What is in those Compact Shelves? Auditing and Quantifying a Government Documents Collection

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Outline

- Background & Purpose

- Methodology

- Planning & Resources

- Survey Instrument &Implementation

- Limitations

- Outcomes & Lessons Learned

About our University & Library

- Land Grant Institution founded in 1888

- Located in Northern Utah, about an hour and half from Salt Lake City

- 16,000 on-campus undergraduates, 27,679 total students

- 2 million books in the Merrill-Cazier Library

- Government Documents & Maps Unit operated independently until 2016 when it was moved under the Special Collections & Archives Department.
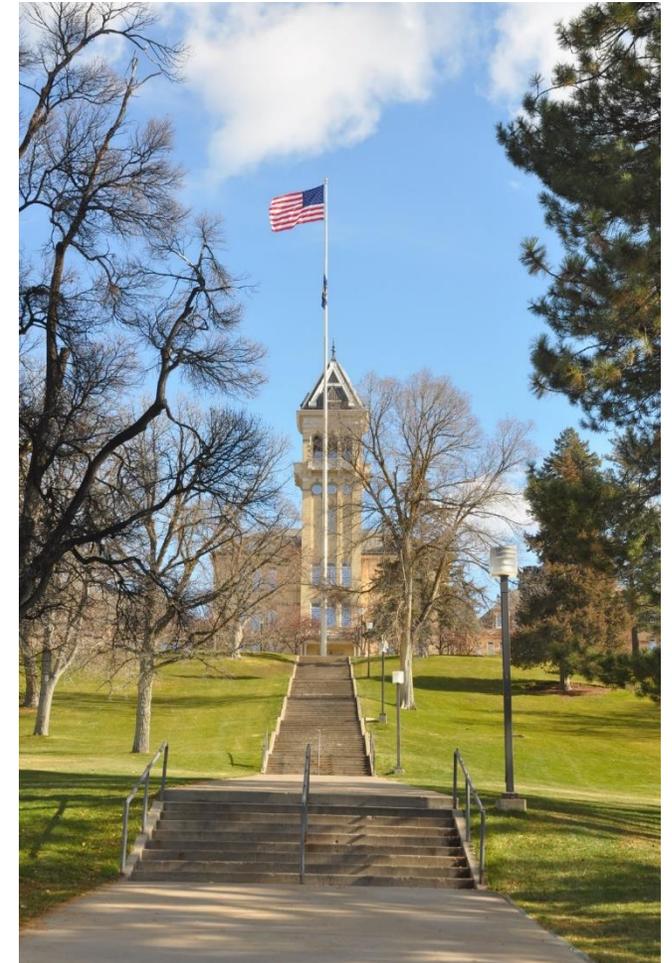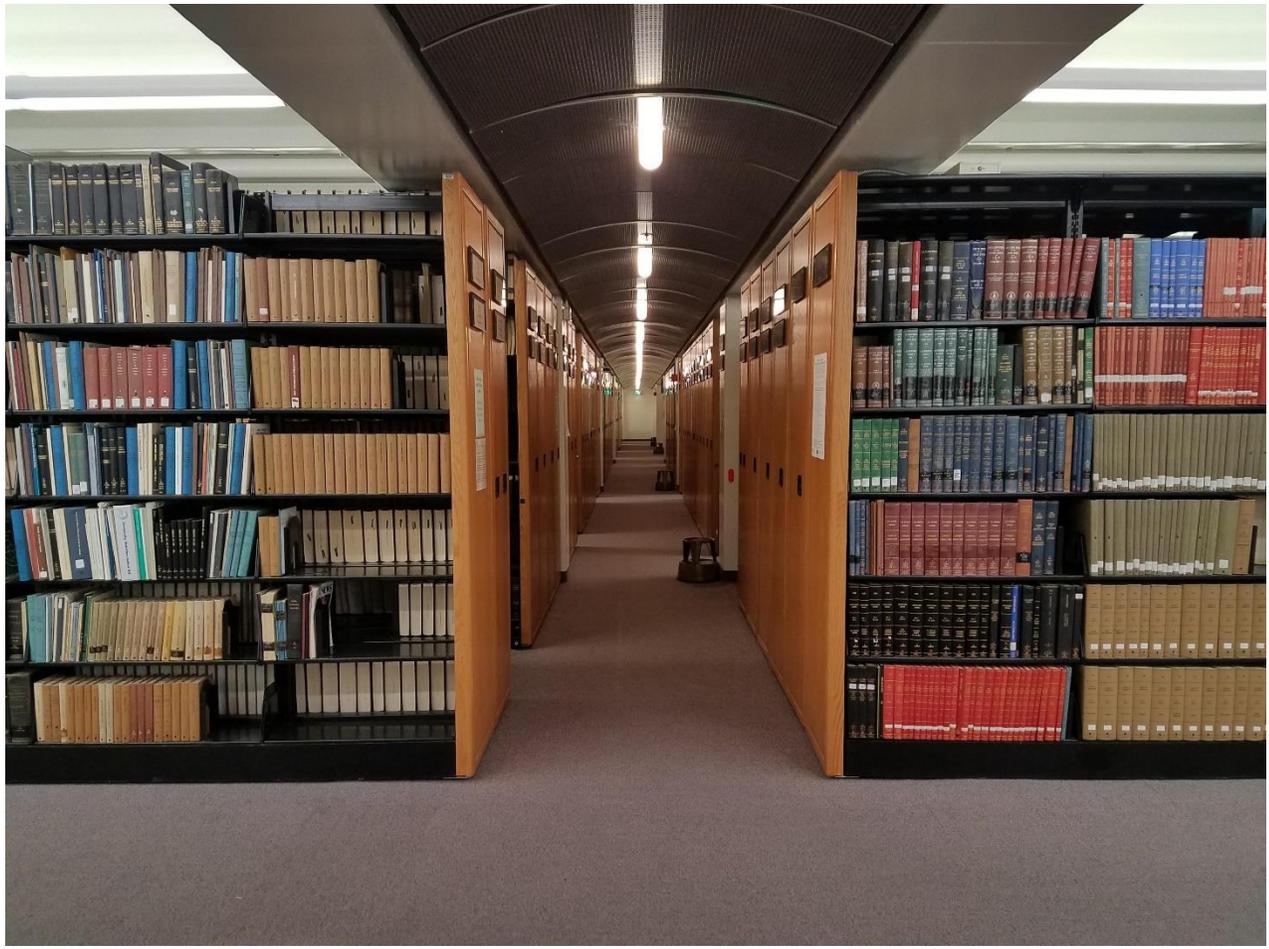
About our Department

- Staff – 4 FTE
  - 1 faculty librarian, 2 library assistants, 3 student workers (1 FTE)
- Office open Monday – Friday, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.
  - First point of contact for reference transactions
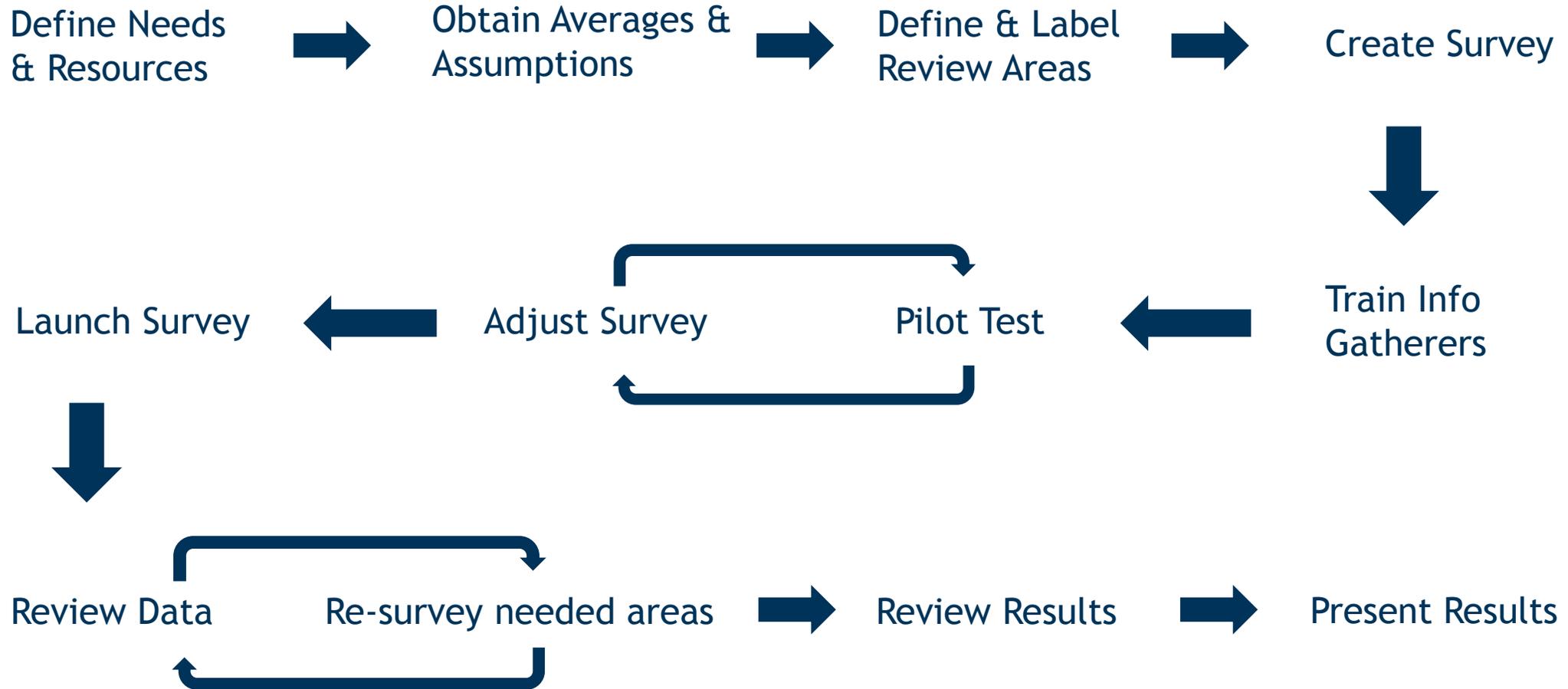- Access to collection during all library hours

About our Collection

- Joined FDLP in 1907 with other land grant institutions
- Reference services relied on indexes rather than catalog records
- No known or documented statistics of cataloged materials
- No documentation of routine collection maintenance (though it has been performed)
- Access to Marcive records

- Compact shelf storage
- "Secure Area" of locked shelves to protect rare or at-risk materials
- Microfiche, Map, Oversize, and Poster areas

Inventory Process

Define Needs & Resources → Obtain Averages & Assumptions → Define & Label Review Areas → Create Survey

↓

Launch Survey ← Adjust Survey ⟳ Pilot Test ← Train Info Gatherers

↓

Review Data ⟳ Re-survey needed areas → Review Results → Present Results

Planning: What do we want to know?

- There are lots of reasons to conduct an inventory or audit. (Braxton, 2005, p. 52-53)
- There are different ways to conduct a count, often determined by what you are looking for
  - Estimates are appropriate when potential impact is low (Habich, 1998, p. 4-5)
- Be sure to bring together stakeholders & decision makers, if needed (Loesch, 2011, p. 304)
- Once we identified our needs, we could consider what we would look for

What do WE want to know?

- What signs need to be updated?
- What SuDoc stems are we missing?– especially historic stems
- Where are SuDoc stem located across our collection?
  - Profiles according to SuDoc (archival perspective)
- What's the extent of our collection?
  - Number of shelves with materials on them
- What's our growth potential?
  - Number of empty shelves
- How many materials do we estimate that we have?
  - Can be a very rough estimate to be verified later

Resources

- Two student staff, 40 hrs/week in summer (total)
- Lower number of patron & usage during summer months
- Additional staff time for data review
- Access to free data collection tools
- IPad mini or smartphone
- Post-it notes, tape & a pen

Preparing for the Inventory

- Keep track of where you have been!

- Define & label review areas
  - Label rows or drawers

- Tracking system in the shelves
  - Info gatherers sign-off in a physical space

- Tracking system in the survey/form
  - Info gatherers verify that submission is complete
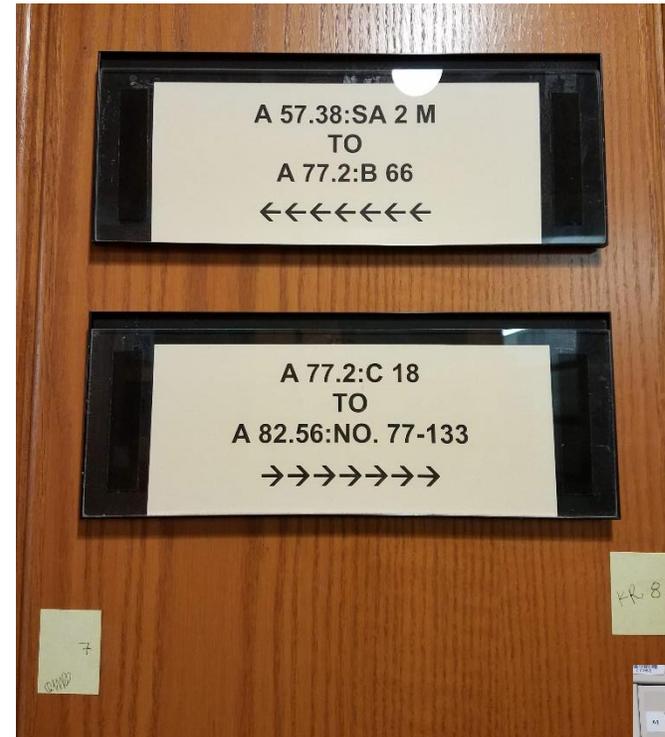
Baseline Data

Use Published Averages

- Average widths are available in a variety of published books and articles.
  - Segment by SuDoc
  - Count # of Pieces
  - Measure Total Inches
  - Divide to obtain average inches per piece

    (Habich, 1998, p. 283-288)

Create Your Own Average

- Randomize sample
- Count # of Pieces & Average
- This inventory:
  - Segments
    - SuDocs: A, E, I, LC, S, Y.4
  - Format types in each segment
    - Paper (194/shelf)
    - Bound (33/shelf)
    - Mix (131/shelf)
    - 3-Ring Binders (38/shelf)

Method utilized in this inventory. Averaged across all SuDocs. Yields a very rough estimate. For greater accuracy, obtain averages per segment.

The Inventory Instrument

Available online at https://bit.ly/2OXuqBg or https://goo.gl/forms/8Kfus3EM1tviPOfG2

Email jen.kirk@usu.edu for additional details.

Building the Survey Instrument

- Free
- No secondary data entry
- Controlled data entry
- Easy for students to access
- Easy to copy, export, and assess data
- Easy review by staff

→

- Google Forms
  - Mobile entry in stacks
  - No data entry from paper forms
  - Easy to update after pilot testing
  - Retain for future use, edit, or copy for future use

Question Categories

- Logic questions to track what row the student was in & what SuDocs were in each row

- Collection management & basic upkeep
  - Sliding shelves, signage questions, # of empty shelves, are shelves too packed?

- "Count" questions with visual prompts

Formatting Questions

- Collect comparable data
  - Multiple choice or drop down answers
- Use images as examples
  - Allows for greater consistency and prevents wild interpretation
- Yes/No options to reveal follow-up questions when necessary
- Questions that confirm data is complete and review can begin

Training Info Gatherers & Pilot Testing

- Outline goals of the inventory and summarize anticipated impacts
- One-on-one training
- Encourage communication
- Run through a few segments to test the survey instrument
  - Adjust as necessary
- Pilot testing establishes & reinforces buy-in from participants
  - They have a voice in the process
- Impose limits
  - Students only reviewed for up to 2 hours per day to prevent rushing, to limit eye strain, and to allow other work to be done

Gov Info Shelf Inventory

Answer questions about SuDoc Ranges in our shelves. Each row should have at least one form submitted. You will need to complete this survey for every SuDoc range in a designated row, so there may be multiple submissions for a row if it contains more than one SuDoc.

* Required

Which department area are you in? *

○ Physical Shelves

○ Lockdown

○ Poster drawers

○ Microforms

○ Maps

○ Oversize

○ Atlases

What SuDoc Stem are you reviewing?

Choose ▾

What number row are you in? (See numbered post-it on the end of row in center aisle) For SuDoc stems that span multiple rows, submit this form for each row number. *
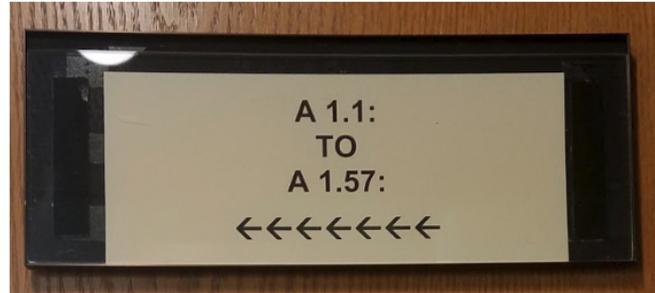
Your answer

View the Survey Here

https://bit.ly/2OXuqBg or
https://goo.gl/forms/8Kfus3EM1tviPOfG2

Does the wayfinding sign match the first and last document on this shelf range? (Picture is just an example)

○ Yes

○ No

If the sign is incorrect, what is the SuDoc of the first document on this range? (May be outside of your SuDoc stem)

Your answer

If the sign is incorrect, what is the SuDoc of the last document on this range? (May be outside of your SuDoc stem)

Your answer

For the next questions about counting shelves, count shelves that have any amount of materials on them.

○ Ok.

How many shelves are used by this SuDoc stem in this row? *

Your answer

View the Survey Here

https://bit.ly/2OXuqBg or
https://goo.gl/forms/8Kfus3EM1tviPOfG2

How many shelves in this SuDoc stem look like this? (Mostly bound volumes) *

Your answer

How many shelves in this SuDoc stem look like this? (Mostly paper, looseleaf or pambound) *

Your answer

How many shelves in this SuDoc stem look like this? (Mix of paper, pambound, and bound volumes)

Your answer

View the Survey Here

https://bit.ly/2OXuqBg or
https://goo.gl/forms/8Kfus3EM1tviPOfG2

Are the shelves roomy enough to comfortably remove materials and reshelve them?

○ Strongly disagree

○ Disagree

○ Neutral

○ Agree

○ Strongly agree

Are materials sliding on the shelves?

○ Yes

○ No

If yes, how many shelves have materials that are slipping or falling over?

○ 1

○ 2

○ 3

○ 4

○ 5 or more

○ N/A - Items are not slipping

View the Survey Here

https://bit.ly/2OXuqBg or
https://goo.gl/forms/8Kfus3EM1tviPOfG2

Have you submitted a form for all SuDocs in this row?

○ Yes

○ No

If the row is complete, initial the numbered post-it in the center aisle.

○ Yes, the row is complete.

○ No, I'll submit another form.

| BACK | SUBMIT |

Never submit passwords through Google Forms.

View the Survey Here

https://bit.ly/2OXuqBg or
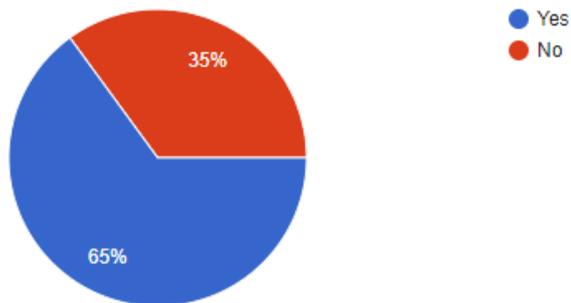https://goo.gl/forms/8Kfus3EM1tviPOfG2

Data Cleaning

- Assume 10% error
  - Build data review into your process
- Look for abnormal entries
- Segmented responses allows for rechecking or resubmission
- Very small SuDoc stems- less than 1 shelf
  - Averages or estimates are extremely unreliable
  - Quicker to count the number of items
  - But, the inventory let us know where they were and we could quickly follow up
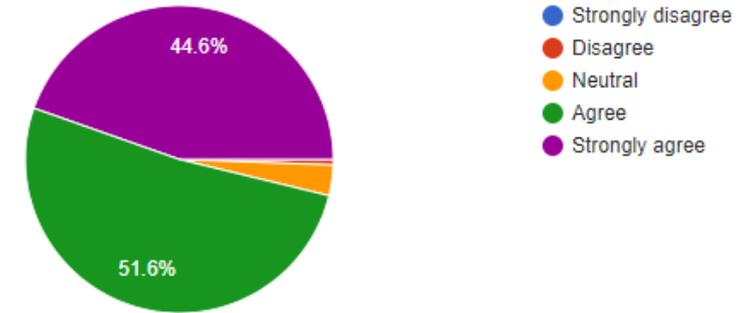
What do our results look like?

Are the shelves roomy enough to comfortably remove materials and reshelve them?

343 responses

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly agree

44.6%
51.6%

Does the wayfinding sign match the first and last document on this shelf range? (Picture is just an example)
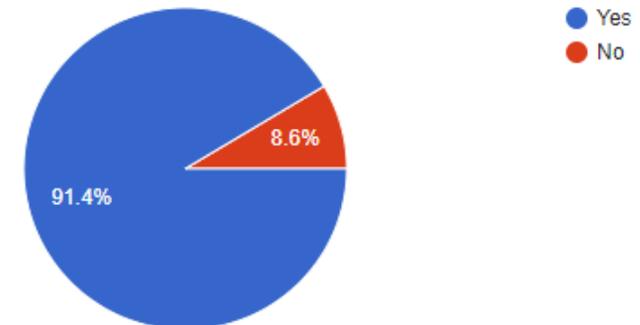
334 responses

- Yes
- No

35%
65%

Is there space for this section to expand?

339 responses

- Yes
- No

8.6%
91.4%

Results: Extent of Circulating Shelves

SuDoc	Number of Shelves	Extent (Feet)*	Estimated Number of Materials
A	506.5	1,456	67,396
C	416	1,196	45,075
I	520.5	1,496	64,776
L	140	403	17,555
S	77	221	8,790
T	104.5	300	13,749
Y	1,871	5,379	275,432
Total Circulating (All SuDoc)	6189.75	17,796	825,569

*Average shelf length is 2.875 feet

Limitations

- Estimates Only

- Does not look at item level or deeper than SuDoc Agency

- Segmented based on format; requires additional review

- Number of info gatherers must be kept small
  - Developed questions with info gatherers. Some of the wording on this form could be clearer.

Lessons Learned

- Survey designed for re-use
  - Estimates are not embedded in survey itself
- Collection-level focus allows for segments & re-surveying
- Pilot Testing is key
- Training is crucial
- Can't rush the process

Next Steps

- Actionable collection maintenance
  - Update signs, fix sliding shelves, remove rusting three-ring binders
- Segmenting the collection into manageable portions for projects
- Comparisons to library catalog
- Sampling project: Identifying problems in larger SuDocs stems
  - University of Mississippi Inventory of items in compact shelves (Greenwood, 2013)

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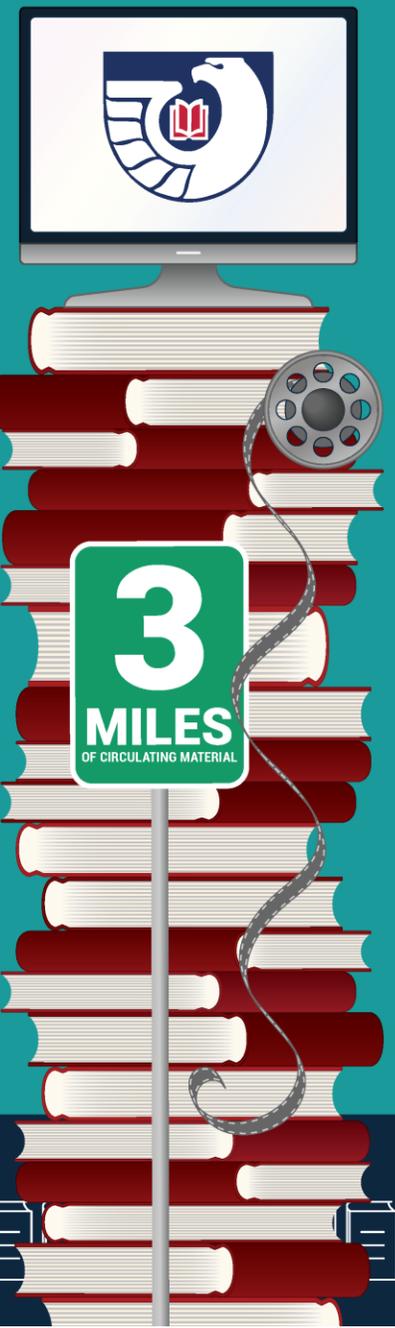
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DEPARTMENT OF INTERIOR
(NEARLY 65,000 PRINT DOCUMENTS)

LONGEST GOVERNMENT DOCUMENT: THE SERIAL SET

References

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Loesch, M. F. (2011) Inventory Redux: A Twenty-First Century Adaptation. *Technical Services Quarterly, 28* (3), 301-311. https://doi.org/10.1080/07317131.2011.571636.

Questions or Conversation

Are you planning an inventory or audit?

Do you have your own tips or "lessons learned"?

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