Cataloging Talktable Highlights

Federal Depository Conference
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Gil Baldwin, Chief of the Library Division, and Laurie Beyer Hall, Chief of the Cataloging Branch, were on hand to answer questions.

Many visitors to the talktable spoke about the problem they have encountered when trying to search and retrieve GPO serial records for titles in their local online systems. The problem arises when the Superintendent of Documents classification number assigned to a serial title is not unique. This is especially problematic when a serial title is part of a numbered series and assigned the classification number for the series. GPO staff response was that the issue is also problematic for GPO serial catalogers trying to identify serial titles in OCLC. GPO staff stated that they would meet with Acquisitions/Classification staff to discuss the current policies for classifying serials and report policy decisions in upcoming issues of **Administrative Notes** and in the special chapter on serials in the new Classification Manual due out later this year.

Another major topic of discussion was the need for a unique number other than the Superintendent of Documents class number to match publications on the shipping list with cataloging records received later from various vendors. Many libraries are creating a preliminary cataloging record on their online systems from the brief information on the shipping list. This allows a title to be accessible to users as soon as the publication is received.

GPO staff felt that the ACSIS (Acquisitions Classification and Inventory System) may provide some field data that could be used for this purpose. GPO staff reminded the participants that the Superintendent of Documents classification number was never intended to be used in as many ways as libraries now use them.

The issue of the classification and cataloging of fugitive documents also was a topic discussed at the cataloging talktable.

GPO staff discussed the limited amount of staff resources in LPS available to handle fugitive documents and suggested that titles not received in depository shipments be classified by using the procedures described for locally assigned SuDocs numbers in the **GPO Classification Manual**.

SuDocs classification errors were also discussed at the cataloging talktable. GPO staff explained that unlike many library operations, the cataloging and classification functions in LPS are performed by two separate branches. Documents are first acquired and then classified. Paper titles are distributed and microfiche titles are converted to microfiche and then distributed. Cataloging of titles occurs after all titles have been distributed. The Cataloging Branch is not set up as a quality control check point for classification errors, although the cataloging staff is familiar

with SuDocs classification and is able to detect many errors and return items for class corrections. The Cataloging Branch Chief serves as a liaison between the Depository Administration Branch and the Cataloging Branch on issues of the identification, classification and cataloging of serials.