Item Selection Rates, Electronic Formats, and Collection Development Policies in the More Electronic Federal Depository Library Program

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Good morning! For my part of the presentation, I'd like to address two specific areas:

First--the 3/15/01 article in *Administrative Notes* concerning Item Selection Rates, and Second--Collection Development Policies and the importance of these in the e-FDLP era.

Item Selection Rates

GPO had been getting a lot of questions regarding proper item selection rates for different types and sizes of libraries and how these selection rates might be affected by more and more Web publishing, electronic databases, etc.

To clarify GPO's position, Cindy Etkin, Charles Bradsher and I wrote the 3/15/01 article for *Administrative Notes*. Please indulge me while I quote sections from the article.

> As stated in Chapter 2 of Instructions to Depository Libraries: "…An appropriate level of selections should be at least one-half the average item selection rate of libraries of similar type and size…"

> …LPS has long viewed this measure as a starting point to compare collection development activities among depositories. The numbers themselves should not be viewed as absolute benchmarks… For the final analysis, inspectors take other factors into consideration…cooperative collection development efforts, using online

government resources or obtaining government information from other sources…

The complexity of collection development issues facing depository librarians today speaks to the primary importance of a well thought out collection development policy…

The true measure of a library's collection development success is not the adherence with the half the average measure, but whether the depository library is meeting the Government information needs of the area it is obligated to serve.

Collection Development Policy

So what constitutes a good collection development policy and how can it be tailored or focused to meet the requirements of the new e-FDLP?

There is no one format or template to use for writing a collection development policy, but to give you an idea of what should/could be included, let's start by reviewing the Federal Depository Library Manual Supplement dated Sept. 1994--Collection Development Guidelines. There are nine sections in this document and we'll look at each one and give you some ideas of what should be included in each, especially in light of the FDLP's increased electronic distribution.

1. Mission Statement--This is probably the most important section for me as an inspector because in this statement, the library gives me an overview of the geographic area it serves (congressional district), its primary clientele, secondary clientele (if applicable), chief business in the area, and what the institution is trying to accomplish. Items that should be included:

   - Demographic statistics (latest census data)
   - Economic analysis of area (including large employers)
   - How does the depository support the overall mission of the institution?
   - Who are the typical users of the collection? What resources do they use?
   - If your primary clientele is not the general public, what resources are chosen to address the needs of the general public?

2. Selection Responsibility

   - Who makes final selection decisions for the documents collection?
   - Who has input into these decisions?
   - Is there cooperative collection development with other institutions? If yes, what is the focus or strength of each depository?

3. Subject Areas

   - Based on the mission statement, what subject areas are collected? What agencies support these subject areas? What publications are selected?
   - What online databases support these subject areas?
   - Describe collection intensity levels. Do you use RLG Conspectus (6 levels) or Library of Congress (4 levels)? Or another method?
   - Look at FDLP Suggested Core Collections for some ideas (being updated).
   - Updated FDLP Basis Collection.

   - Explain why selection rate deviates from average.
   - How is the collection classified? SuDocs, LC, Dewey, other
   - Describe selective housing agreements-- In light of increased online access to Federal documents, do they still need to be in effect?

4. Formats

   - What do users prefer?
   - What is the physical capacity of the facility? Is there room for growth for the depository collection in all formats? Are there storage facilities? Offsite? How are offsite materials identified and retrieved?
   - Is there resource sharing with other libraries?
   - Is there proper equipment for using various formats?
     --Microform reader/printers
     --Computers for Internet/database access.
     --Does equipment meet the recommended specifications?

5. Selection Tools

   - What are the major indexes/databases that support the collection?
   - What happens if you lose access to a database that contains government information that originally caused you to deselect an item from GPO?
   - How are e-only distributed documents identified?

6. Resource Sharing--Any methods employed by the depository to insure access to government information that is not physically available in the library.

   - What resources are provided by the state (virtual library, databases, etc.)?
   - What resources are provided via consortia purchases?

- Do you have a shared catalog (especially with other depositories)?
- Do you participate in cooperative ILL? For all patrons?
- Is there a state plan and if so, how does it affect your depository?

7. Collection Evaluation

- Statistical evaluation (circulation, inter-library loan, Web page hits, reference requests [e-mail, phone, fax, in person, off-premises], etc.)
- Patron satisfaction (user or community surveys). Try an Internet survey!
- Frequent zero-based item reviews.

8. Weeding and Maintenance

- What gets weeded? How do you weed e-only documents?
- How often are disposal lists done?
- What are the policies for binding, replacement, and security of government documents?
- Do you substitute electronic for tangible products? Or one tangible format for another?

9. Access

- How much of the documents collection is in the online catalog? Are hyperlinks used in records? PURLs?
- What are the hours for providing reference service for the documents collection? Where is it performed in the library?
- Are pathfinders, study guides, handouts provided?
- Are any databases restricted because of licensing?
- How is promotion of the documents collection done to the primary clientele? Secondary clientele?
- Do you have an Internet access policy?
- Do you have a service policy for all electronic formats?
- Is the depository emblem posted at the entrance, visible from the exterior of the library?

These are just some ideas to incorporate into a good collection development policy. For some good examples, take a look at Grace York's GODORT Handout Exchange Pages at the University of Michigan. And I encourage those libraries that haven't forwarded a copy of their collection development policies to Grace for inclusion on the site to do so.