



So Long and Thanks for All the Fish*

Amy West

Hello fellow GODORTers! This is my last column as chair and I'm pleased to announce a change to GODORT's communications infrastructure. If you have not already done so, I want to

encourage you to log in to the ALA website (using your ALA member number) and establish and use a member account on ALA Connect to ensure that you receive GODORT information in a timely way. ALA Connect will replace the GODORT announcement list immediately following the 2010 Annual Conference in Washington, D.C.

In 2007, GODORT decided to set up an announcement list for GODORT members using ALA-supplied software. Because GOVDOC-L was and remains a discussion list for government information issues regardless of a subscriber's ALA membership status, GODORT officers felt that the new list should be announcements only, rather than discussion, and should focus on GODORT-specific content such as agendas for upcoming meetings. However, due to a number of factors, the GODORT announcement list never quite worked as intended. For one thing, only moderators can actually post, so there is manual effort involved in posting every single message. For another, GODORT documentation continued to direct GODORT officers to post materials to GOVDOC-L for some time after the new list went live, so some folks got lots of duplicate posts while non-ALA subscribers of GOVDOC-L continued to see posts of little interest. Further, the list isn't automatically updated with new GODORT members (nor are former members automatically dropped from the list) and this, too, contributed to the problems of the GODORT list.

Moreover, since 2007, ALA has introduced a host of new tools to support (attempts at) seamless in-person/virtual member activity, and at least two third-party social tools, Facebook and Twitter, have gained prominence among members. GODORT has dipped its toes into nearly all of these venues. While each of these tools represents fabulous potential for supporting virtual activity, each has also created a much more complex and fragmented information landscape. The complexity may be out of our control, but the GODORT Steering Committee believes we can take some steps to address the fragmentation issue.

To that end, at the 2009 Annual Conference in Chicago, an Ad Hoc Committee on GODORT Communications was

formed, with the following charge:

To identify the range of GODORT communications, define appropriate roles for each of the tools above if appropriate for the purpose, and to define a policy regarding member experiments that may make use of the GODORT identity.

The committee recommendations should

- support and further the intent of GODORT communication;
- facilitate communication by all GODORT members and not serve as a barrier to participation;
- enhance distributed work patterns, as we are an all-volunteer organization;
- maximize automated solutions where possible in order to extend the reach of GODORT-created content as widely as possible with the least amount of manual effort;
- support continued experimentation with new technologies in order to expand virtual, year-round participation in GODORT; and
- eliminate tools if deemed appropriate.

The committee reviewed the use of several existing tools and, at the 2010 Midwinter Meeting in Boston, one of its first recommendations to Steering was that the `godort@ala.org` announcement list be discontinued and replaced by ALA Connect (connect.ala.org).

ALA Connect will allow greater participation by members because it combines into a single location the option to create posts, participate in discussions, hold votes, hold group chat discussions, and post events to the calendar. Because users may receive notice of changes to their ALA Connect communities by email, it does everything an announcement list does, and quite a bit more.

If you have not yet logged on to ALA Connect to set up your email preferences, please do so. You can elect to receive an email message every time someone posts new content to one of your ALA groups or communities, or you can change the frequency of emails to twice a day, daily, or weekly. You will need your ALA member number and password to log in to ALA Connect as a member, which will allow you to view and participate in member-only areas of the site. Step-by-step instructions for refining your email preferences are available at connect.ala.org/email-help.

I'd like to thank all members of the Ad Hoc Committee on Communications, but I'd especially like to thank its co-chairs who have substantial additional duties within the organization and stepped up to tackle this thorny area. So, thank you Valerie Glenn and John Stevenson! Finally, while the Ad Hoc Committee on Communications will conclude at the 2010 Annual Conference, there will doubtless remain communications issues going forward. If you are interested

in helping GODORT navigate through the plethora of communications technologies available, please let your incoming chair, Geoff Swindells, know at your earliest convenience. I feel sure we can accommodate your interests!

* Douglas Adams. *So Long, and Thanks for All the Fish* (New York: Harmony Books, 1985).

Announcing the 5th Annual Cover Contest

Put your photo on *DttP*!

We had such fun with the photos we received for the previous contests, and we already had requests for another contest, so here we go again!

Put together your favorite government comic book together with its superhero... industrial guides with your neighboring factory—the sky (and perhaps TSA) is the limit!

Details

- Photos may be of state, local, federal, foreign, or international publications out in the field.
- All photos submitted must include citation information—use the *Chicago Manual of Style* citation format.
- Photo orientation should be portrait (not landscape).
- Digital photos must be at least 300 dpi.
- File format should be .jpg or .gif
- File name should be lastname_2011.jpg OR lastname_2011.gif

Please submit all images to the lead editors of *DttP* by December 1, 2010. The photo will be on the cover of the Spring 2011 issue. All submitted photos will be posted on the GODORT wiki.

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