meetings will allow Council to conduct business without losing members to local interruptions and distractions that often accompany virtual meetings, and extend the same privilege to all others who attend. More importantly, inperson meetings provide participants essential networking opportunities that cannot happen in a virtual environment.

GPO's Response to Recommendation 2

GPO recognizes Council's need for semi-annual meetings, and GPO further understands the value of networking during in-person meetings. At the same time, conference satisfaction surveys indicated great support for virtual meetings, with many of the attendees stating they could not have attended were the meetings not virtual. The depository community will be best served with a combination of virtual and in-person meetings that have a virtual component.

When determining a date for meetings, GPO always looks at the calendar of library and related conferences, holidays, and even weather. GPO also has to procure conference sites through a competitive bid process, which further shapes the possible meeting dates. The on-site meeting in Washington, D.C. used to be in the spring; this was changed to the fall when hotels meeting our requirements were not available during spring months. When planning meetings and conferences, we cannot presume there will be a Government shutdown. With the necessary advanced preparation required, we have to assume quite the opposite and that we will have appropriations at the start of each fiscal year. Planning around shutdowns or potential continuing resolutions is a slippery slope as continuing resolutions can be for a period of time as short as a day or hours, to as long as months at a time.

GPO will endeavor to meet the requirements of this recommendation and to serve the best interests of the depository community. Council also must understand that GPO has no control over the budget process and that we have the "all virtual" meeting alternative that we may have to employ if the need arises.