

WEEDING GOVERNMENT CD-ROMS AND DVDS

Kay Collins

U.S. Government Information Librarian

University of California, Irvine

Depository Library Conference

October, 2006

How UCI Collects and Weeds CD-ROMs and DVDs

Item number selection:

The University of California, Irvine (UCI) selects the electronic format of publications not offered in a paper format. We especially select those item numbers when we can determine that the format will be data or GIS. When the item number is attached to a title or series such as Census, that is easy. Other item numbers can be much more difficult to discern. Certain agencies do have many electronic products that tend to fall into these categories, e.g., U.S. Geological Survey (for GIS), and the many agencies whose purpose is to provide statistical data (National Center for Health Statistics; National Center for Educational Statistics, etc.). While some of these agencies may have the information on the web, some of them do not provide the data in a form that a user can download and manipulate for their specific needs. And by selecting item numbers in advance of publication, one does not know what the situation will be.

Spreadsheet:

As our collection began to build and space became something of an issue, we were urged to weed or collection. That required establishing criteria for weeding the collection. To do this, we wanted to have some basis for establishing criteria for whether to keep an item or to weed it. So we established a spreadsheet of titles which we created from a couple of places. First we searched our own catalog and *INFOMINE* (<http://infomine.ucr.edu/cgi-bin/search?govpub>) for a list. We also checked that against the DVDs in the U. S. Government CD-ROM cabinet. Then we created a spreadsheet that is in SuDoc order. In addition to SuDoc numbers and titles, we added other columns and went searching for other information. A library assistant in our Multimedia Resources Center set up the spreadsheet and began searching for an on-line equivalent. When found, he added that to the spreadsheet. We then added some new columns to the spreadsheet. Was the title in or catalog (ANTPAC), was there a link to the electronic version, was this to the most recent edition only and another column for comments.

Titles fell into 3 main categories:

- Monographic material with an equivalent on the web
- Serials with some web presence.
- Titles with not a clear web presence and with a cataloging record. Either the title has changed or when on an agency web page it is not longer a “publication” but a source of information.

Weeding criteria:

Initial criteria were evident:

- Look at the publication year of the product. Adhere to GPO regulations concerning weeding of titles.
 - Evaluate titles which have been superseded. E.g. DOD forms
 - Monographs which are the same product on the web as the DVD and have adequate cataloging are candidates for weeding. If both the web and DVD are PDF in format, they are easy to check for consistency of content. If they are cataloged and linked, they are good candidates for weeding.
 - Do we have a paper duplicate that is cataloged.
- If the software can no longer be run on the computer systems which we have, it can be considered for weeding. This requires title by title analysis of the content. Can it be obtained elsewhere? Is it still relevant information that someone could use given they had the proper computer? NOTE: some libraries keep computers and software to run older products. As long as the computer still works, they can provide the information. When that computer is no longer operating, then they must decide whether to keep the DVD/CD or not.
- Some DVD/CDs may have begun to show their age and not be useable no matter what the equipment and software available can do. Those titles either need to be weeded or replaced if necessary.
- Check the circulation record for a title. Has it been checked out? If so, how often? How long ago.

More difficult criteria for decisions:

- Are there researchers on campus who might need this resource? Is there another source for the data in any format?
- For *data*, there are several questions that need to be answered:
 - What format and software are provided on the DVD and possibly on the web?
 - Is the data in PDF only? Can the data be downloaded in spreadsheets?
 - Is there a data directory defining each of the items and the associated numbers needed to use them in spreadsheets?
 - If there is a web version, is it as complete and able to be manipulated via a spreadsheet? Do you lose or gain any data or functionality? How do you find out?
 - What dates and versions are available on DVD and web?
 - Are the data compatible with GIS programs?
- For *GIS* there are similar but slightly different questions.
 - GIS utilizes data if in the proper format to help create maps. There must be some geographic component to the data, e.g., state, county, latitude and longitude, etc. So in evaluating data sets, one should also be considering the possibility it could be used for GIS purposes.
 - Some of the DVDs have the mapping software on the disk. If comparing to a web site, one must see if the end results of any data manipulation are the same. Can they be downloaded?
 - So most of the questions one asks about data can be asked in relationship to whether this is suitable for GIS work.
- *Serials* present even different criteria to consider.

- If the specific serial title is now on the web, does it include the years on the DVD?
- Are the issues comparable in content so that no content is lost?
- How stable has the web pages for this agency been?
- Are they both PDF only?
- Is there some method available on either the DVD or the web for searching the content?
- Besides checking our catalog ANTPAC, I can also search the *Catalog of U. S. Government Publications*. UCI also subscribes to the LexisNexis *Government Periodicals Index* which has links to many of these online serials, though I often find broken links.
- *Final criteria* I might apply is afforded me because UCI is part of the larger UC collections consortium. We can depend upon sister campuses and very often the California State Library (CSL), our Regional Depository.
 - If the DVD is available at another UC campus or at the CSL, I can check with them before weeding to make sure they will loan if necessary. If not, then I have to consider whether I feel faculty and students can be referred to the other campus for that use.
 - Do I want to weed that title or do I just want to send it to our UC storage facility from which it can be borrowed if needed?
 - If I send to storage, will the medium hold up over any number of years? We have already had some DVDs, both commercial and governmental, degrade to the point of non-use.
 - If I send them to shared UC storage, will other UCs feel they can then weed their copies. It will certainly make their decisions easier.

Loading onto a server

In the past, our Systems department loaded heavily used CDs or DVDs onto a server in an effort to make them readily available for our users. I selected high use CDs and they were loaded onto a server. This accomplished 2 things. It helped the students who worked at the service point who checked these out for use in the library and it increased the use of the DVDs. We did not make this available across campus. Users had to be in the Library. But it did free up some data disks to be circulated to those who needed to download data for their research.

As you would guess, this was not a simple solution for the following reasons.

- While some of the CDs loaded easily and were fully functional, others proved difficult or impossible to load onto the server and make them functional.
- It was very time consumptive for our Systems staff. We could not continue the project with newer titles.
- While I wanted to open this up to other users, especially on campus, our Systems department did not want to do this.
- Maybe because of the titles chosen, it still often required the same amount of my time in working with users on how to use the products on the server.

- Our cataloging department had no way of indicating that these titles were loaded onto a server and so it took staff knowledge of what was there in order to direct the user to the product. It did not end up saving all that much time.

Can we cooperate?

When I heard that GPO was working on studying how to solve this issue, I was elated. But as I got into the project at UCI, I began to see that it would not be a simple solution for GPO and that I could not wait. I will have to decide title by title whether to weed or send to storage. I will select the monographs that have a duplicate on the web as the first candidates for weeding or storing. Then I will begin looking at the remaining titles that have a cataloging record that links to a web site. It is a long process. It would be nice to have a group of us working on various parts of it so we can all share the results.

That type of sharing would require establishing some agreed upon criteria we would use to evaluate the DVDs.