

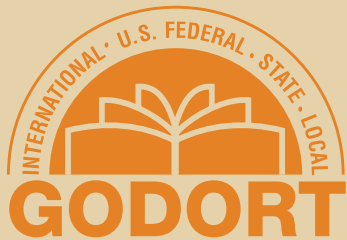
## In This Issue

- **Fugitive Documents: A Case Study of US Forest Service Scientific Reports**
- **GovDocs to the Rescue! Debunking an Immigration Myth**
- **Membership Update**
- **Recommendations: The Federal Depository Library Program and Title 44**

# DttP

## Documents to the People

Spring 2018 | Volume 46, No. 1 | ISSN 0091-2085





*DttP: Documents to the People* (ISSN: 0091-2085) is published quarterly in spring, summer, fall, and winter by the American Library Association (ALA), 50 East Huron Street, Chicago, IL 60611. It is the official publication of ALA's Government Documents Round Table (GODORT).

*DttP* features articles on local, state, national, and international government information and government activities of GODORT. The opinions expressed by its contributors are their own and do not necessarily represent those of GODORT.

**Editorial Staff:**

Please see the wiki for full contact information: [wikis.ala.org/godort/index.php/DttP\\_Editorial\\_Staff\\_and\\_Column\\_Editors](http://wikis.ala.org/godort/index.php/DttP_Editorial_Staff_and_Column_Editors).

**Lead Editor:**

Elizabeth Psyck, Grand Valley State University; (616) 331-8674; [DttP.editor@gmail.com](mailto:DttP.editor@gmail.com)

**Editors:**

Sonya Durney, Portland Public Library; (207) 871-1700; [durney@portland.lib.me.us](mailto:durney@portland.lib.me.us)  
Sonnet Ireland, University of New Orleans; (504) 280-7276; [sebrown3@uno.edu](mailto:sebrown3@uno.edu)  
Stephanie Bowe, University of Maryland; (410) 706-0783; [sbowe@law.umaryland.edu](mailto:sbowe@law.umaryland.edu)

**Reviews Editor:** Paula Webb, University of South Alabama, [pwebb@southalabama.edu](mailto:pwebb@southalabama.edu)

**Advertising Editor:** Laura Sare, Texas A&M University Libraries; (979) 458-2200, [lsare@tamu.edu](mailto:lsare@tamu.edu)

**Advertising:** Inquiries about advertising may be addressed to the Advertising Editor. Please see [wikis.ala.org/godort/index.php/DttP\\_Advertising\\_Rates](http://wikis.ala.org/godort/index.php/DttP_Advertising_Rates) for rates and publication schedule. *DttP* accepts advertising to inform readers of products and services. *DttP* will adhere to all ethical and commonly accepted advertising practices and will make every effort to ensure that its practices in relation to advertising are consistent with those of other Association publications. *DttP* reserves the right to reject any advertisement deemed not relevant or consistent to the above or to the aims and policies of ALA.

**Distribution Manager:** ALA Subscription Department, 50 E. Huron St., Chicago, IL 60611. 1-800-545-2433, press 5; fax: (312) 280-1538; [subscriptions@ala.org](mailto:subscriptions@ala.org)

**Subscriptions/Claims:** *DttP* is sent free to ALA/GODORT members on a per volume (annual) basis. For subscriptions, prepayment is required in the amount of \$35 in North America, \$45 elsewhere. Checks or money orders should be made payable to "ALA/GODORT" and sent to the Distribution Manager. Changes of address and claims six months of the date of issue should be sent to the Distribution Manager. To purchase back issues, write to UMI, 300 North Zeeb Rd., Ann Arbor, MI 48106.

**Contributions:** Articles, news items, letters, and other information intended for publication in *DttP* should be submitted to the Lead Editor. All submitted material is subject to editorial review. Please see the wiki for additional information: [wikis.ala.org/godort/index.php/DttP](http://wikis.ala.org/godort/index.php/DttP)

**Indexing:** Indexed in Library Literature 19, no. 1 (1991) and CSA Worldwide Political Science Abstracts 33, no. 1 (2005), and selectively in PAIS 33, no 1 (2005).

**Editorial Production:** ALA Production Services — Chris Keech, Tim Clifford, Lauren Ehle, and Veronica Perez.

**Columnists:**

Documents Without Borders

Jim Church

Doe Library

University of California, Berkeley

[jchurch@library.berkeley.edu](mailto:jchurch@library.berkeley.edu)

Jane Canfield

Biblioteca Encarnacion Valdes

Pontifica Universidad Catolica

[jeanfield@pucpr.edu](mailto:jeanfield@pucpr.edu)

Federal Documents Focus

Rebecca Hyde

St. Louis University

[rhyde1@slu.edu](mailto:rhyde1@slu.edu)

Lucia Orlando

Univ. of California Santa Cruz

[luciao@ucsc.edu](mailto:luciao@ucsc.edu)

# DttP

Documents to the People

Spring 2018 | Volume 46, No. 1 | ISSN 0091-2085

## Column

- 2 From the Chair—Shari Laster

## Features

- 3 Fugitive Documents

*A Case Study of US Forest Service Scientific Reports*

Carol A. Singer

- 7 GovDocs to the Rescue!

*Debunking an Immigration Myth*

Rosemary Meszaros and Katherine Pennava

## 'Round the Table

- 13 Membership Update

- 17 Recommendations: The Federal Depository Library Program and Title 44

## Book Review

- 20 A Legacy of Lessons Learned: Landstuhl Regional Medical Center During Wartime, 2001-2014

---

## About the Cover:

"Two llamas enjoy the Billy the Kid Trail," from Digital Photographs Relating to America's Byways, ca. 1995–ca. 2013, contained in Record Goup 406 Records of the Federal Highway Administration, 1956–2008, <https://catalog.archives.gov/id/7717352>.



## Where do we go from here?

Shari Laster

**A**s I write this message in early March 2018, we are on the cusp of the introduction of the major legislative reform affecting access to government information.<sup>1</sup> A draft bill, written by the Committee on House Administration, is expected to be introduced that would make substantial changes to the Federal Depository Library Program (FDLP) and possibly to the agency that administers it, the US Government Publishing Office (GPO).

Many of the changes to the FDLP proposed in draft reflect principles endorsed by the GODORT Steering Committee in August 2017, which were incorporated into the American Library Association's Title 44 reform position statement. Perhaps in part because the FDLP serves the public with minimal fanfare and virtually no recognition, these measures were developed in a bipartisan process with the input of groups including the American Library Association (through the Washington Office), the American Association of Law Libraries, and the Association of Research Libraries. Librarians and others testified before the Committee on House Administration in September 2017; GPO officials testified over the summer and responded to Congressional requests for information in consultation with the Depository Library Council (DLC).

However, other draft provisions would substantially revise GPO's authority to oversee federal information dissemination. Some of these changes are progressive in that they update provisions originating from the Printing Act of 1895. Others reflect increasing government privatization and decentralization; for example, the scope of print procurement that federal offices can undertake independent of GPO is expanded. A few provisions might be considered regressive, including those that rename the agency head, currently "Director of the Government Publishing Office," back to "Public Printer" and further stipulates that the appointee shall be a graphic communication professional who will serve in the post for a term of ten years.

We do not know if there will be ample time to gather and consider useful public input as to whether reforms to GPO's mandate and operations, if introduced, are in the best interest of public access to government information. Such reforms and changes may go forward (or not) and be approved by the House of Representatives (or not) for reasons that are driven by politics, not policy.<sup>2</sup> For those who have worked on these issues

since the past summer (and in many cases, much longer than that), this is a great disappointment.

The GODORT Principals statement is excerpted in this issue both for general information and to make a point. For the most part, our statement focuses on structural changes to the FDLP itself. We did not recommend changes to GPO's other operations, or the priorities and administrative decision-making of any number of participating libraries, or the work of librarians and library staff who provide access to the public on an everyday basis. Yet all of these factors must come together for the FDLP.

As library folks who care about government information, we would do very well to look beyond our self-imposed boundaries. Too many draw a hard-and-fast line between publications and records, or insist that government data is too different from government documents to be within the scope of our work, or arbitrarily decide that we can only provide shared, persistent access to publications if GPO first catalogs them. I am concerned that these barriers cause us to miss the larger picture, which is that work happens in libraries every day that blithely disregards every one of these distinctions, and many more I have not identified here.

The great challenge of our day is to push past what we think we can each do individually. Let's work with archivists and records managers, let's work with metadata creators and digital preservationists, let's work with researchers and teachers and learners across disciplinary boundaries. Let's work with our communities and members of the public, especially those whose needs and interests are so often marginalized in traditional library collections and services. Let's work with our government partners, yes, but also with nonprofits and advocacy groups. And let's learn to listen better and then make our voices heard—in our libraries, in our professional communities, and in all of the work that touches ours.

The past year has shown us that government information is relevant and that the public cares about it. It's up to us to make the connections that can change everything.

### Notes

1. My discussion reflects the 2/22/2018 draft; it is possible that the bill as introduced will be altered from this version.
2. For a sense of what this process has been like, the best comparison I can offer is available at the following link: <https://goo.gl/eGyxvY>.

# Fugitive Documents

## A Case Study of US Forest Service Scientific Reports

Carol A. Singer

Librarians who work with government publications have long been concerned about the many US government documents that remain inaccessible and, in some cases, difficult to discover. In 1976, Ruth Smith reported to the Public Printer's Depository Library Council, "A conservative estimate is that 50% of the Federal documents published are not main stream publications. In one way or another they manage to elude national announcement. They are not sent to GPO or NTIS [US National Technical Information Service] and are not widely advertised."<sup>1</sup> In 1993, Peter Hernon expressed this common concern: "We can question how the public can learn about the existence of particular information resources and services, how public access can be guaranteed and enhanced, and how information services can be standardized and seamlessly linked for better use."<sup>2</sup> The problem is considered so serious that in 2004 the Fugitive and Electronic-Only Documents Committee of the American Association of Law Libraries Government Documents Special Interest Section sponsored the first annual Fugitive Documents Week to encourage librarians to report fugitive documents to the US Government Printing Office (GPO).<sup>3</sup>

As distribution of government documents increasingly transitioned to an online service, librarians worried that this would further impede the FDLP's ability to provide depository library access to the publications produced by US government entities. As Kristi Jensen noted,

A more dispersed network environment that allows publishing agencies to bypass the traditional reporting mechanisms means that some resources may never be included in library catalogs or online indexes, the tools frequently used in an academic research library to provide access to government information. . . . Thus, rather than becoming more accessible these undistributed online documents may become almost

entirely inaccessible to the typical user in a large research library.<sup>4</sup>

This inaccessibility is caused, in part, by the lack of a single resource that lists all documents published by US government entities. It is impossible to determine what percentage of government publications, whether they are tangible or virtual, are distributed to depository libraries because there is no accurate count of how many US government publications are produced.

Although government documents librarians frequently refer to these missing documents as fugitive documents, exact definitions for the term vary. In 1975, Cynthia Bower defined a fugitive as "any federal publication that my library—a regional depository—failed to receive on deposit."<sup>5</sup> A 2001 General Accounting Office report defined fugitive documents as "documents that should be—but are not—distributed by the Superintendent of Documents to the depository libraries."<sup>6</sup> In 2003, Gil Baldwin, director of GPO's Library Programs Service, defined a tangible fugitive document as "a U.S. Government publication that falls within the scope of the Federal Depository Library Program (FDLP), but has not been included in the FDLP," but noted that there was a second category he termed "online fugitives." This category consisted of online publications whose existence was not reported to the GPO. He estimated there might be 250,000 online fugitive publications that should have been part of the FDLP.<sup>7</sup> A 2004 article in a GPO newsletter defined fugitive documents as "those documents of public interest or educational value, not classified for reasons of national security, which have not been acquired for distribution to Federal depository libraries or brought under bibliographic control through the Catalog of U.S. Government Publications."<sup>8</sup> In 2005, Jacobs, Jacobs, and Yeo defined fugitive documents as "publications that are not entered into the national bibliographic record nor distributed to FDLP libraries."<sup>9</sup>

One problem area in access and discovery of government publications has been federal scientific and technical information (STI). A 1990 Office of Technology Assessment report studied the problem of dissemination of federal STI and concluded that four key areas would determine the success of federal scientific and technical information. One of these was “indexing of databases and documents, so that STI users in and out of the government know what and where STI exists.”<sup>10</sup> David Gold wrote in 1993 that ineffective indexes means, for the public, “there is no access point to comprehensive information on federally-produced STI. Due to this, researchers and engineers in academia, the private sector, and even the Federal government cannot find out quickly about *all* STI which has resulted from Federal R&D in a given area of interest to them.”<sup>11</sup> Gil Baldwin quoted a former director of the NTIS who said in 2000 that there could be “50,000 gray literature NTIS titles” that should have been part of the FDLP.<sup>12</sup> An Inspector General investigation of National Institutes of Health (NIH) publishing found that NIH had supplied the FDLP with adequate copies of only ten of the sixty-two publications included in their test sample.<sup>13</sup> The report noted, “By NIH not providing copies of publications to GPO for FDLP distribution, Depository Libraries, and the public who use them, do not have ready access to documents to which they are entitled, that were printed with taxpayer funding.”<sup>14</sup>

In 2001, Kristi Jensen published the results of an attempt to identify US Geological Survey open-file reports missing from the Pennsylvania State University collection. Jensen initially identified more than 1,300 reports using a variety of resources and finalized a list of 240 items that were missing from her library’s catalog and also from the US Geological Survey’s list of open-file reports. She then searched for these documents in GeoRef, WorldCat, the Catalog of US Government Publications (CGP), and the catalogs of two similar universities. She found that none of these databases included records for almost 30 percent of the 240 documents.<sup>15</sup>

Lisa S. Nickum described the historical difficulties in finding federally funded technical reports, concluding that most are “not available in other widely used commercial databases with related journal literature. The problems with dissemination, accessibility, and bibliographic control have led, understandably, to the belief that the federally funded technical report literature is difficult, if not impossible, to identify and locate.”<sup>16</sup>

The ability to identify and access full text of the publications of the US Forest Service’s Northern Research Station (NRS) published from 2012 through 2016 served as a case study in access to and discovery of recent US government scientific and technical literature. According to the webpage titled

“About the Northern Research Station” ([www.nrs.fs.fed.us/about/](http://www.nrs.fs.fed.us/about/)) the NRS is one of seven Forest Service research units and covers an area that includes states from Minnesota in the north to Missouri in the south and to Maine in the northeast. A list was compiled of 361 documents published by the NRS during those five years, using Forest Service resources, in addition to internet and database searches.

During July and August 2017, a variety of online resources were searched to explore how easily a researcher would be able to identify any of these 361 publications. Each publication was searched by title and, if necessary, keywords or author.

The initial question to be addressed was whether these publications were considered fugitive documents. Although the definition of a fugitive document varies, a common thread among the definitions is that these documents were not distributed by the FDLP. If a document was included in the FDLP, in either tangible or virtual format, it should be listed in the CGP ([catalog.gpo.gov/](http://catalog.gpo.gov/)). Only 234 of the 361 publications (65 percent) were found in the CGP, resulting in 127 fugitive documents issued by the NRS between 2012 and 2016.

Although a researcher looking for research published by the federal government might have chosen to search the CGP, there are other resources that might be searched for the types of research conducted by the Forest Service.

If a researcher was looking specifically for Forest Service publications, the obvious choice would be Treearch ([www.fs.usda.gov/treearch/](http://www.fs.usda.gov/treearch/)), the Forest Service’s database of full-text scientific publications authored by Forest Service scientists, including reports, journal articles, conference proceedings, and books. Because this database doesn’t include documents that are not considered to be scientific, 20 (6 percent) of the 361 publications in the test sample were not in the Treearch database. However, not all researchers who could benefit from using NRS publications would use this database because the Forest Service publishes research on topics that are not exclusively about forests.

The NRS also provides access to their publications if a researcher knows which NRS scientific series would include the needed publication. Their “Publications and Data” page ([www.nrs.fs.fed.us/pubs/](http://www.nrs.fs.fed.us/pubs/)) links to lists of the documents in these series, which include General Technical Reports, General Technical Reports—Proceedings, Information Forestry, Resource Bulletins, Research Maps, Research Notes, and Research Papers. In addition, their “News Releases” page ([www.nrs.fs.fed.us/news/](http://www.nrs.fs.fed.us/news/)) includes a list of publications in the Station’s Research Releases series, with links to the full text of each document. These two pages collectively provide citations and links to full text of 347 (96 percent) of the 361 documents.

However, not all researchers would know that the Forest Service or NRS might issue documents that would be useful for their work. As Gold explained, “Unclassified Federal STI is currently available, but it only has an impact if a researcher can find useful information quickly.”<sup>17</sup> How would a researcher discover the existence of relevant NRS publications without deliberately searching for these reports at Forest Service or NRS websites?

One database that allows for discovery of current federal scientific publications is Science.gov ([www.science.gov/](http://www.science.gov/)). This database searches more than sixty federal databases and scientific websites for federal government scientific and technical information, including Treearch. Because of this, 361 (94 percent) of the NRS publications were in the Science.gov database.

The National Technical Reports Library (NTRL) ([ntrl.ntis.gov/NTRL/](http://ntrl.ntis.gov/NTRL/)), a service of the NTIS, provides indexing and full text for a wide variety of US technical reports. In 1994, David Gold wrote, “In theory, NTIS is supposed to serve as a (non-exclusive) centralized repository and distributor for Federal STI allowing researchers access to a comprehensive system to find the information they seek.”<sup>18</sup> However, only 215 (60 percent) of these NRS reports were part of the NTRL.

Another federal database that searches scientific information is the National Agricultural Library database, NAL Catalog (AGRICOLA) ([agricola.nal.usda.gov/](http://agricola.nal.usda.gov/)). This database includes records for agriculture and allied disciplines, including forestry. AGRICOLA offers separate searches for books and articles in addition to a combined search. The titles in this test sample were searched using the Book Search. Because the Forest Service and the National Agricultural Library are both part of the US Department of Agriculture, and because forestry is one of the subjects included in this database, a researcher might assume that these NRS documents would be part of the AGRICOLA database. Unfortunately, the researcher would be disappointed: only 203 (56 percent) of the 361 papers in the test sample were in the NAL Catalog (AGRICOLA).

All publications were searched in OCLC’s WorldCat database ([www.worldcat.org/](http://www.worldcat.org/)) to get an indication of whether these NRS documents were available in libraries. Although this database doesn’t include holdings for all libraries in the US, it is a source of holdings for a very large number of libraries. The WorldCat database included records for only 285 (79 percent) of the 361 documents.

Google Scholar ([scholar.google.com/](http://scholar.google.com/)) is a popular search engine that indexes and provides access to a wide variety of journal articles, books, reports, etc. Beckmann and von Wehrden compared Google Scholar to Web of Science and concluded

**Table 1. Search results**

Database	Papers Found (N = 361)	Percent
Northern Research Station Series lists	347	96%
Treearch	341	94%
Science.gov	341	94%
WorldCat	285	79%
Google Scholar	245	68%
Catalog of US Government Publications	234	65%
National Technical Reports Library	215	60%
Agricola	203	56%

that “due to its full-text search capabilities, [Google Scholar] is an important and very useful tool to search the literature. To date, it has been widely overlooked by the scientific community.”<sup>19</sup> Google Scholar provided records for 245 (68 percent) of the 361 documents in the test sample.

In addition to the sources listed above, the commercial databases BIOSIS Previews ([wokinfo.com/products\\_tools/specialized/bp/](http://wokinfo.com/products_tools/specialized/bp/)), Environment Complete ([www.ebsco.com/products/research-databases/environment-complete](http://www.ebsco.com/products/research-databases/environment-complete)), and GreenFILE ([www.ebsco.com/products/research-databases/greenfile](http://www.ebsco.com/products/research-databases/greenfile)) were also searched for records of these documents, but none were found.

As the results show, none of the sources that were searched included all of the 361 publications in this sample. These searches were performed in July and August 2017, so additional reports from the test sample may now be indexed in one or more of these sources. The results of the searches, in order by percentage of NRS documents included in the source, are in table 1.

In addition to being able to search for previously published documents, scientists also strive to maintain a knowledge of current research. There are several resources for those who wish to know the most recent NRS publications. The NRS announces new publications on its “New Station Publications” page ([www.nrs.fs.fed.us/pubs/updates/](http://www.nrs.fs.fed.us/pubs/updates/)), which provides a selective list of recent NRS publications in addition to links to previous iterations of this list. These lists collectively announced the publication of 261 (72 percent) of the 361 publications. The NRS also announces some of their new publications on their Twitter feed (@usfs\_nrs). Their Twitter feed was used to announce 202 (56 percent) of the 361 items published from 2012 to 2016. The Forest Service Library compiles selective lists of recent Forest Service publications, which are published in the *Journal of Forestry*. These lists are composed of documents from all of the Forest Service research units. Records for 138 (38 percent) of the documents in this case study were included in these lists.

If a fugitive document is defined as one that is missing from the FDLP, this exploration revealed disturbing news for government documents librarians. Slightly more than one-third of the documents in this sample were missing from the CGP.

However, this is a test only of the documents published from 2012 to 2016 by one unit of an agency within one cabinet-level department. To make a more definitive statement about the extent of fugitive documents, much more research would be needed. It is not clear that the results of a search for items published in other periods by other research units within the Forest Service, by other agencies within the US Department of Agriculture, or by other federal government units would yield similar results. Instead, the results of this exploration could be considered to be a canary in the coal mine, a warning that the number of fugitive documents may be quite significant.

**Carol A. Singer** (singerca@bgsu.edu), Reference and Instruction Librarian, Bowling Green State University.

## Notes

1. US Superintendent of Documents, Depository Library Council to the Public Printer, *First Report to the Public Printer 1972–1976* (Washington, DC: US GPO, 1978).
2. Peter Herson, “Discussion Forum: Equity in Public Access to Government Information,” *Government Information Quarterly* 10, no. 3 (1993): 302, [https://doi.org/10.1016/0740-624X\(93\)90014-Q](https://doi.org/10.1016/0740-624X(93)90014-Q).
3. “First Fugitive Documents Week Nets 222 New Titles,” *Administrative Notes* 25, no. 5 (April 14, 2004): 1, [tinyurl.com/y7cqlx5x](http://tinyurl.com/y7cqlx5x).
4. Kristi L. Jensen, “Providing Access to Online Government Documents in an Academic Research Library Collection,” *Science & Technology Libraries* 20, no. 2/3 (2001): 17, [https://doi.org/10.1300/J122v20n02\\_03](https://doi.org/10.1300/J122v20n02_03).
5. Cynthia Bower, “Federal Fugitives, DNDs and Other Aberrants: A Cosmology,” *DtTP: Documents to the People* 17, no. 3 (September 1989): 120, <https://searchworks.stanford.edu/view/xm677yc8398>.
6. US General Accounting Office, *Information Management: Electronic Dissemination of Government Publications*, Report no. GAO-01-428 (Washington, DC: US Government Printing Office, 2001), <https://www.gao.gov/new.items/d01428.pdf>.
7. Gil Baldwin, “Fugitive Documents—On the Loose or On the Run; Presentation by Gil Baldwin, Director, Library Programs Service, GPO; American Association of Law Libraries Conference, Seattle, WA, July 15, 2003,” *Administrative Notes* 24, no. 10 (August 15, 2003): 4–5, <https://tinyurl.com/ybtctx6g>.
8. “First Fugitive Documents,” 1.
9. James A. Jacobs, James R. Jacobs, and Shinjoung Yeo, “Government Information in the Digital Age: The Once and Future Federal Depository Program,” *Journal of Academic Librarianship* 31, no. 3 (2005): 198, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.acalib.2005.02.006>.
10. US Office of Technology Assessment, *Helping America Compete: The Role of Scientific & Technical Information*, Report no. OTA-CIT-454 (Washington, DC: US GPO, 1990), 2, <http://ota.fas.org/reports/9023.pdf>.
11. David Gold, “Improving the Impact of Federal Scientific and Technical Information: A Call for Action,” *Government Information Quarterly* 10, no. 2 (1993): 224, [https://doi.org/10.1016/0740-624X\(93\)90052-2](https://doi.org/10.1016/0740-624X(93)90052-2).
12. Baldwin, “Fugitive Documents,” 5.
13. US Department of Health and Human Services, *Office of Inspector General. Review of the National Institutes of Health Printing Program*, Report no. A-15-98-80001 (Washington, D.C: US GPO, 1999), 5, <https://oig.hhs.gov/oas/reports/phs/c9880001.pdf>.
14. *Ibid.*, i.
15. Jensen, “Providing Access to Online Government Documents,” 20–23.
16. Lisa S. Nickum, “Elusive No Longer? Increasing Accessibility to the Federally Funded Technical Report Literature,” *Reference Librarian* 94 (2006): 35, [https://doi.org/10.1300/J120v45n94\\_04](https://doi.org/10.1300/J120v45n94_04).
17. Gold, “Improving the Impact of Federal Scientific and Technical Information,” 229.
18. *Ibid.*, 223.
19. Michael Beckmann and Henrik von Wehrden, “Where You Search Is What You Get: Literature Mining—Google Scholar Versus Web of Science Using a Data Set from a Literature Search in Vegetation Science,” *Journal of Vegetation Science* 23 (2012): 1199, <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1654-1103.2012.01454.x>.



# GovDocs to the Rescue!

## Debunking an Immigration Myth

Rosemary Meszaros and Katherine Pennavaria

*One question that routinely comes up in genealogy research: why is the family's surname different from its (presumed) original form? Most people have heard one explanation: those names were "changed at Ellis Island," altered either maliciously or ignorantly by port officials when the immigrant passed through. The charge against immigration officials, however, is provably false: no names were written down at Ellis Island, and thus no names were changed there. The names of arriving passengers were already written down on manifests required by the federal government, lists which crossed the ocean with the passengers. Records kept by the government demonstrate conclusively that immigrants left Ellis Island with the same surnames they had arrived with. The idea that names were changed at the point of entry is a myth, an urban legend promoted by a popular film. Changes were made later, by the immigrants themselves, usually during the naturalization process.*

*For the great enemy of the truth is very often not the lie (deliberate, contrived, and dishonest), but the myth: persistent, persuasive, and unrealistic.*

—John F. Kennedy

(Yale commencement Speech, June 11, 1962)

**M**ost Americans are familiar with the idea that immigrants to the United States during the Ellis Island years (1892–1954) had their surnames altered by the processing officials, either deliberately or through ignorance of the correct spelling. A search of the internet on the phrase “name was changed at Ellis Island” yields more than 300,000 hits; variations on the phrase yield even more. Here is a sampling of recent statements in an online forum asking people whether they believe that such a thing happened:<sup>1</sup>

My family name was probably shortened from something Eastern European to something German, certainly at Ellis Island.

My great-grandfather came through and the name was shortened and changed by the worker.

Some of my relatives' surnames were recorded incorrectly on arrival.

My great-grandfather and his two brothers came over together from Lithuania and left Ellis Island with three different last names.

Our Italian surname was changed at Ellis Island when my great-grandparents came over.

If one is to believe these earnest posters, the surnames of immigrants to the United States were routinely treated in a shoddy, unprofessional manner by the government representatives at American ports.

**They are wrong.** No one's family name was changed, altered, shortened, butchered, or “written down wrong” at Ellis Island or any American port. *That idea is an urban legend.*

Many names did get changed as immigrants settled into their new American lives, but those changes were made several years after arrival and were done by choice of someone in the family. The belief persists, however, that the changes were done at the entry point and that the immigrants were unwilling participants in the modifications. Sophisticated family history researchers have long rolled their collective eyes at the “Ellis Island name change” idea. In genealogy blogs and online

publications, they wearily repeat the correction—names were not changed at Ellis Island; immigrants changed their own names, usually during the citizenship process. But the belief persists, perhaps because people need to explain surname changes in a way that satisfies them (thinking that their immigrant ancestors made the changes themselves apparently does not do so).

Why is this myth so persistent? Malcolm Gladwell, in his book *The Tipping Point*, explains his concept of “stickiness,” the elusive quality that some ideas and concepts have: they catch on and don’t let go.<sup>2</sup> Since Gladwell’s book was published in 2000, social science and behavior research has explored the nature of “sticky” ideas. Among the conclusions reached is, “When we have a gap in our knowledge, we strive to resolve it.”<sup>3</sup> Across America today, people descended from nineteenth- and twentieth-century European immigrants strive to resolve why their family’s surname is different from the (presumed) original. In addressing this gap, however, many seekers have reached the wrong conclusion. Unfortunately, that incorrect conclusion has proved quite “sticky.”

Other writers have dealt with why and how surnames evolved or were altered as immigrants settled into US cities to begin their lives as Americans;<sup>4</sup> the focus here is on presumed behavior of clerks at Ellis Island and other immigration points during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries when they encountered (primarily) European surnames. These federal employees have been accused of, at best, carelessness, and at worst, racial prejudice, both presumably perpetuated while they were on the job.

What does the historical record tell us about these immigration officials and about the US government’s policies and procedures relating to immigrants? That record, loosely defined, begins with the inception of America itself: everyone who came here, or who was brought here, after the official founding of the nation was an immigrant. Until 1819, people coming to the United States were dealt with according to state laws. In 1819, the federal government took over and immigration law and policy as we know it began.

Tempting as it is to blame the government, the issue of name changes is one where federal officials at American ports can be cleared of the charges. Those officials are not around today to defend themselves against accusations of carelessness and prejudice, but if we look at federal laws relating to immigrants, at the copious paperwork from the period, and at contemporary writings and imagery, we can see for ourselves that the idea is false: not only didn’t those officials change names—they *couldn’t* have. Abundant evidence from the period shows

conclusively that American officials were not recording passenger names onto paper.

It’s difficult to say when the urban legend about names being altered at Ellis Island began, but easy to know when the notion spread to the popular imagination. In the 1974 film *The Godfather II*, which closely follows events described in the novel *The Godfather* by Mario Puzo, Vito Andolini is sent away from his violence-suffused home town of Corleone, in Sicily, when he is a child. He arrives at the Ellis Island processing station and, overwhelmed by the noise and the people, finds himself unable to speak. The immigration official asks the boy his name, and the question is repeated in Italian by a translator. The frightened boy stays mute, so the translator looks at the card pinned to Vito’s clothing. He clearly says, “Vito Andolini, from Corleone,” but the clerk misunderstands and mutters, “Vito Corleone” (the translator does not, for some reason, correct him). The clerk then appears to record “Vito Corleone” on the paper in front of him, and little Vito is sent on his way. And that, we are clearly expected to conclude, is how the Godfather got his name.<sup>5</sup>

It’s a powerful scene, but the action is based on a misunderstanding of what really happened when someone reached the front of the line and was asked, “Name?” Though the film otherwise captures the crowded, noisy process at Ellis Island effectively, an egregious historical inaccuracy occurs the moment the clerk writes down Vito’s name incorrectly. In reality, immigration officials did not write names down—they checked them off on a list in front of them. In other words, the names were *already written down*. The officials were not working with blank sheets of paper on which they created lists of newly arrived passengers, but with ship manifests, official lists of passengers who had disembarked. These manifests were required by US federal law as of March 2, 1819. Beginning on that date (i.e., when the federal government assumed control over immigration), ship captains were required to report a list of all passengers brought to US shores from foreign countries; information required included name, sex, age, and occupation.<sup>6</sup> Several decades later, in 1893 (just after Ellis Island opened), the requirements for manifests became even more specific: the shipping company clerks were required to obtain contact information and to ask each passenger a series of questions about their health and political views. Furthermore, the clerks who created the manifests were told that “immigrants shall be listed in convenient groups . . . and no [list] shall contain more than 30 names.”<sup>7</sup> These instructions are precise and clear, and they are not mere suggestions—they are published in the *U.S. Statutes at Large*, which contain federal laws as they are passed by Congress. Any captain who didn’t turn over a list of names when he dropped off

his passengers faced a displeased federal official and some steep fines.

As the statements in the *U.S. Statues at Large* make clear, the passengers' names were recorded long before they arrived, usually as part of the ticket-buying transaction—the same way we arrange travel today. And just like today, before they boarded, each traveler had their name and ID checked against the list of people who had purchased tickets. Today we don't give our names at the arrival point, but this additional step was part of the processing during the height of immigration to America—hence the misunderstanding promoted by *The Godfather* saga.

It's vital to remember that the people coming over from Europe and other places were paying passengers, not cattle. They weren't shoved onto ships and then dumped onto American shores to be newly cataloged by harried immigration officials. The shipping companies were running a business, much as airlines do today—they sold tickets to people who could afford to purchase them (even a steerage class ticket cost almost a thousand dollars in today's currency). These companies aggressively advertised, and their agents crisscrossed Europe in search of customers. Someone wanting to book passage to America, Canada, Australia, South America, etc., would have had no difficulty locating an agent. Agents quoted ticket prices to the would-be traveler, accepted payment, and then recorded each traveler's name and other identifying information (the specific information collected varied over the years). The information taken down by the agents was sent to the home office, where it was transferred by shipping company clerks onto large blank sheets provided by the US government. Those sheets became the passenger lists which later were used by American port officials.

After all the tickets for a particular voyage had been sold and the manifest was complete, it was turned over to the ship's captain. On departure day, crew members checked people's names against the list as they came on board. The crew allowed past them only those people whose names were on the list, i.e., those who had paid for a ticket. If a person had paid but did not board, then their name was crossed out on the manifest. If someone was transferred to the vessel after the official manifest had been handed to the captain, that name was added to the list. If a passenger died en route, a notation was made. Thus the captain had an accurate, up-to-date list of who was on board when the ship left its home port and who was on board when it docked at the end of the journey.<sup>8</sup> Captains were required by the 1819 Steerage Act to sign a statement printed on the manifest verifying that the names on each list matched the names of those people disembarking.<sup>9</sup> Any discrepancies resulted in fines for the shipping company. Thus it was in the shipping



Figure 1. Registry clerks at Ellis Island

company's interest to make sure no one stepped onto American soil whose name was not already on a manifest.

When the ship arrived at an American port, the captain signed the manifest and delivered it to the chief immigration official. That official checked it and then gave the manifest to officers called registry clerks who questioned each traveler and verified the information recorded on the lists. Figure 1 is a photograph of registry clerks at Ellis Island showing, on the left, the officials working with the manifest pages, and on the right, travelers (with clothing tags) and a translator (seated).

Each registry clerk worked with a subset of pages from the manifest of a particular voyage. The pages he was given corresponded to the numbers on the clothing tags issued to passengers. These tags, which you can see in the photograph and which play a prominent role in the *Godfather II* scene, usually had the individual's name, home address, and numbers that corresponded with a page in the manifest. Figure 2 shows an example of a tag.

You can see the words "Manifest Sheet No." above the number 5. In other words, a quick glance at a traveler's card told the officials charged with moving people along which line each traveler needed to stand in.

Obviously then, despite what the *Godfather* film conveys, the officials at Ellis Island did not record travelers' names—they had pages with the names *already filled in*. The task of the registry clerks was to do the same thing the ship's crew had done: check each person's stated name against the name recorded on

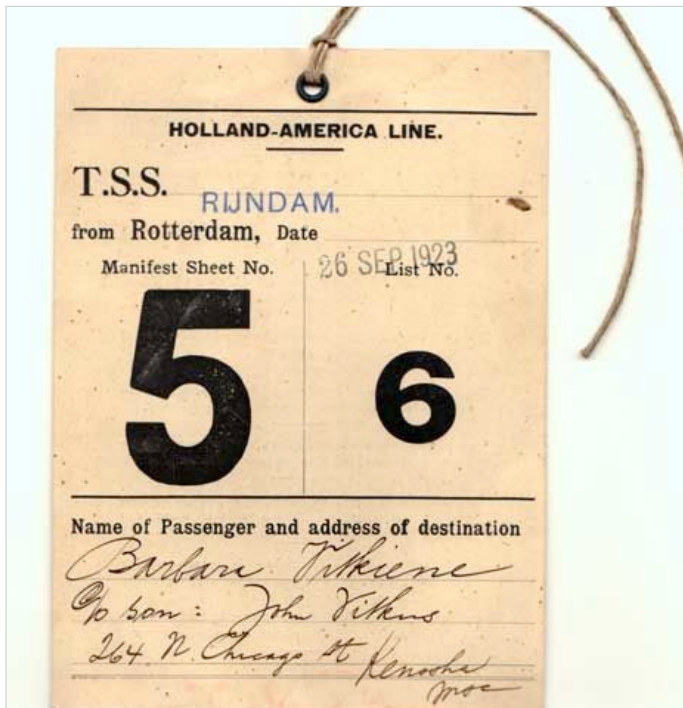


Figure 2. Example of a clothing tag

the manifest. If they didn't match, the newly arrived passenger was sent to detention so their case could be reviewed by a board of inquiry. Anyone who could not prove they had paid for a ticket—whose name was not already written down on the manifest—was sent back to the point of embarkation at shipping company expense. Those people were (and still are) called “stowaways.”

Multiple contemporary films and photographs show officials working with already completed lists, making only checks and tick marks rather than recording the information each time.<sup>10</sup> As you can see in figure 3, the manifests were marked on repeatedly.

In addition to the tick marks, figure 3 also shows a name that has been crossed out, indicating that though a ticket was purchased, the passenger did not board. Every manifest page looks like this—full of names written in Europe or wherever the immigrant originated, with a series of marks over numerous columns and some names crossed out. The manifests did not even have blank lines by the time they reached the registry clerks—those blank spaces were lined through by the captain once the ship sailed to prevent any unsanctioned additions. Remember that these manifests were US federal property from the moment the captain passed them on; making alterations to them had to be done according to federal law. Had the officials at Ellis Island done what they are routinely accused of doing, they would have put their jobs in jeopardy.

After serving their official purpose, the manifests were boxed up and saved; they remain the property of the US government and today are stored at the National Archives. Interested parties can access them on digitized microfilm via Ancestry.com or through the National Archives site ([www.archives.gov](http://www.archives.gov)).

So no one's name was changed at Ellis Island. Though denizens of the internet will repeat the myth as if it were truth, their immigrant ancestors without a doubt carried away from Ellis Island and other ports the name they arrived with. Many immigrants chose to change their names later on—in 1906, federal law made it easy to do so during the citizenship process, and still does so today.<sup>11</sup> The travelers themselves or their family members were therefore responsible for the name shortening and changing that so bothers many people trying to figure out their family history.

Even this brief examination of the procedures involved in traveling and processing makes clear that no federal officer at an American port ever carelessly or maliciously altered an immigrant's name because it was too difficult to spell or sounded too foreign. On a side note, the belief that immigration officials changed names to make them less “foreign” presumes that the Ellis Island officials were of different ethnicities than the immigrants and were openly hostile to them. In fact, officials were often hired *because* they spoke multiple languages. New York mayor Fiorello LaGuardia began his career as a translator at Ellis Island—the child of European immigrants, he spoke Italian and Yiddish in addition to English.

The memoir of one Ellis Island official provides a fascinating look at the process from within. Victor Safford began working at Ellis Island in 1895. In his 1925 book, *Immigration Problems: Personal Experiences of an Official*,<sup>12</sup> Safford describes encountering crowds of passengers on the day of his initial job interview. He notes the conversations he overheard between people who spoke a variety of languages, including German, Norwegian, Yiddish, Italian, Croatian, and Hungarian. He says this casually, as if a working knowledge of several languages is not unusual—and it wasn't, for someone being interviewed to work with foreign-born travelers. Safford was not an outlier in this fluency—he writes that at his interview, officials and government employees were conversing among themselves in various languages other than English. And if the official did not speak a traveler's language, translators were available to assist, as you can see in figure 1.

Mario Puzo's famous novel was published in 1969; most likely he did not know what really had happened to immigrants at Ellis Island apart from a general understanding that people

No.	Name	Age	Sex	Occupation	Origin	Destination
1	Pozzo — Vittorio	16	m	Carpenter	Italy	Italy
2	Pombino — Alberto	32	m	Labourer	Italy	Italy
3	Scutozzi — Achille	40	m	Labourer	Italy	Italy
4	Sodda — Giovanni	23	m	Miner	Italy	Italy
5	Loce — Salvatore	20	m	Miner	Italy	Italy
6	Astorini — Francesco	31	m	Labourer	Italy	Italy
7	Buttern — Carlo	19	m	Labourer	Italy	Italy
8	Baldelli — Nello	18	m	Labourer	Italy	Italy
9	Pellegrini — Luigi	44	m	Teacher	Italy	U.S.
10	Pellegrini — Catharina	41	f	Housewife	Italy	U.S.
11	Pellegrini — Margherita	14	f		Italy	U.S.
12	Pellegrini — Giuseppe	3	m		Italy	U.S.
13	Pellegrini — Isabella	3	f		Italy	U.S.
14	Mahelbitim — Felice	47	m	Miner	Italy	Italy
15	Zabara — Albino	35	m	Labourer	Italy	Italy
16	Amelbiti — William	61	m		Italy	Italy
17	Amelbiti — Antonio	41	m		Italy	Italy

Figure 3. Ship manifest example

stood in long lines, gave their names, and were eventually sent on their way into America.

Perhaps Francis Ford Coppola, director of both *The Godfather* (1972) and *The Godfather II* (1974), also did not know the truth about how the immigrants were processed. After all, these creative projects were completed long before today's relatively easy access to the passenger manifests, federal documents, and contemporary video and photography that show the truth about that processing. But the time when such ignorance of historical reality can be excused has long passed—librarians, historians, and information professionals can now set the record straight when they get a chance. The US government's well-known penchant for creating and saving large amounts of paperwork has made that possible.

**Rosemary Meszaros** (rosemary.meszaros@wku.edu), Professor, Coordinator of Government Documents and Law, and **Katherine Pennavaria** (k.pennavaria@wku.edu), Professor, Visual and Performing Arts Library Coordinator, Western Kentucky University.

## Notes

1. "Names Changed at Ellis Island," Straight Dope (messageboard), accessed July 21, 2016, <https://boards.straightdope.com/sdmb/archive/index.php/t-493641.html>.
2. Malcolm Gladwell, *The Tipping Point* (New York: Little Brown, 2000).
3. Barbara Kiviat. "Change Agents: Are You Sticky?" Time.com, October 29, 2006, <http://content.time.com/time/subscriber/article/0,33009,1552029,00.html>.
4. See, for example, Donna Przech, "They Changed Our Name at Ellis Island," Genealogy.com, accessed April 2, 2018, [http://www.genealogy.com/articles/research/88\\_donna.html](http://www.genealogy.com/articles/research/88_donna.html); and Leslie Albrecht Huber, "Ancestors in the Records: Naming Patterns," Understanding Your Ancestors, <http://www.understandingyourancestors.com/ar/namingPatterns.aspx>, first published in Everton's Genealogical Helper (November/December 2005).
5. Watch the whole scene: "Godfather Ellis Island," YouTube video, Hola Soy Jey, November 17, 2013, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ubT-Bm36L2U>.
6. Steerage Act of 1819, 3 Stat. 488.
7. Act of March 3, 1893, 27 Stat. 570.
8. This carefully delineated process shows why there never can be an accurate list of *Titanic* passengers. There were undoubtedly people listed on the manifest who did not board and others whose names were added after the manifest was delivered to the captain (people who missed their departure on another ship and had to be reassigned). Alterations made by the ship's crew existed only on that single copy of the manifest—and that document, like the captain of the *Titanic* himself, went down with the ship. Any list published today is a reconstruction made with shipping company notes and earlier drafts of the manifest.
9. Steerage Act of 1819, 3 Stat. 488, Section 4.

10. See, for example, the public-domain documentary *Island of Hope, Island of Tears* by Charles Guggenheim, internet video, National Park Service, 1992 (1989), <https://archive.org/details/gov.ntis.ava15996vnb1>.
11. Naturalization Act of 1906, 34 Stat. 596.
12. Victor Safford, *Immigration Problems: Personal Experiences of an Official* (New York: Dodd, Mead & Co., 1925). Available in full text at the Hathi Trust Digital Library ([www.hathitrust.org](http://www.hathitrust.org))

# Membership Update

Following brief messages from two candidates for ALA president, Treasurer Rebecca Hyde proposed a revised budget for the coming fiscal year that reflects changes in expenses and revenues due to moving *DttP: Documents to the People* to ALA's online journal platform. The chair of Legislation Committee, Geoffrey Swindells, moved that GODORT endorse in principle a resolution commending former director of the GPO Davita Vance-Cooks for her service. This was unanimously approved.

Councillor Bill Sudduth discussed an update on ALA Council activities, including a proposed increase in dues and preliminary discussions on further association-wide reorganization. Past-Chair Sarah Erekson provided an update on the Annual Conference Remodel, noting that the new program jury process presented hurdles for Round Tables and penalizes communities like government information librarianship for which speakers who are well known in our own circles may not have name recognition outside the community. Chair-Elect Hallie Pritchett gave an overview of the website revision process being undertaken by an ad hoc committee following ALA's migration to a new Drupal site. As part of this revision, the wiki will be retired in favor of the Drupal site. The ALA Connect migration experienced setbacks in fall 2017 but is expected to proceed in spring 2018. Volunteers are needed to assist in the web migration.

Chair Shari Laster shared information about the role of the GODORT chair and the Steering Committee in ALA Washington Office's work on Title 44 reform. Steering has endorsed a position statement on the FDLP, which has informed ALA's position on substantive

provisions in the draft legislation.—*Shari Laster, GODORT Chair*

## Steering Committee

During the course of the meeting, Steering voted to approve the award winners as communicated by Ann Marshall, chair of Awards Committee, and to approve the GODORT budget with amendments as submitted by Treasurer Rebecca Hyde. Other reports were provided and acknowledged, and ALA Executive Board Liaison Andrew Pace gave a report. Also, the Chair's Program for the 2018 Annual Conference was announced: a panel will discuss trustworthiness and government information.

Discussion took place regarding a proposal for GODORT to host Government Information Online (GIO), an email reference service provided independently but previously affiliated with GPO. The proposal was brought forward by Gwen Sinclair, chair of Education Committee, and Robbie Sittel, chair of Publications Committee, both of whom are currently involved in organizing and providing the service. Following the discussion, Steering unanimously approved the intent of the proposal for GODORT to fund GIO. Gwen Sinclair and Robbie Sittel will work with Gavin Baker of the ALA Washington Office to seek a partnership agreement with GPO.

A second proposal from Robbie Sittel came forward on behalf of the Depository Library Council (DLC), which is seeking an organization to host the travel fund initiated in honor of former DLC Chair Karen M. Russ. Following extensive discussion, it was determined that more information is needed about the sustainability of this award and whether it would be steered toward an endowed fund or only be provided while

the initial funding persists. Clarification was also needed as to how GODORT could accept the money fundraised by a GoFundMe crowdsourcing campaign, noting that the award would need to be formally approved by ALA's committee on grants and scholarships. Steering voted unanimously to endorse the project in principle. Robbie Sittel and Rebecca Hyde will work with the Awards Committee on next steps, with the intent to bring a formal proposal to Steering by Annual Conference.

Steering voted to approve the formation of the Federal Information Interest Group. The Interest Group chapter of the Policy and Procedures Manual can be amended as other interest groups are formed.—*Shari Laster, GODORT Chair*

## Preservation Forum

After two excellent programs at the 2017 Annual Conference about different aspects of preserving government information, GODORT continued the conversation at the 2018 Midwinter Meeting with a forum that asked "where do we go from here?" Robbie Sittel from the University of North Texas and Marie Concannon from the University of Missouri discussed the Preservation of Electronic Government Information (PEGI) Project, which, through support from IMLS, is engaging diverse groups of stakeholders in conversations around at-risk federal digital information. Cindy Etkin from the US GPO discussed GPO's preservation initiatives to date and how the community can get involved. Both sections included lively discussion and active audience participation in brainstorming ideas to move preservation projects forward and help preserve information produced by every level of government so it remains

available for future generations.—*Hallie Pritchett, GODORT Chair-Elect*

## Research Round Robin

Government information librarians and others met to informally discuss academic research projects and challenges with major collection cataloging projects. No decision has been made as to whether to continue this series at future conferences.—*Shari Laster, GODORT Chair*

## Bylaws Coordinator Report

My first priority as the new Bylaws Coordinator was to make changes in the current GODORT Policies and Procedures Manual (PPM) to reflect the major change resulting from GODORT membership's decision at the 2017 Annual Conference to abolish the Bylaws Committee in favor of a new officer position of Bylaws and Organization Coordinator. References to Bylaws Committee throughout the PPM were changed to Bylaws Coordinator. This also necessitated the removal of the old chapter 13 (Bylaws Committee) and at the same time creating a new chapter 10, "Officer: Bylaws Coordinator," which required renumbering the old chapters 10–12 to new chapters 11–13.

Several additional changes were made at the request of Steering Committee: (1) the threshold requiring Steering Committee's approval for expending funds was raised from \$50 to \$100 in the Treasurer's chapter; (2) a new section was added for the Virtual Meetings Coordinator in the Special Officers chapter; (3) due to the request by the Federal Documents Task Force to dissolve itself, the section on it was removed from Task Force chapter (giving it the status "retired") and all mentions to FDTF throughout the PPM were removed; (4) information

regarding Emerging Leaders and Larry Roman Mentorship Award were added to the Awards chapter; and (5) a new chapter 27, "Interest Group," was written and presented to Steering Committee at the 2018 Midwinter Meeting.

In the process of making the preceding changes, it became clear additional changes needed to be made to the PPM to update it so that it accurately reflects the changes over the past few years. Working with several of the committee chairs, I was able to make these additional changes to the PPM: (1) references to "internal liaisons" still existed in several of the committee chapters, so they were removed; (2) references to the GODORT Hotel and ProQuest Breakfast meeting were also removed since they are no longer valid; (3) the conflicting information regarding external liaisons from GODORT to other organizations was addressed by removing outdated references and adding new listings while trying to streamline for clarity the listings of existing, active external liaisons; (4) several chapters were updated with wording about committees being entitled to interns if they want them; (5) with the inconsistency of the numbers of committees members indicated in various places within the PPM was fixed; and (6) the "Notable Documents Rating Chart" in appendix F was revised.

Eighteen revised chapters and two revised appendices of the PPM were sent to the GODORT webmaster for uploading onto the GODORT wiki before the 2018 Midwinter Meeting in February. At that time two chapters were still waiting for final approval of their revisions by their committee chairs, and seven chapters were on hold pending changes to be made after the Midwinter Meeting.—*Vicki Tate, GODORT Bylaws and Organization Coordinator*

## Awards Committee

The Awards Committee met virtually in a closed session on January 19. The committee reviewed the nomination packets for the 2018 GODORT Awards and reached a consensus on the awardees. The committee also briefly discussed next steps in the awards process.—*Ann Marshall, Chair*

## Cataloging Committee

The Cataloging Committee met February 10, with two members attending virtually. GPO's representative, Stephen Karfen, presented the Library Services and Content Management and US GPO update. Jim Noel gave the Marcive update. Invited speaker Valerie Glenn gave a HathiTrust documents registry update based on questions previously submitted. She also discussed the process for cataloging record corrections and copyright releases. The GODORT Toolbox for Processing and Cataloging Federal Government Documents is nearing final editing offline. Because GODORT is moving information off the wiki to ALA Connect and GODORT LibGuides, the Cataloging Committee formed a working group to learn LibGuides. Volunteers are welcome. The International Documents Task Force sent feedback that they are soliciting volunteers to work with us on updating the Toolbox for Processing and Cataloging International Government Documents. In addition, the Committee created a working group to establish best policies and practices for cataloging government documents in RDA: Resource Description and Access and will check into possible collaboration with other ALA groups, such as MAGIRT. Finally, the Committee discussed best options for an educational outreach initiative concerning cataloging government information



and agreed to gather ideas.—*Andrea Morrison, Chair*

### **Development Committee**

The committee met virtually on February 19. We discussed the amount ALA notes is a fully funded \$3,000 scholarship (\$135,000) and agreed we would pursue that for the Rozkuszka Scholarship. In spring 2017 the committee tried an email solicitation that netted very little, so this year the committee will be looking into a fundraising letter. In June 2018 we will also be auctioning the vacations at the Readex properties in Chester, Vermont, and Coral Gables, Florida, in support of the scholarship.—*Andrea Severson, Chair*

### **Education Committee**

The GODORT Education Committee met in person on February 10. Members and guests discussed the style guide and timeline for the GODORT website revision and how the Education Committee's pages should be organized in the new structure. Updates to the wiki will no longer be made and decisions must be made about which parts of the wiki content should be put in LibGuides and which should be on the website.

The committee endorsed accepting responsibility for oversight of the Government Information Online virtual reference service if Steering were to accept the proposal for GODORT to purchase a subscription to LibAnswers to host the service. The service is currently hosted by University of North Texas Library.

The committee discussed ways that it could help LIS programs offer government information courses and support librarians who teach such courses. Suggestions included proposing a program for the 2019 Annual Conference and setting up site listing resources such as

syllabi and curriculum for LIS government information courses. The committee could also post a list of resources such as webinars and other continuing education opportunities on its website.

GODORT received an inquiry from the Society for History in the Federal Government regarding assistance with its outreach program for federal history. Committee members discussed ways GODORT members could contribute, such as having a Wikipedia edit-a-thon and possibly a request for volunteers to work on historical resources for "dead" agencies.—*Gwen Sinclair, Chair*

### **Federal Information Interest Group**

The FIIG discussion topic for the Midwinter Meeting was "Using Government Information in Library Instruction." Participants shared strategies they have used for incorporating government information into instruction, assignments and research topics they have found successful, and best practices they have developed through experience.—*Justin Otto, Interest Group Leader*

### **Government Information for Children Committee**

The Government Information for Children Committee met on February 10. Members met in person and virtually. The committee briefly discussed plans for a National History Day webinar. Greg March, Connie Williams, Debbie Abilock, and Tiffeni Fortno will begin planning in late spring for the webinar, tentatively planned for summer.

The committee discussed promotion ideas for Constitution Day (September 17). A suggestion was made to promote Constitution Day in March and again in August so K-12 teachers will be aware and plan for it. The committee will use

social media and education discussion lists to send out information to teachers.—*Liza Weisbrod, Chair*

### **International Documents Task Force**

The IDTF held a virtual meeting on Tuesday, February 6. The following presenters joined us and provided updates on their projects and products: Ramona Kohrs, Thanos Giannakopoulos, and Bojan Grozdanic, UN Dag Hammarskjöld Library; Sherri Aldis, UN Publications; Devika Levy, World Bank Group; and Iain Williamson, OECD. An update was also provided on a request from the Cataloging Committee for volunteers to help update the GODORT Toolbox for International Government Documents.

For meeting notes and a link to the recording, please visit the IDTF wiki.—*Catherine McGovern, IDTF Coordinator*

### **Legislation Committee**

The Legislation Committee met jointly with ALA Committee on Legislation's Government Information Subcommittee on February 10. Cindy Etkin from the Office of the Superintendent of Documents was a guest speaker and discussed GPO's position on the Committee on House Administration's discussion draft of legislation to revise Title 44. ALA Washington Office staff believe it is the House committee's goal to introduce the legislation in the near future, which will likely reflect revisions since the discussion draft was initially circulated. The two committees also discussed a draft tribute resolution for Davita Vance-Cooks, former director of GPO, who left federal service last fall. GODORT Legislation voted to endorse the resolution in principle.

The Legislation Committee met on Sunday morning, with four committee

members, two observers, and the GODORT chair, assistant chair/chair-elect, and immediate past chair in attendance. After a brief recap of the joint meeting with the COL Government Information Subcommittee from the day before, the bulk of the meeting was devoted to a discussion of how best to involve the GODORT membership in the anticipated revision of Title 44 of the US Code. The committee decided to send an email alert to the membership after the conference that will urge members to use the recently revised “What is the FDLP?” one-pager to inform legislators and government affairs staff at their home institutions about the value of the program. The meeting ended with a brief discussion of topics for virtual meetings over the next several months.—*Geoffrey Swindells, Chair*

### **Publications Committee**

The Publications Committee met virtually on December 12, 2017. The committee discussed the Occasional Papers Series and received updates on *DttP* management and a treasurer’s report. We are nearly a year into *DttP* being offered virtually via ALA’s Open Journal Systems platform. The Publications Committee will review use and cost and report back to GODORT Steering and Membership. In addition to regular business, the committee discussed nominations for Notable Documents chair and *DttP* editor, which are currently being sought.—*Robbie Sittel, Chair*

### **Rare and Endangered Government Publications Committee**

The REGP held a virtual meeting through ALA Connect on Thursday,

February 22. The group covered a variety of topics, including how the Title 44 Revisions might affect the number of fugitive documents, and the uptick in missing or moved documents. Some librarians shared that documents they or their patrons knew where were available can no longer be found, and David Walls (GPO) and Shari Laster shared the work that the Preservation of Electronic Government Information (PEGI) Project is doing. It was a well attended meeting with robust conversation and we look forward to continuing in person at Annual Conferenc in June.—*Aimee Slater and Susanne Caro, Co-Chairs*

# Recommendations: The Federal Depository Library Program and Title 44

## Excerpts from response to ALA-WO and COL from GODORT: August 31, 2017

GODORT's *FDLP / Title 44 Principles* are recommendations that seek to strengthen the promise of long-term access to federal information by building on the existing strengths of the Federal Depository Library Program (FDLP). These *Principles* focus on Chapter 19 but also address policy codified in other parts of Title 44, including Chapters 17, 35, and 41.

We see the majority of these *Principles* as supportive of activities authorized under current law, and in many cases already underway as part of existing GPO initiatives. If there is an opportunity to strengthen and clarify these provisions, we believe it is the best interest to do so.

### Summary: FDLP / Title 44 Principles

1. Permanent no-fee public access to federal information can be accomplished through continued partnership between GPO and libraries.
  - a. Update the definition of "government publication."
  - b. Guarantee free access and privacy protections for users of federal information.
  - c. Improve GPO's ability to partner with depository libraries.
  - d. Maintain the regional-selective depository model with minor changes.
2. The FDLP is well-positioned to play a significant role in the long-term preservation of federal information.
  - a. Make all information dissemination products managed by GPO available to collect and preserve.

- b. Create a role for depository libraries to accept deposit of digital federal information.
3. Improvements to broader federal information policy will facilitate better access and more reliable preservation.

### Details: FDLP / Title 44 Principles

#### 1. Permanent no-fee public access to federal information can be accomplished through continued partnership between GPO and libraries.

The core strength of the Federal Depository Library Program (FDLP) is that it is a network of libraries of all types, including academic, law, public, federal, and state libraries, working individually and in partnership with GPO and other program participants to accomplish the broad goal of ensuring public access to federal government information in all formats. The changes we have identified will strengthen the network and modernize the scope of its purview to reflect changes in how the government informs the public.

We note that any privatization of federal government information dissemination or preservation is antithetical to the public right to access this information, and would also reduce the cost-effectiveness of the current system in providing access to federal information for agencies and departments.

#### 1.a. Update the definition of "government publication."

The scope of Chapter 19 should be updated to include information, regardless of form or format, that a federal

agency publishes, discloses, disseminates, or makes available to the public. This change reflects the ways in which government informs the public, and makes clear the government's responsibility to ensure access to this information. This expanded definition would be interpretable to include audio and video content, databases, information from FOIA reading rooms, and other means of public information dissemination used by federal departments and agencies.

Records under the purview of NARA continue to be as such; this update addresses only public information, and reflects the government's responsibility to ensure long-term access to all of its information dissemination products.

#### 1.b. Guarantee free access and privacy protections for users of federal information.

While GPO does not currently use its Chapter 41 authorization to charge fees for access to its digital repository outside of depository libraries, this outdated provision stands in opposition to the mandate to provide public access. All digital products, including ebooks and databases, and their accompanying metadata should be freely available to access and download, and not subject to cost recovery under Chapter 17.

GPO's online tools and services are subject to the same privacy protections in place for other federal web services, a fact that can be clarified in its governing authority. To further protect user privacy, users should be notified of any web tracking that is essential

for the functionality of the tools and databases, and have the option to opt out or leave the website. These privacy measures are in alignment with ALA's Bill of Rights (see: <http://www.ala.org/advocacy/intfreedom/librarybill/interpretations/privacy>).

1.c. Improve GPO's ability to partner with depository libraries.

Depository libraries create metadata, digital surrogates, training tools, and other valuable resources on a daily basis. Currently, the law does not permit GPO to accept this content and incorporate it into its systems without providing something of value in exchange. Providing GPO with gift authority will enable the agency to set standards to ingest metadata and digital surrogates created by partner libraries into its repository without the current quid pro quo requirement. This provision will help partnerships between GPO and depository libraries to result in expanded public access.

While retention does not ensure preservation, it is the basis for all preservation activities. GPO's coordination of retention agreements in its existing FIPNet preservation stewardship program could be enhanced with grants or in-kind support, particularly for description and conservation for print documents. Giving GPO grant-making authority would provide the agency leverage to work to balance inequities in existing practices.

1.d. Maintain the regional-selective depository model with minor changes.

The principle at the heart of the FDLP is simple: sharing responsibilities across a network of libraries accomplishes what a single government agency or library alone cannot. Regional

depository libraries have agreed to permanently retain their collections for the benefit of all selective depository libraries, other libraries in their district and state, and the general public within their state. They also ensure the appropriate disposition of government publications, which are public property, through oversight of the discard process. Both of these responsibilities are foundational to the effectiveness of the distributed network. Regional depository libraries also play a crucial role by providing guidance and other forms of support to libraries within their state, along with reference and interlibrary loan services.

Opportunities exist for regional and selective depositories to collaboratively manage collections and provide services across state lines. When doing so fills an identified gap in the network, the FDLP should be able to accommodate multi-state and shared regionals, and other forms of regional arrangements across state lines. Given that one of the strengths of the regional depository system is the service relationship between each regional and the selective depository libraries within their jurisdiction, any multi-state arrangement should be subject to the approval of a majority of depository libraries affected by the arrangement. These arrangements must also be subject to senatorial approval.

The relationships between Congress and the libraries designated by members of Congress as depositories are crucial to Congressional support for the program. With that said, the limitations of no more than two regionals per state, and the minimum collection size of 10,000 volumes, are no longer justified in defining the program parameters and needlessly limit participation. The number of regionals can be increased per state to make it possible for libraries to share the

work of retention, preservation, and reference services; and any library willing and able to provide information services to the public should have the opportunity to participate in the program.

Additionally, it is in the best interest of the program to keep the designation of law libraries as a special category in order to encourage their participation. Depository libraries should be able to select any print format published by an agency, including bound and unbound publications, in order to best serve their users.

Libraries that do not accept or manage print or digital collections still do important work in enabling and enhancing access to government information within their communities of service. However, it is misleading to refer to these libraries as depositories, as they are not receiving anything on deposit. Another FDLP participant category would better reflect these roles.

2. The FDLP is well-positioned to play a significant role in the long-term preservation of federal information.

Permanent public access requires a preservation strategy. In addition to ensuring access, the decentralized nature of the FDLP lends itself to fulfilling long-term preservation of federal information dissemination products. Many depository libraries have already undertaken preservation as part of their depository responsibilities, including conservation and description work. Chapter 19 should be amended to formally authorize GPO to assist in the preservation of federal government information to ensure that our shared aspiration for long-term public access is grounded in law. Formal acknowledgement of this role also supports continued cooperation and collaboration with federal libraries and other agency partners.

2.a. Make all information dissemination products managed by GPO available to collect and preserve.

Strengthening GPO's existing Chapter 41 mandate for an electronic storage facility, to indicate an access and preservation repository, would support continued development and maintenance of FDsys/govinfo. To fully achieve long-term access goals, this repository will require reliable funding along with appropriate staffing.

GPO currently manages content in its repository (FDsys/govinfo), on its servers ("permanent") and through vendors such as the Internet Archive. Content stored outside of FDsys/govinfo is typically made available on an access-only basis, and at this time cannot be systematically accessed or collected for inclusion in a preservation system. The collection and description of these information dissemination products is already mandated as part of the Cataloging & Indexing Program authorized in Chapter 17. To enable unmediated collection and preservation for libraries, this digital content should be ingested into FDsys/govinfo. Doing so opens a pathway for

public download, access, reuse, and preservation at a wide variety of scales.

2.b. Create a role for depository libraries to accept deposit of digital federal information.

Several libraries are already playing a role in preserving digital government information. Promising models are in place at a variety of scales, such as the system currently in use by Canadian libraries, and the distributed storage of FDsys/govinfo content in LOCKSS-USDOCS (see: <https://lockss-usdocs.stanford.edu/>) in cooperation with GPO. To improve coordination of this work and raise its profile, the FDLP should include an additional formal role for selective and regional depository libraries that are willing to receive and store digital government information on behalf of the program, and preserve and/or provide access based on appropriate standards and agreements with GPO.

3. Improvements to broader federal information policy will facilitate better access and more reliable preservation.

Federal information cannot be preserved for future access if it cannot be collected. Greater agency cooperation with GPO is always desirable. However, absent a compliance scheme, incorporating principles of web design and structure that make agency websites and content easier to capture will enable better access and more reliable preservation. The Office of Management and Budget (OMB) mandate to oversee federal information policy should extend to making executive agency and commission information dissemination products amenable to collection and preservation.

Information management is similar to any form of asset management: planning and documentation defines parameters, identifies benchmarks, and prepares the organization to manage obstacles. By creating public information management plans, agencies could document and communicate existing content lifecycles. Coordinating this work fits in the existing jurisdiction of OMB and could lead to improved business efficiencies within agencies.

# Review

---

*A Legacy of Lessons Learned: Landstuhl Regional Medical Center During Wartime, 2001–2014.* Karen Hennessy. Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2017.

*A Legacy of Lessons Learned* by Karen Hennessy is a mix of history and organizational practice focused on the Landstuhl Regional Medical Center (LRMC), the largest US military medical facility in Europe. Before September 11, 2001, LRMC was a general care hospital for US military personnel and their families stationed in Europe. As troops were distributed to parts of the Middle East, Europe, and Africa in conflicts following September 11, 2001, LRMC developed into a premier trauma center caring for service members wounded in US military conflicts and then evacuated to LRMC. LRMC became a transition point for wounded and critically ill soldiers evacuated from their deployment, with approximately 20 percent of

patients being returned to duty while many injured patients were transported on to facilities in the United States within 96 hours of arrival at LRMC.

Each chapter of the book focuses on one of the aspects or departments of LRMC, its development between 2001 to 2014, and how these moving parts fit together to provide a holistic care service for wounded warriors. Some departments were set up during the transition to supporting war effort, such as the liaison support role for each wounded warrior and the Wounded Warrior Finance Office. Background is provided with each chapter, implementation methods are discussed (including job description and requirements for department positions), and successes and challenges are listed for review.

Each chapter also features photographs, organizational charts, workflow charts, and maps or forms to illustrate work processes. One example is the

LRMC Traumatic Brain Injury Program Patient Screening Questionnaire in the chapter 5, “Traumatic Brain Injury.” The book relies heavily on the use of acronyms, and it provides a helpful list of acronyms prior to the index.

This work will be useful to those interested in medical practices in large organizations. The book also provides an interesting look at merging organizational and command structures between military branches as well as coordinating with medical facilities in the continental United States and other medical treatment facilities across military theaters. The book maintains a technical focus, but it also includes quotes and stories from soldiers and LRMC personnel that demonstrate the core feeling of LRMC as a place of care and human connection.  
—Amanda Homce, *Indiana University Bloomington*