How to Inventory Your Collection: Using SuDoc as a Starting Point

Jen Kirk

Government Information Librarian, Utah State University

Outline

- Background & Purpose
- A bit about SuDoc
- Inventory Planning
- Conducting the Inventory
- Limitations
- What we've done since 2018 & Lessons Learned

About our University & Library

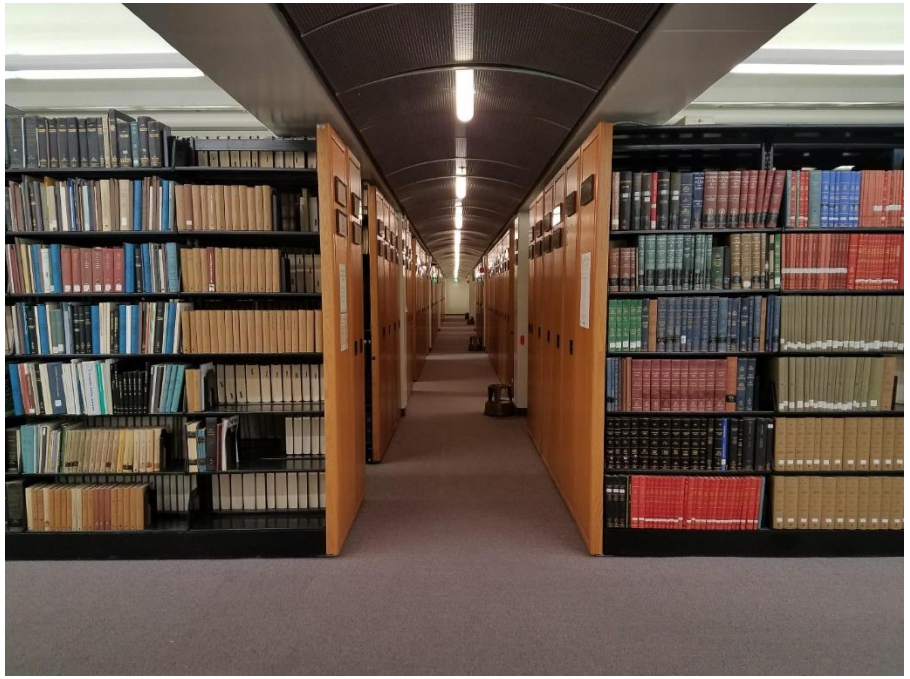
- Land Grant Institution founded in 1888
- Located in Northern Utah, about an hour and half from Salt Lake City
- 16,000 on-campus undergraduates, 27,000 total
- 2 million books in the Merrill-Cazier Library
- Government Documents & Maps Unit operated independently until 2016 when it was moved under the Special Collections & Archives Department.

About our Department

- Staff – 3.5 FTE
  - 1 faculty librarian, 1 library assistant, 3 student workers (1.5 FTE)
- Access to collection during all library hours

About our Stacks

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



Why did we need an inventory?

- New Coordinator in 2017
- Joined FDLP in 1907 with other land grant institutions
  - Historic collection materials
- Reference services relied on indexes rather than catalog records
  - Not 21st century user friendly
- No documented statistics of cataloged materials
  - Difficult reporting to library leadership
- No documentation of routine collection maintenance (though it has been performed)
- Materials shelved by SuDoc in stacks
  - Difficult for users to understand this unique collection

A bit about SuDoc

- Organized by entity – similar to “provenance” used to guide archival collections
- Universal for comparisons to other collections
- Identifying gaps and potential collecting areas
  - Priority SuDoc “stems”
  - Publication history of certain federal programs or subjects
- Can be segmented as needed

A – *Department of Agriculture*

A 13 – *Forest Service*

A 13.28 – *National Forest Maps*

A 13.28: W 26 – *Wasatch-Cache National Forest*

SuDoc on the Shelf

- Short runs are easy to miss when browsing
  - Uncatalogued – no one even knows they are there.
    - EP, ER, ES, FA, FAA, FC, FCA, FCD, FE, and FEM
- Build notable but underrepresented collection areas

What did we want to know?

- What's the extent of our collection?
  - Number of shelves with materials on them
- 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 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

Inventory Planning

- Once we identified our needs, we could consider what we would look for
- There are different ways to conduct an inventory, often determined by what you are looking for
  - Estimates are appropriate when potential impact is low
- Be sure to bring together stakeholders & decision makers, if needed

Estimates & 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)

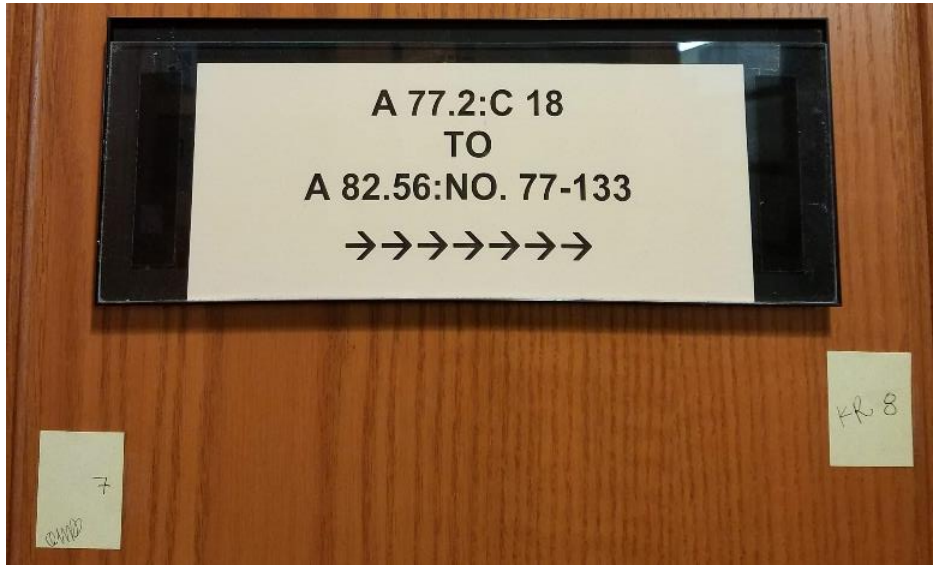
Method utilized in this inventory. Averaged across all SuDocs. Yields a very rough estimate. For greater accuracy, obtain averages per segment.

Resources

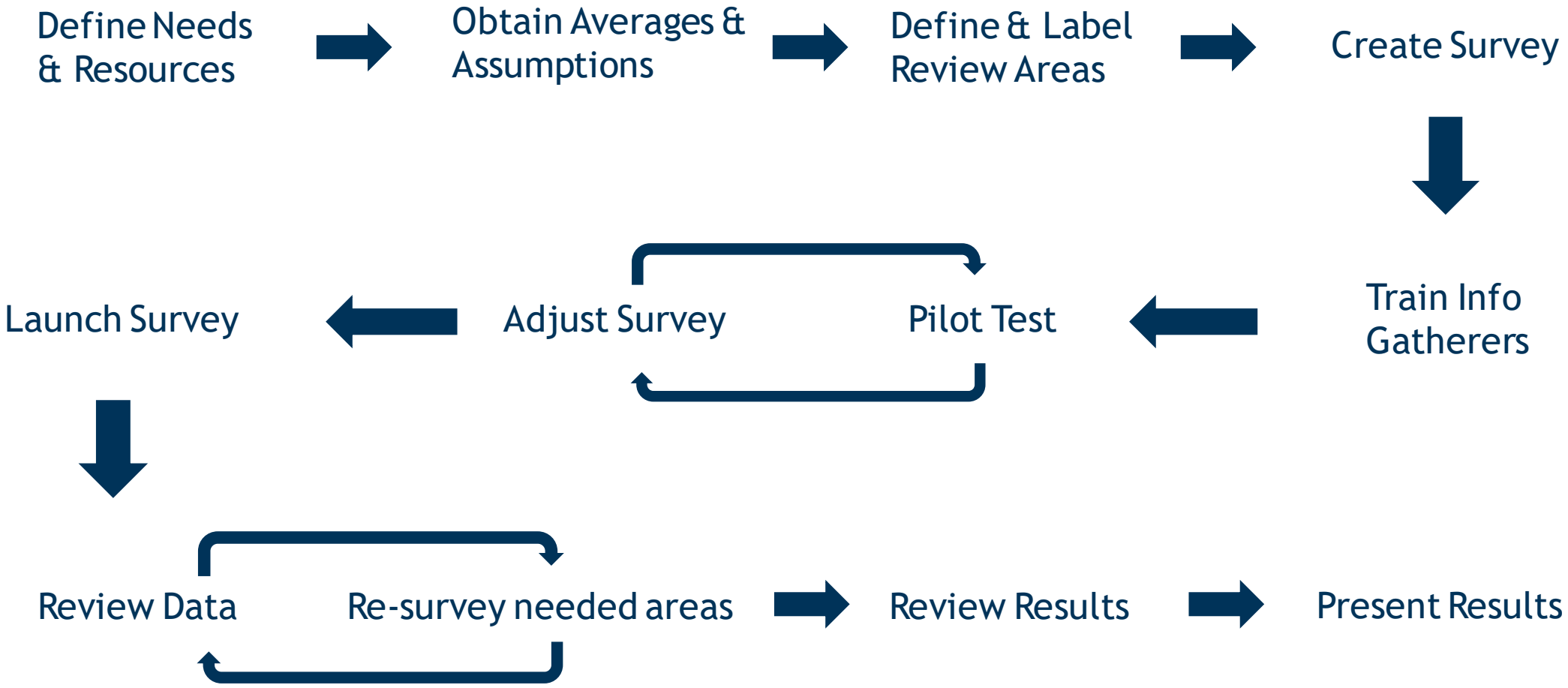
- Two student staff, 40 hrs/week in summer
- Lower number of patron & usage during summer months
- Additional staff time for data review
- Access to free data collection tools
- IPad mini or smartphone
- Post-it notes, tape & a pen

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



Inventory Process



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

- Shelving:
  - Row number reviewed and total number of shelves
- Collection management:
  - Shelf characteristics, shelf capacity, and signage.
- “Count” questions:
  - Used to derive extent calculations and estimate quantities of materials.
- Inventory management:
  - Confirm completeness and form logic.

Formatting the 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
- 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

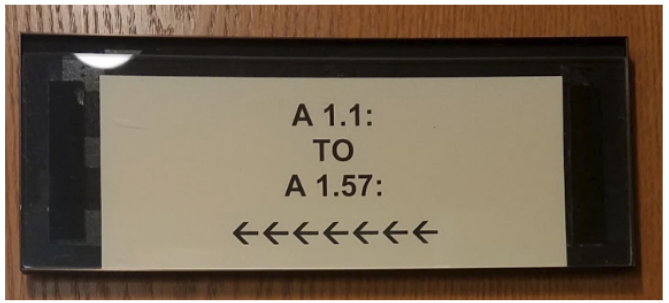
What number row are you in? (See numbered post-it on the end of row in center aisle) For SuDoc stems that span multiple rows, submit this form for each row number. *

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.

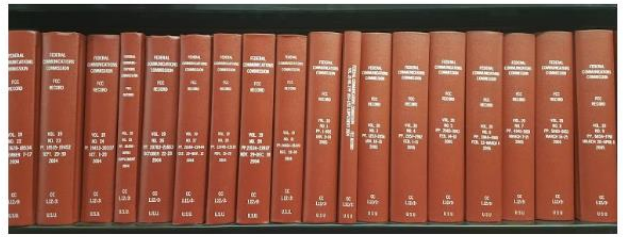
How many shelves are used by this SuDoc stem in this row? *

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

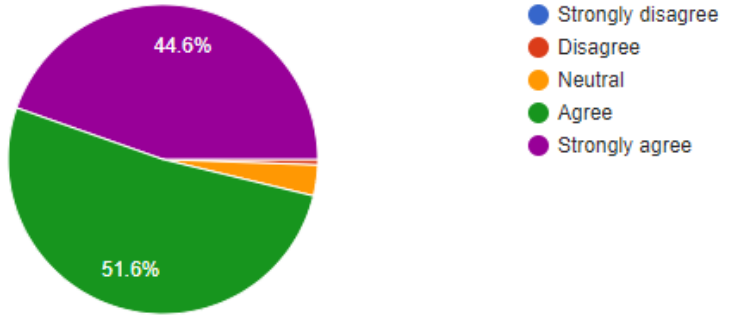
Data Cleaning

- 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 did our results look like?

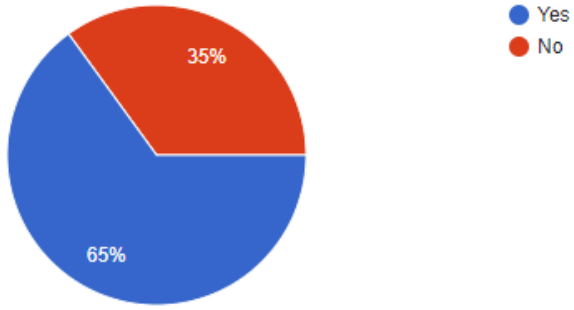
Are the shelves roomy enough to comfortably remove materials and reshelve them?

343 responses



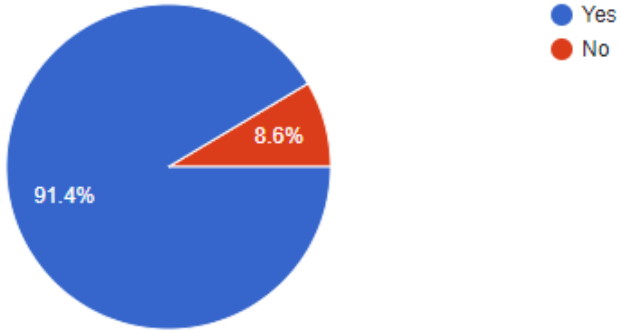
Does the wayfinding sign match the first and last document on this shelf range? (Picture is just an example)

334 responses



Is there space for this section to expand?

339 responses



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

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

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.

Next Steps

- Actionable collection maintenance
  - Updated signs, fixed sliding shelves, removed three-ring binders
  - Purchased acid-free magazine holders, folders, and envelopes
- Segmenting the collection into manageable portions for projects
- Comparisons to library catalog & external shelf lists

Results: Collection Profiles

FCD Federal Civil Defense Administration

Date Range: 1951 - 1958

Collection Priority? checked

Status: Complete

Ranking: 8

Formats: Print

Active Formats:

Other Library Locations:

Number of shipments: 0

Number of Agencies: 1

Collection Description

Estimated Circulating Collection Total	Estimated Circulating Linear Feet	Circulating Stacks Row Number(s)	Estimated Secure Area Collection Total
131	2.5	40	0
Number of Shelves Bound: 0.00	Number of Shelves Paper: 0.00	Number of Shelves Mixed: 1	Number of Shelves Binders: 0

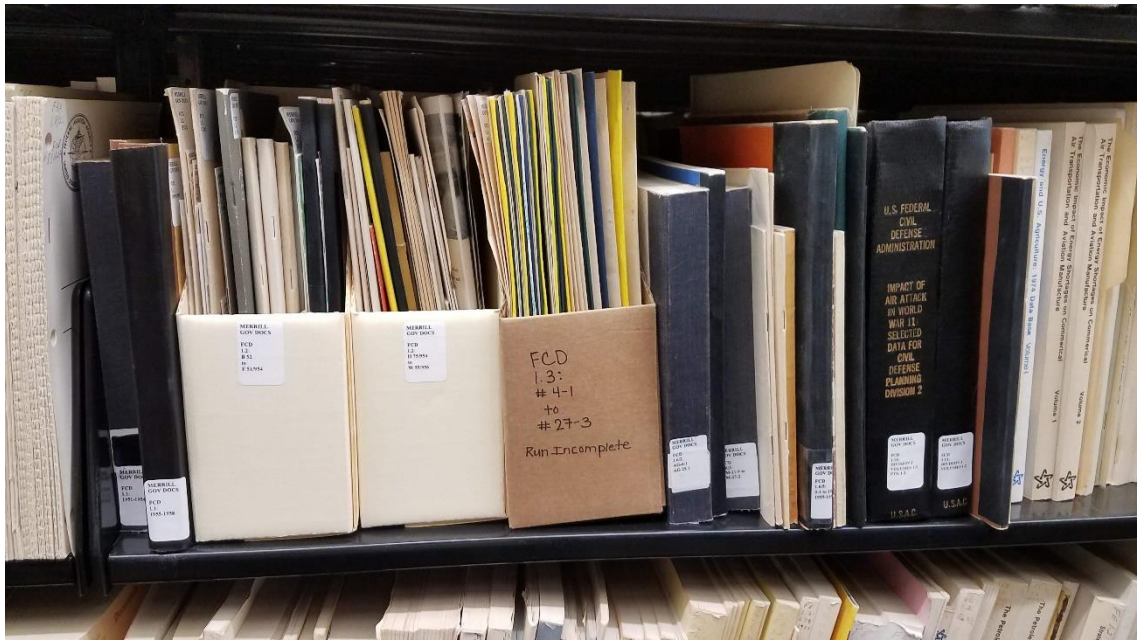
Acquisitions

Number of Superseded Tangible Items Numbers	0	Number of Items Received Last Year	0

Agencies in this Collection Area	Federal Civil Defense Administration

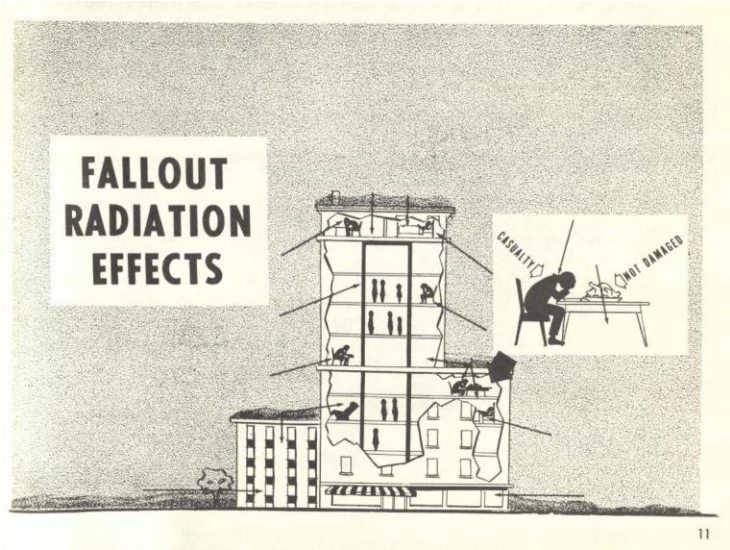
Recent Projects

Project Name	Number of Items/Attendees	Staff Member(s)
FCD Cataloging	83	Shelley

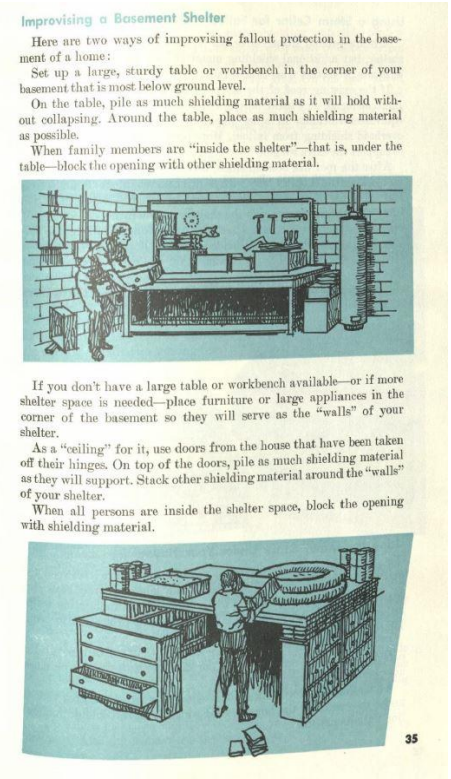


FCD Example

- Federal Civil Defense Administration
  - Existed from 1951-1958
  - Preceded by: PR 33.8xx: (part of Office for Emergency Management)
  - Followed by: PR 34.7xx: (Office of Civil and Defense Mobilization)
- Inventory identified 1 shelf; 83 items found and cataloged
- Used regularly in history courses

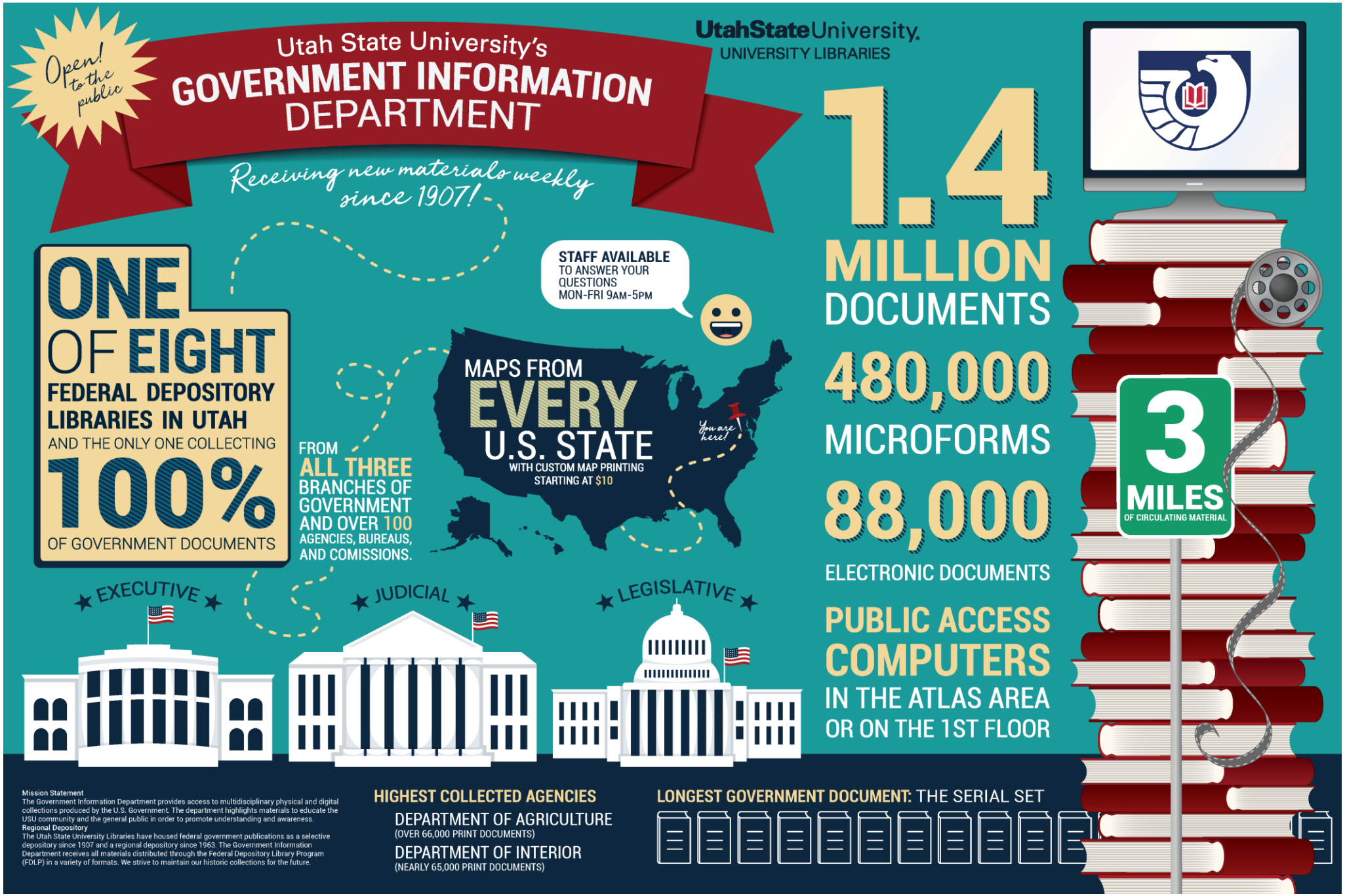


Found because of this inventory.



External Resources for Projects

- Shelflists
  - University of North Texas (UNT) Serial Set
  - Hearings lists from Florida and North Carolina
  - Projects conducted in our own stacks
    - Soil Surveys
    - Federal Civil Defense Administration
- Sampling project: Identifying problems in larger SuDocs stems
  - University of Mississippi Inventory of items in compact shelves (Greenwood, 2013)


Open! to the public
Utah State University's
GOVERNMENT INFORMATION DEPARTMENT
Receiving new materials weekly since 1907!
UtahStateUniversity.
UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES
1.4 MILLION DOCUMENTS
480,000 MICROFORMS
88,000 ELECTRONIC DOCUMENTS
PUBLIC ACCESS COMPUTERS IN THE ATLAS AREA OR ON THE 1ST FLOOR
3 MILES OF CIRCULATING MATERIAL
ONE OF EIGHT FEDERAL DEPOSITORY LIBRARIES IN UTAH AND THE ONLY ONE COLLECTING 100% OF GOVERNMENT DOCUMENTS
FROM ALL THREE BRANCHES OF GOVERNMENT AND OVER 100 AGENCIES, BUREAUS, AND COMISSIONS.
STAFF AVAILABLE TO ANSWER YOUR QUESTIONS MON-FRI 9AM-5PM
MAPS FROM EVERY U.S. STATE
WITH CUSTOM MAP PRINTING STARTING AT $10
You are here!
EXECUTIVE
JUDICIAL
LEGISLATIVE
Mission Statement
The Government Information Department provides access to multidisciplinary physical and digital collections produced by the U.S. Government. The department highlights materials to educate the USU community and the general public in order to promote understanding and awareness.
Regional Depository
The Utah State University Libraries have housed federal government publications as a selective depository since 1907 and a regional depository since 1963. The Government Information Department receives all materials distributed through the Federal Depository Library Program (FDLP) in a variety of formats. We strive to maintain our historic collections for the future.
HIGHEST COLLECTED AGENCIES
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
(OVER 66,000 PRINT DOCUMENTS)
DEPARTMENT OF INTERIOR
(NEARLY 65,000 PRINT DOCUMENTS)
LONGEST GOVERNMENT DOCUMENT: THE SERIAL SET

Interested in learning more?

Kirk, J. (2020). What is in those compact shelves? Auditing and quantifying a government documents collection. *College & Research Libraries News, 81*(10), 486. doi:https://doi.org/10.5860/crln.81.10.486

References

Braxton, B. (2005). Inventory: 26 Reasons for Doing One. *Teacher Librarian*, *32* (4). Retrieved from http://dist.lib.usu.edu/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=lxh&AN=17470118&site=ehost-live

Greenwood, J. T. (2013) Taking it to the Stacks: An Inventory Project at the University of Mississippi Libraries. *Journal of Access Services*, *10* (2), 77-89. https://doi.org/10.1080/15367967.2013.762266.

Habich, E. C. (1998). *Moving Library Collections A Management Handbook*. Westport: Greenwood Press.

Kirk, J. (2020). What is in those compact shelves? Auditing and quantifying a government documents collection. *College & Research Libraries News*, 81 (10), 486-489. https://doi.org/10.5860/crln.81.10.486

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”?

For more information contact:

Jen Kirk
jen.kirk@usu.edu
435-797-8033

Utah State University
UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES