

When the Government Hands You Lemons... Or nothing at all.

How we turned a bad situation into a good
opportunity.

Sonnet Ireland
University of New Orleans, 0224A
2015 DLC Meeting and FDL Conference
Monday, October 19, 2015

Lest we all forget...

The 2013 Government Shutdown

Or, as I like to call it, **Judgment Day**.

Sites were on “hiatus” during the shutdown, so we had to
rely on our **PRINT** collections to get us through.





The “Old Way” ≠ The Wrong Way

New ideas are great.
They drive us to think about how we do things, as well as why we do them.
They help us to evolve.

But that doesn't turn old ideas into bad ideas.
They are just different.

And just like diversity in the workplace...different is good.

Different offers more options...more perspectives.

When in Roman Times...

"The past is a foreign country; they do things differently there." – L. P. Hartley

The shutdown, more than any other time, showed us how important it is to know how to answer questions using the old-fashioned way—

GASP!!!

going to the physical documents themselves!

The Tables were Turned

The shutdown, while upsetting for all of us, was particularly distressing to this newer, more digital generation. It humbled any of us who thought we knew what we were doing.

It was also a great opportunity for us to turn to the wise sages in our field and ask them to help us learn how to answer questions when our digital documents and sites fail us.

The River Runs Dry

It also reminded us that we rely on the Internet as though it were a mighty river. It may change course over time, but it is always there, waiting to serve.

Yet...there we were. Without some of the very resources that we rely on every day. This shows us that nothing is certain. While the Internet may still be there, that doesn't mean that all the things we need will be as stable.



“Sometimes Opportunity Knocks...”

But most of the time it sneaks up and then quietly steals away.” – Doug Larson

Dare I say... The shutdown was the perfect opportunity for librarians to show that there is a need for our profession...

especially for librarians who work with our specialize in government information.



After all, if some of *us* were stressing out about finding information that we're familiar with...

Imagine how our users felt...



Collecting Dust? Not for Long.

It was also a great opportunity for documents librarians to defend their physical collections. Some gov doc librarians across the country have experienced pressure from their Deans and Directors to heavily weed their print collections...

Or to even bow out of the FDLP because "everything is online now."



I Need You to Need Me

Our users not only needed our knowledge (and our physical materials) to help them through...

They also needed our network. This was a wonderful opportunity for depository libraries across the country to assist each other, whether with guidance on how to answer a question or emailing/faxing needed documents.

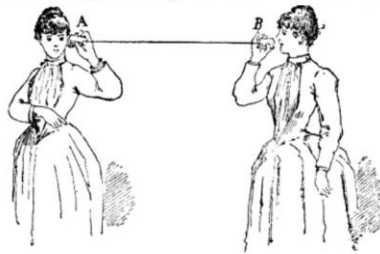


FIG. 76. Trådtelefon.

I promise I'll be good if you turn the government back on...





Never Give Up... Never Surrender...

By Grabthar's Hammer,
The FDLP librarians really stepped up

Balancing Act

*"My point is, life is about balance. The good and the bad.
The highs and the lows. The pina and the colada."
— Ellen DeGeneres, Seriously... I'm Kidding*

But that doesn't mean that we should shun all things virtual. In fact, now is a great time for librarians to embrace the power of social media...to either share content or create content.

It's all about balancing the physical and the virtual. Think of one as the pina and the other as the colada.

“A Library is Not a Luxury...

But one of the necessities of life.” – Henry Ward Beecher

During this time of upheaval, the country was forced to watch Congress erupt in vitriol, each side blaming the other.

As a result, users can't always trust what they read or hear. And isn't this why we are here? To help inform? To help educate?

We Even Put It in Writing

► **Mission**

The mission of the Federal Depository Library Program (FDLP) is to provide free, ready, and permanent public access to Federal Government information, now and for future generations.

► **Vision**

The vision of the FDLP is to provide Government information when and where it is needed in order to create an informed citizenry and an improved quality of life.

From <http://www.fdlp.gov/academy/17-about/mission-and-history/113-mission-and-history>

“A Library is the Delivery Room...”

*For the birth of ideas, a place where history comes to life.”
– Norman Cousins*

If the library is a delivery room, then we are the doctors, aiding in the birth of those ideas.

It is our job, our duty, our calling to inform our users, without bias, about what is happening and how it will affect them and the agencies they rely on.

Social media can, and should, be an important part of that.



Some of us used Facebook.

Gov-stuff 4 U Members Events Photos Files

 **Lori Smith**

When the U.S. government shuts down, it doesn't really shut down entirely. Various vital services will continue to operate. Agencies like the Federal Aviation Administration and the Coast Guard continue to ensure our safety. The mail will still be delivered and food will still be inspected. However, many very important services will cease temporarily and federal facilities, such as the National Zoo, will be closed. For more details about which federal government functions will continue and which won't, see this page from the USA.gov site maintained by the General Services Administration. Many government websites may also be unavailable during this time, but fortunately, USA.gov does not seem to be one of them.

 **Government Shutdown | USA.gov**
usa.gov
1-800-FED-INFO Call us toll-free at 1-800-FED-INFO (1-800-333-4636) for answers to government questions.

Like · Comment · Share · October 1, 2013 at 10:27am

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Some used LibGuides

MISSISSIPPI STATE UNIVERSITY
University Libraries

Library Website SEARCH

HOURS | FAQ | SITE MAP | FEEDBACK 

RESEARCH SERVICES NEED HELP? ABOUT MY ACCOUNTS Today's Hours: 7:00 AM - 1:45 AM GO DIRECTLY TO:

Mississippi State University Libraries > Research Guides > Alternate Government Research Sources Admin Sign In

Alternate Government Research Sources Tags: anthropology, middle_eastern_cultures, business_economics, government_documents, mathematics_statistics_political_science_public_admin, quantitative_analysis, sociology

A dynamic guide to alternate research sources for use during the 2013 Federal Government shutdown.
Last updated: Oct 17, 2013 URL: <http://guides.library.msstate.edu/altgovsources> Print Guide RSS Updates

Status Updates & News Online Resources Library Resources ERIC Help

Status Updates & News Comments (8) Post Page Search: This Guide Search

Status Updates

- 10-16-13, Night: Shutdown Officially Ends**
The Senate and House pass the Continuing Appropriations Act 2014 to end the shutdown, and the law is signed by President Obama in the early hours of 10/17/13. Federal employees are informed they should report to work the next morning.
- 10-16-13: Euromonitor Offers Free Access to Passport: Countries and Consumers**
Free access to Passport: Countries and Consumers offered by Euromonitor for socio-economic data while the government sites are down. This system includes data from the US Census Bureau, Bureau of Economic Development, and International Trade Commission. Free access is through 14c. &. To access the database you must register for an account at www.portal.euromonitor.com.
- 10-6-13: Social Explorer Offers Free Full Access to Census Data During Shutdown**
The current shutdown in Washington is limiting the access that scholars and researchers have to vital materials, including the US Census website. To that end, Oxford University Press and the Social Explorer team will open up access to Social Explorer for the next few weeks. Social Explorer offers users Census data from 1790 to 2010 and

Updates & News

- What's Open, What's Closed**
From CHN: what's open, what's closed, total # of employees, # expected to work during shutdown, # furloughed, notes.
- Agency Contingency Plans (OMB)**
Plans for all agencies.
- National Journal**
Issues older than 14 days are available online from MSU Libraries.
- Government Executive**
Issues older than 14 days are available online from MSU Libraries.
- NY Times, Fiscal Crisis: Continuing Coverage of the Budget Debates**
- Washington Post Live Updates: The Shutdown**
- HuffPo: Government Shutdown**
- Pew Research: How to Get Census Data During the Government Shutdown**

Comments (8)

EDIT: Full-text is not available.

Some used blogs

Federal Documents @ Earl K. Long Library

A blog designed to help you keep up with press releases that otherwise be overlooked.

Day 3 of the Government Shutdown

Well, it's official: The 2013 Depository Library Council Meeting and Federal Depository Library Conference has been cancelled with hopes of actually holding the Meeting and Conference in the spring of 2014. Read the letter from The Superintendent of Documents, Mary Alice Baish [here](#).

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Thursday, October 3, 2013

Day 3 of the G

Well, it's official: The 2013 Library Conference has been cancelled in the spring. Read the letter from Mary Alice Baish [here](#).

During the shutdown, more than any other time (dare I say), is the perfect opportunity for librarians to show that there is a need for our profession--especially for librarians who work with or specialize in government information. It is also a good reminder that we must always keep our skills sharp. I confess, I'm guilty of relying too much on our electronic overlords (aka, computers). But we rely on the Internet as though it were a mighty river. It may change course over time, but it is always there, waiting to serve. A great example of this is the cautionary tales of teenagers and young adults posting pictures that can come back to haunt them because "once it's out there, there is no erasing it." Yet...here we are. Without some of the very resources that we rely on every day. This shows us that nothing is certain. While the Internet may still be there, that doesn't mean that all the things we need will be as stable. So...this is why it is important to know how to answer questions using the old-fashioned way--going to the physical documents themselves. So let's take this opportunity, especially the younger generation of documents librarians, to turn to the wise sages in our field and ask them to help us learn how to answer questions when our digital documents and sites fail us.

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And some of us used Twitter



@feddocs #govshutdown2013

I started out tweeting about which government sites were shutdown...

Then memos and plans from various agencies on how *they* were handling the shutdown...

Then the occasional resource about the shutdown...

Then articles regarding the shutdown...
Including a list of the 17 government shutdowns.

When the Lights Came Back On

So now everything is back to normal...

(knock on wood)

Some of us have continued to embrace the social media we use to reach users across the country...even across the globe.

Best example:

Lori Smith, Southeastern Louisiana University, 0231A
Gov-stuff 4 U (Facebook)

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/2202096244/>

Here is what I've been exploring...



Suggestions

Explore different social media programs.

Twitter may make more sense for one library...

But Tumblr is better for another.

Take a look at how we use our different accounts, and cobble something together that suits you.



Suggestions

And spend some time “hitting the books.”

Explore your print collection during a non-stressful time...okay, maybe just a LESS-stressful time.

You might not remember everything you learn. But, when you need it, you’ll find it comes a little easier.



Confession and a Lesson

I've let my government documents social media accounts fall by the wayside from time to time.

It happens.

You get new responsibilities...you have stressful events in your personal life.

It happens to everyone.

The lesson?

Just take a deep breath, forgive yourself, and climb back on the horse and start again.

You'll find that the virtual world is quite forgiving.



Final Thoughts

Hopefully, we haven't forgotten the lessons we learned during this shutdown.

Especially with the near-miss we experienced this year *(and may still experience in the next couple of months)*.

It wasn't our first shutdown, and it probably won't be our last...

So let's work together. Let's make a plan to support each other when things like this happen. Together, we can get through these disasters and show our patrons that they really do need us.

Thank you!

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