



Providing Access: Establishing Cataloging Priorities in a Large Depository Collection

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ABSTRACT

Like many large depositories, Auburn University Libraries (AUL) hold a sizable legacy collection that is only partially cataloged. The Libraries has had a retrospective cataloging project in place since 2012, but has only recently looked for a way to employ a more data-driven approach to establish cataloging priorities. Using data from three sources—the PURL Usage Reporting Tool, library circulation figures, and click-through data from the public catalog—we examined the usage of the collection for both paper and electronic formats. From this information, we identified the most-used Superintendent of Documents (SuDoc) classifications and created a list of areas on which to prioritize cataloging resources.

BACKGROUND

Since 2012, AUL has focused on providing access to two areas: historic aviation materials and selected Department of Agriculture publications. As a Center of Excellence for these two areas through the ASERL (Association of Southeastern Research Libraries) Collaborative Federal Depository Program, the Libraries have agreed to house and provide access to these documents. By 2018, these materials were largely cataloged and the Libraries wanted to take a focused approach to setting cataloging priorities for the rest of the collection.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. Which SuDoc classifications are most used?
2. Are the most-used classifications fully cataloged? Would they benefit from retrospective cataloging?

METHODOLOGY

This study extracted three years (2015-2018) of circulation data for tangible government publications, one year of click-through data for online documents from Auburn's public catalog (2017-2018), and one year of data from the PURL Usage Reporting Tool for online documents (2017-2018).

The study combined circulation rates for documents, click-through data for documents, and PURL Usage Reporting Tool data for documents to create a list of most-used documents.

After creating a ranked list by SuDoc stem, each entry was checked to verify the completeness of cataloging and suitability for further cataloging.

CONTACTS

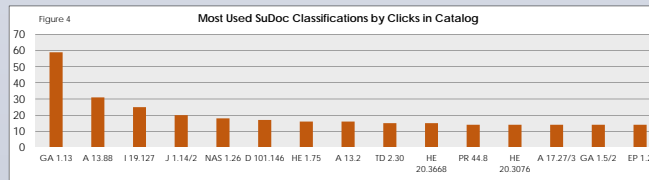
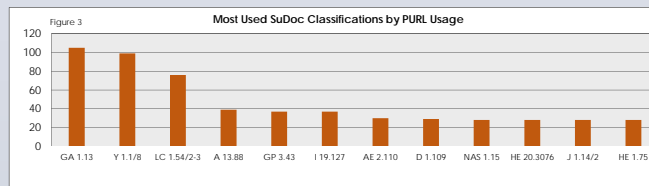
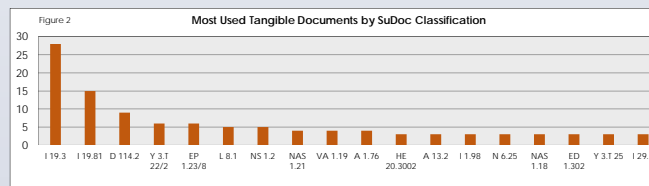
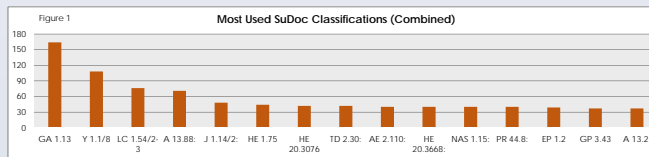
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RESULTS

Table 1. Cataloging priorities based on usage.

SuDoc Stem	Clicks	PURLs	Circs	Total	Title	Notes	Records currently in catalog
GA 1.13	59	105	0	164	GAO Reports to Congress	Online 1997-	>10,000
Y 1.17/8	9	99	0	108	Congress. House reports		>10,000
LC 1.54/2-3	0	76	0	76	Library of Congress. Congress.gov	Database	
A 13.88:	31	39	1	71	Forest Service General Technical Pubs		5019
J 1.14/2:	20	28	0	48	FBI General Pubs		357
HE 1.75	16	28	0	44	Health and Human Services Dept. OEI (Office of Evaluations and Inspections)		1233
HE 20.3076	14	28	0	42	NH SeniorHealth Videos	Online	158
TD 2.30:	15	26	1	42	HRT Report		1572
AE 2.110:	10	30	0	40	Slip Laws		2687
HE 20.3668:	15	25	0	40	National Institute on Deafness and Other Communication Disorders NIDCD Fact Sheet	Online 2003-	31
NAS 1.15:	12	28	0	40	NASA Technical Memorandums		>10,000
PR 44.8:	14	26	0	40	President of the U.S. (Special Committees and Commissions)		84
EP 1.2	14	25	0	39	EPA General Pubs		3154
GP 3.43	0	37	0	37	FDSys	Database	
A 13.2:	16	18	3	37	Forest Service General Pubs		2090
I 19.3:	1	2	28	31	Geological Survey, Bulletins		4314

■ - Cataloging Priorities



DISCUSSION

This study uses data from three reports:

Circulation Report (2015-2018) (Figure 2)

- 170 tangible documents circulated.
- Number of circulations per title ranged from 1 to 17
- 141 titles (83%) circulated only once

PURL Usage Reporting Tool (July 2017-June 2018) (Figure 3)

- 3471 PURLs were accessed through Auburn's IP ranges and domains
- The report included only documents accessed through PURLs provided by the U.S. Government Publishing Office

Click-through Report (July 2017-June 2018) (Figure 4)

- 5787 online documents were accessed through the public catalog
- The report includes data for:
 - Documents accessed through GPO-provided PURLs
 - Documents accessed through non-PURL URLs
 - Documents in the HathiTrust
 - Serial Set publications from Readex
 - Congressional hearings from ProQuest
 - ERIC documents
 - Technical reports from OSTI
 - Journals provided through NIH

Figure 1 represents most-used SuDoc classifications when usage data is combined. Table 1 lists cataloging priorities determined through combined usage data from the three studies.

The following publications were excluded from the cataloging priorities:

- Congressional hearings
- Serial Set publications
- ERIC documents
- Technical reports from OSTI
- Journals provided through NIH

All documents in these categories are completely cataloged.

CONCLUSIONS

1. The three usage reports provide an indication of which fully- or partially-cataloged SuDoc classifications are most heavily used. These reports do not reflect those areas which are not cataloged and unavailable for browsing in closed stacks.
2. The usage statistics show that users have a marked preference for online documents. Circulation of tangible documents is minimal, possibly because of the convenience of digital copies, but also because tangible documents are housed in closed stacks, requiring retrieval by library staff. Records for digital copies of documents (when available) will be added to our catalog as areas are cataloged.
3. Cataloging priorities (Table 1) are based on combined data from the three usage reports and suitability for cataloging. For instance, GAO Reports are available online through the catalog from 1997-present and the pre-1997 uncataloged reports were deemed less important to users. Older Forest Service publications, however, were determined to be still relevant to researchers and so became a cataloging priority.