

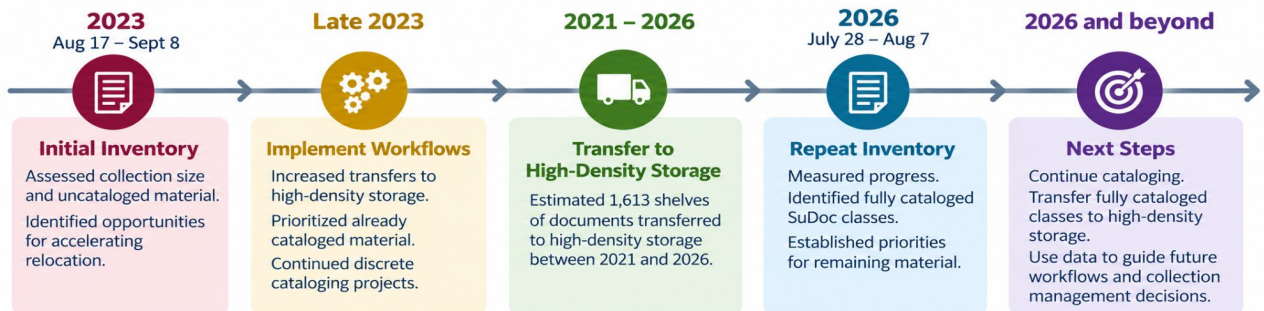
Beyond the Catalog: Using Inventory Data to Assess an Uncataloged Government Information Collection

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Overview

In 2023, the Arizona State University Library's Government Information team conducted a comprehensive shelf inventory of Fletcher Library's federal documents print collection to determine the extent of material remaining on-site and the amount still requiring cataloging. The inventory also informed planning for the collection's relocation. In 2026, the team repeated the inventory using the same basic methodology. The follow-up inventory was designed to assess cataloging progress, identify fully cataloged SuDoc classes ready for transfer to high-density storage, and establish priorities for remaining uncataloged material. Comparing the two inventories demonstrates substantial progress in both cataloging and collection relocation.

From Inventory to Action: Project Timeline

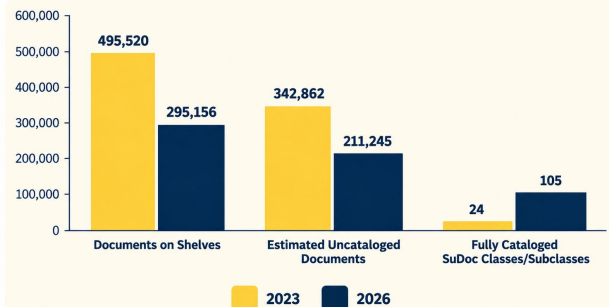


Inventory Methodology



What's Changed?

Growth in Cataloged Content and a Reduction in Uncataloged Material



Inventory Limitations

- Item totals are estimates based on 52 documents per linear foot.
- Shelf density varies considerably.
- Maps and microforms were difficult to consistently exclude.
- Additional quality control may be needed where Alma catalog records indicate cataloged material that cannot be located on the shelves.

Lessons Learned

- Repeatable methodology enables meaningful comparison.
- Physical inventory and Alma catalog data provide complementary information.
- Cataloging percentages need collection context.
- SuDoc-level data supports actionable decisions.
- Inventory data can support both assessment and workflow planning.

Conclusion

Between 2023 and 2026, the federal documents print collection at Fletcher Library became substantially smaller due to relocation, the estimated uncataloged backlog decreased, and the number of fully cataloged SuDoc classes increased from 24 to 105. Repeat inventories provided data to assess progress and guide future cataloging, relocation, and collection management decisions.