

Separate But Unequal No More: Integrating Federal Documents Collections

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- I. Director's View of Documents in a Law Library
 - A. Government documents are essential to the users of law libraries
 - 1. Government documents contain primary legal information – judicial opinions, legislative enactments, administrative decisions, rules, and orders
 - 2. But often best research tools containing or giving access to government legal information are published commercially. So government documents alone are not enough!
 - B. Government documents give the public access to justice
 - 1. Must be accessible on the same basis as other law library materials
 - 2. The public may need more help in use of legal materials
 - C. Physically separate documents collections and departments do not support the goals of intellectual integration of government information or of equal access
 - 1. Different organizational schemes, different physical locations, and different service points assume user knows to ask for documents.
 - 2. Different cataloging rules and record-keeping tasks make access more difficult and inefficient.
 - 3. Separate documents departments can be isolated from the mainstream of library activities and services
 - 4. Automated systems have made it more difficult to justify separate technical servicing for documents

- II. Budgeting and Personnel Issues
 - A. Must think of integration on 5 levels
 - 1. Personnel
 - 2. Physical and virtual collections
 - 3. Record keeping
 - 4. Service points for users
 - 5. Selection
 - B. Who will do what?
 - 1. Selection
 - 2. Cataloging
 - 3. Check in and process
 - 4. Provide reference services
 - C. Does the selector need to supervise the box-opener?
 - 1. Yes – needs to be competent to know entire automated serials system

2. No – does not need to develop this expertise, but superior communication will be essential
 - D. Selector should not be responsible for all reference questions involving government documents
 1. Intellectual integration of all government legal information is the responsibility of all reference librarians, regardless of who publishes it
 2. Selection of government documents does give rise to special expertise that needs to be shared with colleagues and users
 3. Users don't know "documents"
- III. Is Federal Depository Library Program Necessary With Transition to All Electronic Information?
- A. Much less important since Federal Depository Library Program no longer provides content!
 - B. But may be necessary if public access to legal information is somehow restricted
 - C. Switch to electronic (with no archiving standards) has been cheaper for the government, not less expensive for FDLP members
 - D. Selection & record keeping have been hard hit
 - E. No Federal Depository Library Program would make selection of federal government documents more like selection of other government documents.
- IV. Mainstreaming of Government Document at All Levels Has Improved the Access to These Important Materials and has Improved Our Overall Service to All Users
- A. Current practice at Gallagher Law Library
 1. Reference librarian spends half time plus doing all documents selection
 2. Technical services handles Federal Depository Library Program boxes, cataloging, and processing
 3. Government documents sit with their commercial sisters
 4. All reference librarians think of and use government documents in their work
 - B. Results of integration
 1. Selection of important documents is normalized and consistent with library's collection development policy
 2. More efficient technical processing of all documents by technical processing of all documents by technical specialists
 3. Better service to all users through web catalog and trained reference librarians
 4. Intellectual integration of government information
 5. Reduced the people resources devoted to this one type of legal information
 - C. Federal government documents are a microcosm of what is going on more broadly in legal publishing. We use documents as our case studies – as a way to think about the bigger questions of the information revolution