Selected Resources Concerning Law Libraries and Librarians as Participants in the Federal Depository Library Program

This collection of articles, presentations, and links to websites is intended to be useful to law libraries and librarians that are currently participating in the FDLP or who may be considering becoming part of it or in changing their status.

I. Articles
II. Webinars & Blogs
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V. AALL Testimony on the FDLP (1995 to current)

I. Articles:

Affirms the importance of law school libraries continuing to serve as federal depositories. Describes how the “social capital” created by the program benefits both the law library and the community, through the interaction between the two groups.

Two academic law librarians discuss various economic and practical reasons for a law library to maintain its FDLP participation as depository distribution shifts from primarily print format to mostly electronic.

Iris Lee, Withdrawing from the FDLP: A Responsible Solution, Law Library Lights, Fall 2001, at 6-7 (http://llsdc.org/attachments/wysiwyg/232/fall01.pdf).
Discusses pros and cons of the decision by George Washington University Law Library to withdraw from the FDLP.

After nearly twenty years as a selective depository in the FDLP, Suffolk University Law Library chose to leave the program because it could no longer provide the unrestricted access mandated by the program. Article covers the process followed and the expected and actual outcomes of leaving the program.

A personal account by a librarian at Suffolk University Law Library, which faced the situation of a new building that no longer allowed the provision of public access. Article details the steps that were required during the process of relinquishing federal depository library status.


Focuses on the role of the FDLP and importance of law libraries to the program. Buckley was a staunch supporter of legislation enacted in the 95th Congress that allowed accredited law school libraries to become federal depositories. He praises “the many contributions made by law librarians” in the two decades since Pub. L. No. 95-261 was enacted and states that “having law libraries designated as a category is appropriate, necessary, and to everyone’s advantage.”


A brief article about a hypothetical law school dropping out of the depository system in order to charge access fees. The author worked at Pace University Law Library at the time of publication, but was formerly an inspector for the FDLP.


Weighs the arguments for staying and for leaving the depository system. Includes cost figures for replacing basic documents and a selective bibliography.


A snapshot of the work of a law librarian in a federal depository library at the beginning of the transition to digital access to government information, with a focus on the coming changes. Includes charts and statistics and quotes from law librarians.


Discussion of the quality of reference service in law school depository libraries in the Los Angeles area. Notes the variation in quality and completeness of answers given by the degrees held by the reference librarians. The rationale behind offering depository status to law school libraries was the higher quality assistance that could be offered by librarians with greater law training.


Even before the 1978 law, there were 40 law libraries of various types (court, state, and academic) participating in the FDLP as selective depositories, primarily through Congressional
designation or other special provisions. This article discusses the unique role that law libraries can play in providing access to government information, both directly to the public and through the legal community. Included is a compiled list of publications available for depository selection at that time that were of greatest interest to law libraries. The list is based on the responses of 30 law library depositories to a 1970 survey.

II. Webinars & Blogs


Washington Blawg (http://aallwash.wordpress.com/) This is the blog of the Government Relations Office of the American Association of Law Libraries (AALL). The Washington Blawg covers policy issues, relevant events, news, and resources relevant to the law library community. Also addresses important topics such as access to government information, digital authentication, copyright, open government issues, and more.


Gov Docs Guy (http://library.kentlaw.iit.edu/blogs/govdocs/). This blog covers newsworthy and noteworthy government documents at all levels of government from local to international, and is managed by Kevin McClure, Government Documents Librarian for the Downtown Campus Library at the Chicago-Kent College of Law.

Free Government Information (http://freegovinfo.info/). This blog is written by several librarians with government documents experience. Their goal is to “raise public awareness of the importance of government information and create a community with various stakeholders to facilitate an open and critical dialogue.”

III. AALL Annual Meeting Programs: (Audiotapes are available for most—see AALL Annual Meetings: an Annotated Index of the Recordings in the AALL Publications Series)

“Reaching Our Peak: Resolving Issues for Law Libraries in the Federal Depository Library Program” (2010 GD-SIS-sponsored program at AALL Annual Meeting. Not audiotaped.) Coordinator: Kate Irwin-Smiler. Moderator: Sally Holterhoff. Speakers: Kate Irwin-Smiler, Melanie Oberlin and Jennifer Wondracek. Discussion of three key challenges faced by law libraries participating in the FDLP: providing public access to depository materials within a larger law collection, making collection decisions appropriate to the larger collection, and managing technical services workflow to ensure the library is getting the most benefit for the least cost.

“Law Libraries and the Federal Depository Library Program: Can This Marriage Be Saved?” 2009 AALL Annual Meeting program. Coordinator and Moderator: Sally Holterhoff. Speakers:


Discussion of current participation of law libraries in the FDLP and possibilities for the future, from the varying perspectives of a GPO Inspector, a documents librarian, and a library administrator.

IV. Presentations at Depository Library Council Meetings & Federal Depository Library Conferences

[Note: Law librarians serving on the Depository Library Council to the Public Printer through the years have not only participated in the discussions and deliberations but have also contributed their expertise as speakers, coordinators, and moderators of educational programming at the Fall FDLP Conference. Other members of the law library community have also been speakers on programs at the conference. Listed below are descriptions of a number of such presentations in recent years. Meeting minutes, transcripts, and lecture notes from these presentation are posted on the FDLP Desktop ]

“Digitizing History” 2011 Fall Meeting. Speakers: Susan Lyons, Reference & Government Documents Librarian, Rutgers Law Library, Rutgers Law School; Wei Fang, Head of Digital Services, Rutgers Law Library, Rutgers Law School. The Rutgers Law Library is currently digitizing two collections of materials, primarily government documents, which tell the story of two important episodes in New Jersey history. The presentation will offer a checklist on how to select documents for digitization, funding issues, using open source digital repository software, project management and workflow, metadata, quality control, and digital preservation. A beta Web site will be presented.

This presentation will introduce government documents librarians to several exciting, free and easy-to-use Google cloud computing tools: Alerts, Blogger, Custom Search, Docs, Translator Toolkit, iGoogle, News, Reader, Sites, YouTube. These tools provide automated capture and push, in real-time, of customized government information for depository library patrons.

Come explore PACER - learn how to set up and managing accounts; search; and tips for training staff. Bring your laptop and make this a hands-on session.

“Government Information Mashups: The Future?” 2011 Fall Meeting. Speakers: Jennifer Wondracek, Instructional Services Reference Librarian, Lawton Chiles Legal Information Center, Fredric G. Levin College of Law, University of Florida; Joshua Tauberer, Founder of GovTrack.us & Co-Founder of POPVOX; Tom Lee, Director of Sunlight Labs, Sunlight Foundation; Stephen Schultze, Associate Director, Center for Information Technology, Policy, Princeton University.
Technologies that take raw data and create new, polished information sources are known as mashups. With some of the major sources of government information, such as the Statistical Abstract, being cut due to lack of funding, mashups utilizing government data are going to become even more important. This presentation is intended not only to educate librarians, but also to foster cooperation between those who can build the technology and those who understand patron information needs.

Changes in the learning environment, new modes of information delivery and morphing audience expectations mean government information specialists and educators need to teach and train in creative ways. Panelists will discuss different strategies, including using YouTube videos, online tutorials, and multidisciplinary approaches across the LIS curriculum.

Congress and the Executive branch are pursuing a number of open government initiatives that will make more information available online more rapidly and in improved formats; they're also simultaneously reducing funds for many transparency-related programs. This conversation will provide an overview of some of those initiatives (such as the Open Government Directive, the DATA Act, Data.gov, the Access to Congressionally Mandated Reports Act, and the House’s Legislative Documents initiative) and evaluate their prognosis in the near term. Panelists will also discuss some of the recent cuts in support to GPO, the e-government fund, and other initiatives.

“Five Flags: San Antonio’s Multinational History,” 2011 Spring Meeting. Speakers: Julie McLoone, Rare Books Librarian, University of Texas At San Antonio Libraries; Rita L. Wilson, Government Documents Coordinator, University of Texas at San Antonio Libraries; Stacy Fowler, Technical Services/Government Documents Librarian, St. Mary's University Law Library; and Kathleen L. Amen, Government Information Librarian, St. Mary’s University.

“Making Continuing Education Happen: Details of Planning and Implementing the Six-State Virtual Government Information Conference” 2010 Fall Meeting. Speakers: Janet Fisher, Division Director, Arizona State Library; Peggy Jobe, Associate Professor and Faculty Director, Government Publications Library, University Libraries, University of Colorado at Boulder; Christopher C. Brown, Reference Technology Integration Librarian, University of Denver; Jennie Gerke, Electronic Government Information Librarian, University of Colorado – Boulder; Pat Ragains, Business and Government Information Librarian, University of Nevada, Reno; Sandy Rizzo, Librarian III - Business and Government Information, Mesa (AZ) Public Library. The biennial continuing education conference was scheduled for this year in the 4-corner area of the country. With a weak economy, we were concerned that attendance might be limited. To facilitate broad participation, we decided to experiment with an online econference. The Six-State Virtual Government Information Conference took place from August 11-17, 2010 using GPO's OPAL subscription. The feedback we have received from participants has been overwhelmingly positive. Come and hear how we developed this conference and made it happen.

“Authentication of Digital Government Information: Why Does It Matter?” 2010 Fall Meeting. Moderator: Camilla Tubbs, Government Documents Librarian, Yale Law Library. Speakers: Scott Matheson, Web Manager, Yale University Library; Tim Byrne, Senior Outreach Librarian, U.S. Dept. of Energy; Stuart Basefsky, Senior Reference Librarian, School of Industrial & Labor Relations, Cornell University. Authentication of government information in digital format has been a major concern for law librarians and legal researchers for some time. However, for those in other disciplines—fields such as science, social sciences, and engineering—the integrity of the digital government data used for analysis or experimentation is a matter of considerable importance as well. Panelists will provide varied perspectives on this topic, followed by time for questions from the audience.

Council Session: Council and Strategic Planning” 2009 Spring Meeting. Speakers: Gwen Sinclair, Librarian, University of Hawaii at Manoa Library; Sally Holterhoff, Associate Professor and Government Information/Reference Librarian, Valparaiso University Law Library; Suzanne Sears, Head, Government Documents Department, University of North Texas Willis Library Denise Stephens, Vice Provost for Information Services/ CIO, University of Kansas
Congressional, Library, and Information Services Council will discuss the development and evolution of the draft FDLP Strategic Plan, including goals and strategies.

“Plenary Session: Future of the FDLP,” 2008 Fall Meeting. Speakers: Cynthia Etkin, Senior Program Planning Specialist, Office of the Superintendent of Documents, GPO; Denise Stephens, Vice Provost for Information Services/CIO, University of Kansas; Gwen Sinclair, Head of Government Documents & Maps, University of Hawaii at Manoa Library; Sally Holterhoff, Associate Professor and Government Information/Reference Librarian, Valparaiso University Law Library.
Discussion of the future of the FDLP and how we get there through strategic planning. A continuation of the session from last Spring’s Council meeting.

Discussion of the depository library guidelines that focuses on user needs and services within an environment of distributed digital collections.

“I'll Get By With A Little Help from My Friends: Create a Local Government Documents Networking Group!” 2007 Fall Meeting. Speakers: Sally Holterhoff, Valparaiso University School of Law; Kirsten Leonard, INDIGO Chair/E-Resources & Documents Librarian, Indiana University Kokomo Library; and Judith Violette, Indiana University Purdue University Fort Wayne.


“Plenary Session: AELIC’s Survey on Authentication of Government Information.” 2007 Fall Meeting. Speakers: Mary Alice Baish, AALL Associate Washington Affairs Representative; Peter Lefevre, Law Revision Counsel, U.S. House of Representatives; and Mike Wash, Chief Technical Officer, GPO.
During the Council Plenary Session: E-I AELIC’s Survey on Authentication of Government Information: A Year Later and Still Challenging.

“Implementing LOCKSS in My Library,” 2007 Spring Meeting. Speakers: M. Elizabeth Cowell, U.S. Government Information Librarian, Stanford University; Patricia Kenly, Business Reference Librarian & Documents, Coordinator, Georgia Institute of Technology; Scott Matheson, Head of Public Services, University of Colorado Boulder Law Library.

“Council Session: Open Forum” 2007 Spring Meeting. Facilitator: Marian Parker, Associate Dean for Information Services, Wake Forest University School of Law and Ric Davis, Director, Library Services & Content Management, GPO Council & GPO staff.
An opportunity for attendees to exchange information and participate in a Q&A session with Council and GPO staff.
“E-Competencies and Development of Standards,” 2003 Fall Meeting. Speakers: Janie L. Hassard Herman, Princeton Public Library; Timothy L. Coggins, University of Richmond School of Law.

“Government Sites for Kids,” 2002 Fall Meeting. Mary Goetzinger, Federal Consumer Information Center; Jim Veatch, Library HQ; Barbie Selby, University of Virginia, Arthur J. Morris Law Library; T.C. Evans, EIDS.

“Important Legal Resources (Yes, Even in Your Non-Law Library),” 2001 Fall Meeting. Speakers: Mark Gooch, College of Wooster; Barbara Selby, Arthur J. Morris Law Library, University of Virginia.


“Reconsidering Depository Status,” 2000 Fall Meeting. Speakers: A. Hays Butler, Government Documents/Reference Librarian, Rutgers University School of Law, Camden; David C.R. Heisser, Reference/Documents Librarian, The Citadel Military College; Elizabeth M. McKenzie, Director, Suffolk University Law Library; Sheila M. McGarr, Chief, Library Division, LPS.


V. AALL Testimony on the FDLP (1995 to current)

The 113th Congress (2013-2014)


The 112th Congress (2011-2012)

• Statement for the record by AALL President Darcy Kirk in support of the FY 2013 budget requests of the Library of Congress and the Government Printing Office before the House Committee on Appropriations Subcommittee on Legislative Branch, March 20, 2012.

• Statement for the record by AALL President Darcy Kirk to urge full funding for the Government Printing Office in the FY 2012 Legislative Appropriations bill to Senate Committee on Appropriations Subcommittee on Legislative Branch, September 14, 2011.


The 111th Congress (2009-2010)
• Oral Statement by Mary Alice Baish in support of the FY 2011 appropriations request of the Government Printing Office before the House Committee on Appropriations' Subcommittee on Legislative Branch "Legislative Branch Subcommittee Public Witness Hearing”, February 24, 2010.

• Statement by Mary Alice Baish on behalf of AALL, the Medical Library Association, and the Special Libraries Association in support of the FY 2010 appropriations request of the U.S. Government Printing Office before the House Committee on Appropriations' Subcommittee on Legislative Branch "Legislative Branch Subcommittee Public Witness Hearing", May 5, 2009.
  • Oral Statement by Mary Alice Baish

The 110th Congress (2007-2008)
  • Oral Statement by Mary Alice Baish

  • Oral Statement by Mary Alice Baish
  • Responses to Questions for the Hearing Record, May 9, 2007

The 109th Congress (2005-2006)
none


The 107th Congress (2001-2002)


The 106th Congress (1999-2000)

- Written Testimony of Ridley R. Kessler, Regional Documents Librarian, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill on behalf of AALL, ALA, ARL, MLA and SLA, regarding the FY 2001 Appropriations for the Government Printing Office before the Subcommittee on Legislative, House Committee on Appropriations, February 2, 2000.
  - Oral Testimony by Ridley R. Kessler

  - Oral Testimony of Ridley R. Kessler, Jr.
  - Responses by Ridley R. Kessler, Jr. to questions from Representative Steny Hoyer

The 105th Congress (1997-1998)

  - Oral Statement by Robert L. Oakley
  - Responses from Robert L. Oakley, Washington Affairs Representative for the American Association of Law Libraries, to Questions for the Hearing Record from Senator Wendell Ford, Ranking Minority Member, Senate Committee on Rules and Administration
  - Response from Robert L. Oakley, Washington Affairs Representative for the American Association of Law Libraries, to Question for the Hearing Record from Senator John Warner, Chair, Senate Committee on Rules and Administration

• **Statement of Barbara J. Ford, Executive Director, University Library Services, Virginia Commonwealth University** on proposed revisions to Title 44 of the United States Code before the Senate Committee on Rules and Administration, May 8, 1997.

• **Statement of Robert L. Oakley, Director of the Law Library and Professor of Law, Georgetown University Law Center Library, Edward B. Williams Law Library** on the Government Printing Office and Executive Branch Information Dissemination before the House Subcommittee on Government Management, Information and Technology Committee on Government Reform and Oversight, May 8, 1997.

• **Statement of Robert L. Oakley, Director of the Law Library and Professor of Law, Georgetown University Law Center Library, Edward B. Williams Law Library** on the FY 1998 appropriations for the Government Printing Office before the Subcommittee on Legislative House Committee on Appropriations, February 12, 1997.

**The 104th Congress (1995-1996)**

• **Statement for the hearing record of the American Library Association, American Association of Law Libraries and the Association of Research Libraries** regarding the FY 1997 appropriations for the Superintendent of Documents before the Subcommittee on Legislative Branch, United States Senate, July 10, 1996.

• **Statement of Dr. Betty J. Turock, Professor, Library and Information Studies, Rutgers University** on Public Access to Government Information in the 21st Century before the Senate Committee on Rules and Administration, June 18, 1996.

• **Statement of Dr. Betty J. Turock, Professor, Library and Information Studies, Rutgers University** on the FY 1997 appropriations for the Government Printing Office before the Subcommittee on Legislative Branch House Committee on Appropriations, March 6, 1996.

• **Statement of Dr. Betty J. Turock, Professor, Library and Information Studies, Rutgers University** on the FY 1996 appropriations for the Government Printing Office before the Subcommittee on Legislative Branch House Committee on Appropriations, February 23, 1995.