

Breakout Session by Library Type—2005 Spring DLC

APRIL 18, 2005

8:30AM-12:00 NOON

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TOPIC	Future Tangible Distribution to Depositories
LIBRARY TYPE	Special Libraries/Others
<p>MODERATOR: GRETCHEN SCHLAG</p> <p>NOTE TAKER: NATHANIEL KRAFT & CHERYL KNOTT- MALONE</p> <p>DISCUSSION:</p>	<p>Discussion Points for Council Breakout Sessions on Tangible Distribution</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Users of depository libraries have differing needs for tangible documents. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is unique about your library’s users and how do those characteristics create a requirement for the use of tangible documents? • What information needs do tangible documents meet for your users that are not met through electronic information? <p>Answers: There is frustration among State and other libraries since some have integrated Law Library functions. Many of these libraries have very specialized collections (regional geography, for example), in addition to acting dually as law libraries. It was difficult to try and participate in both areas (State and Law) of the Essential Titles survey with defining requirements and restrictions based on library type set in survey. It was felt that selections didn’t overlap on State and Law libraries in the survey, even though State libraries had very similar demands to Law. In these instances of State libraries acting also as Law libraries, tangibles are needed by users because of the existing requirement for physical documents in the legal community. Furthermore, several of these State/Law libraries offer “authentic” tangibles (such as the CFR) on loan to users, which is a service that few other libraries provide.</p> <p>In some cases, the users of State and Other libraries are, in fact, other libraries. State and other libraries act as the last resort for the tangible format of a document, and provide inter-library loans and duplications as needed. In these cases, State libraries typically find themselves selecting all tangibles for deposit to fill this user-oriented need.</p> <p>Finally, regional requirements and local interests often come into play with State and Other libraries. They maintain specialized collections of atypical region-oriented documents, such as histories, maps, and water surveys, which are found to be most useful to users in a tangible format. It was the general consensus that these atypical tangible formats have yet to be developed into very usable electronic formats, with their users’ desire for “authentic” seeming documents further bolstering the need for</p>

tangible format. To some State libraries, the desire for more region-oriented materials in tangible format outweighs a desire for tangible versions of core documents of the Federal Government. It was suggested that perhaps libraries could be grouped into regions for discussion; however, this then raised the question of how to determine such regions.

Who determines use/usability needs? GPO needs a diverse understanding of all kinds of libraries and library types. Perhaps focus groups would help.

2. Under ID 71, GPO policy is to continue tangible distribution of essential titles as long as the publishing agency publishes in tangible form. GPO will also continue tangible distribution for those titles for which there are no useable/useful electronic equivalents. GPO will apply the criteria of ID 71 to determine how to best provide other information products by assessing:

- How the product will be used.
- The specific characteristics of the online and/or tangible product.
- Issues relating to permanent public access.
- The cost of providing the material.

Do you concur with these criteria?

Are there additional criteria that GPO should consider?

Answers: The group generally concurred with these points, with the stipulation that determining “usability” involves input from the library community, or is defined by the user community, and not necessarily by the Federal Depository Library Council. In addition, these topics lead to some discussion on reviving the idea of print on demand.

3. Approximately 60% of depository libraries participated in the most recent Essential Titles Survey. While many sample surveys would consider this an excellent response rate, the purpose of this survey was to determine if a clear set of additional titles could be identified as essential for the various types of depository libraries.

- How can we most effectively use the survey results to make meaningful decisions?
- Do you concur with the recommendations put forth this morning by the Depository Library Council?
- Are there other steps that GPO and the community should take?

Answers: Generally, the Group believed that in order to make the results meaningful, it would be beneficial to do as much regional identification as possible – this in turn might “reflect the true story” of the libraries’ needs. Some individuals felt that the FDLP “is not a free book program, so cataloging tools should never have been offered on the survey,” which in turned affected the outcome of the results.

There was a general agreement with the Council’s recommendation to conduct a new survey; many felt that it was not clear what the goal of the survey was, that they are “out of the loop” with GPO, and that they had no idea whether the goal of the survey was to create “explicitly distinct” Essential Titles lists. It would be useful if GPO could do a better job of making its intentions clear to the community, and conduct surveys such as this with better preparation and more time for the process of responding.

Steps that the group recommended should be taken by GPO are:

- Cleaning up the item numbers/fixing the item number system before conducting a new survey;
- Getting input from libraries by region, as opposed to strictly by library type;
- Limiting the number of selections a library can make (if the item numbers get cleaned up), so people would be forced to select only what they really want, and thus providing a more controlled set of results;
- Revisiting/reworking the item selection process;
- Take into consideration the dual roles that State libraries have to consider so as not to force a sacrifice on their part;
- Improve the survey technology -- many libraries/selectives weren’t even sure if their results were received by GPO;
- And provide more advance information and time for the survey so librarians can make preparations to do a better job of considering and responding to it.
- In some cases, such as with State/Special Libraries, it might prove useful to open the selections available to other libraries (esp. Law) as options as well, to better suit their multiple roles as libraries

Additional Notes/Responses:

- Some felt the Print on Demand survey was “impossible to answer” – did this make it seem like people weren’t interested in it then as a pilot project?
- One librarian voiced the concern that things said to specific details “were being taken as criticism of the whole project” [re: POD]

- “for state interest, POD would desire a “right then,” whereas Library of Congress proposes a wait period, for a single run of multiple copies”
- Sentiment is POD would work well as a concept for State/Special libraries
- Item number system should be cleaned – reorganized, purged of items not available for many years.
- Microfiche is not a good format in general; in general, a document would be better in electronic than in fiche, provided that it’s an “archive” quality version of electronic.