Government Documents
Houston Cole Library
Collection Assessment
Submitted by Bethany Latham
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INTRODUCTION

The Government Documents Collection differs from conventional subject collections in a variety of ways, the most important of these being: it is interdisciplinary, the items are received free-of-charge, some items are not classed using Library of Congress (LC) call numbers and, because the collection is acquired through the Federal Depository Library Program (FDLP), it must meet mandates and conform to regulations which do not impact traditional collections. Due to these factors, assessment of the Government Documents Collection by traditional means is not possible (i.e., there are no conspectus sheets). The Government Documents Collection assessment must be, by necessity, more holistic. Consequently, an alternative method of assessment has been adapted from the guidelines established by the WLN Collection Assessment Services.[1] This was done with the hope of modifying the guidelines to fit the unique properties of the Government Documents Collection while creating an assessment that is comparable to those performed on specific subject areas.

An inaugural assessment was performed on the Government Documents Collection in May of 2005. This assessment will use it as a baseline for comparison and also provide a zero-based evaluation of the current state of the Government Documents Collection.

The Government Documents Collection is made up primarily of materials received through the Federal Depository Library Program. The Library has been a selective depository since 1929, and it currently selects **31%** (**3,113** item numbers out of an available **10,175**) of the publications distributed through the FDLP. This is an increase of **4%** since the last government documents assessment.

Based on the guidelines established by the WLN Collection Assessment Services, the Government Documents Collection is rated an overall **3aP** (Basic Study or Instructional Support Level, predominately English). Refer to the holdings counts and checklist analysis for a more detailed examination of the Library's collection.

The primary purpose of the Government Documents Collection is to support the current and anticipated instructional, research, and service programs of the University, in addition to meeting the informational needs of the 3rd
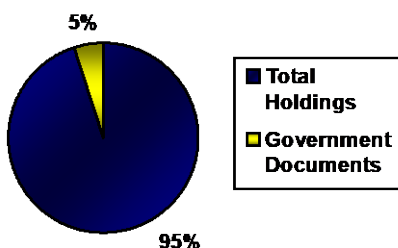
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[1] Powell, Nancy and Bushing, Mary. (1997). *Using the Conspectus Method.* Lacey, WA: WLN.

Congressional District of Alabama.[2] In addition, the Collection is required by federal mandate to comply with the objectives and regulations of the Federal Depository Library Program.[3]

HOLDINGS

Unlike many institutions, the Library assigns LC classification to its tangible government publications and integrates them into the rest of its collection. The exceptions to this practice include: ephemeral materials (classed by SuDoc and shelved in the 2nd floor vertical file), maps (filed alphabetically by title in the 3rd floor map cabinets), and microfiche (classed by SuDoc and filed in the 2nd floor and other fiche cabinets). The Government Documents Collection contains **42,355** titles, which accounts for approximately **5%** of the total library holdings. This count does not include Y4 Congressional microfiche, public [slip] laws, and a few other item types which are not cataloged.

Figure 1: Government Documents Holdings

- Total Holdings
- Government Documents

5%
95%

It should also be noted that these counts reflect the Library's holdings with regard to federal government documents (i.e., those produced by the U.S. Federal Government). The Library's collection also includes international (**2,149** titles), state (**30,976** titles) and local (**1,336** titles) documents outside the scope of this assessment.

As stated above, the Government Documents Collection is interdisciplinary. The largest subject concentrations of the Government Documents Collection include:

- Social Sciences (25%)
- Political Science (12%)
- Science (11%)
- Medicine (9%)
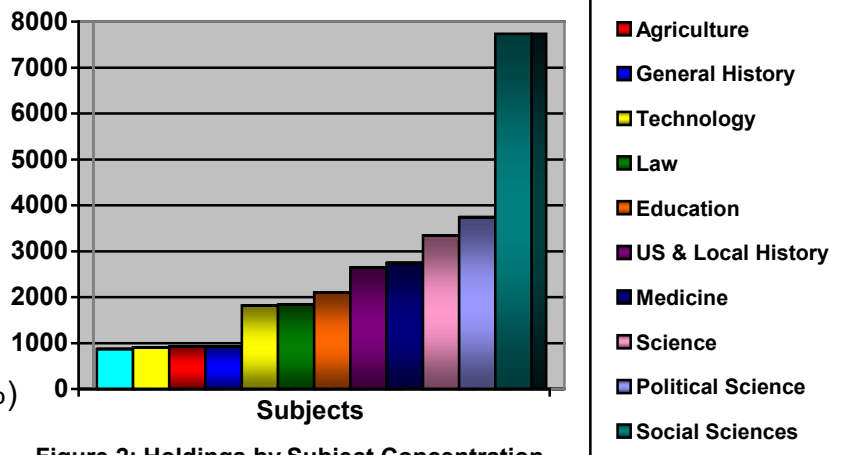- US & Local History (8%)

Documents Holdings by Subject

- Military Science
- Geography
- Agriculture
- General History
- Technology
- Law
- Education
- US & Local History
- Medicine
- Science
- Political Science
- Social Sciences

Subjects

Figure 2: Holdings by Subject Concentration

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[2] McAbee, Sonja. (2001). *Houston Cole Library Collection Management and Development Policy.* Jacksonville, Ala.: Jacksonville State University, GPO-1.

[3] The mandates and regulations of the FDLP are myriad, but the primary procedural governing document is the *Legal Requirements & Program Regulations of the Federal Depository Library Program* (rev. June 2011). This document supersedes the *Instructions to Depository Libraries* (2000), *Federal Depository Library Handbook* (2008) and the *Federal Depository Library Requirements* (2009).

- Education (7%)
- Technology (6%)
- Law (6%)
- Agriculture (3%)
- General History (3%)
- Geography & Anthropology (3%)
- Military Science (3%)

The following tables provide a more detailed breakdown of the Government Documents Collection holdings.

HOLDINGS BROKEN DOWN BY MAJOR GOVERNMENT AGENCIES:

SuDoc	Government Agency	Approximate LC Classification Equivalent	Documents Titles
A	Agriculture	S-SK	1601
AE	National Archives & Records Administration	E-F	213
C	Commerce	H-HJ	1338
CR	Civil Rights Commission	JC, K, KF	245
D	Defense	D-F, U-UH, V-VM	2472
E	Energy	TA, TC-TD, TJ-TK	553
ED	Education	L-LJ	1985
EP	Environmental Protection Agency	GE, TD, QH-QR	406
FT	Federal Trade Commission	HF	196
GA	Government Accountability Office	HJ	44
GP	Government Printing Office	Z	101
HE	Health & Human Services	R-RZ	4922
HH	Housing & Urban Development	HD, NA, TH	426
HS	Homeland Security, FEMA (formerly FEM)	HV	531
I	Interior	E-F, TD, GB, GE, GV	5718
J	Justice	HV	2078
JU	Judiciary	KF	119
L	Labor	H-HD, HF	662
LC	Library of Congress	Z	359
NAS	National Aeronautics & Space Administration	TL	545
NF	National Foundation on Arts & Humanities	M-NX	94
NS	National Science Foundation	Q-QR	31
PE	Peace Corps	HC	34
PM	Personnel Management Office	HF, HG	123
PR	President of the U.S.	HV, JK, KF	387
PREX	Executive Office of the President	G, GB	1190
PRVP	Vice President of the U.S.	HV, JK, KF	30
S	State Department	J-JC, JK	400
SBA	Small Business Administration	HC, HF, HG	146
SI	Smithsonian Institution	QH-QL	769
SSA	Social Security Administration	HD	141
T	Treasury	HG, HJ	394
TD	Transportation	T, TE-TG, TL	285
X & Y	Congress*	KF	2860

SuDoc	Government Agency	Approximate LC Classification Equivalent	Documents Titles
	Total ‡		**31,398**

*Does not take into account non-cataloged Congressional microfiche
‡Totals will not add up to 42,355 because minor government agencies are not included in this table. Also, some document records do not have SuDoc numbers; therefore, they cannot be counted by agency

HOLDINGS BROKEN DOWN BY LC CLASSIFICATION/SUBJECT:

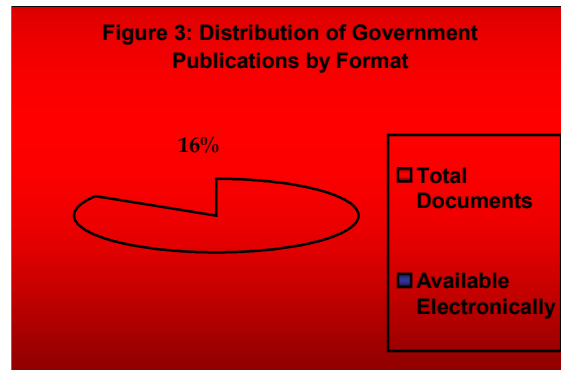| LC Classification	Major Divisions, Categories, and Subjects	Documents Titles
A-AZ	General Works	83
B-BX	Philosophy, Psychology, & Religion	55
C-CT	Auxiliary Sciences of History (General)	154
D-DX	History (General) & Europe (General)	923
E	United States History (General)	2647
F	U.S. Local History, Canada, Latin America	602
G-GV	Geography, Anthropology, & Recreation	907
H-HX	Social Sciences	7733
J-JZ	Political Science	3743
K-KZ	Law	1841
L-LT	Education	2106
M-MT	Music	30
N-NX	Fine Arts	264
P-PZ	Language and Literature	195
Q-QR	Science	3342
R-RZ	Medicine	2744
S-SK	Agriculture	928
T-TX	Technology	1817
U-UH	Military Science	869
V-VM	Naval Science	162
Z-ZA	Bibliography and Library Science	325
Total ‡		**31,470**

‡Totals will not add up to 42,355 because many document records do not have LC classification

E-books

The majority of governmental electronic resources added to the catalog are monograph and serial publications by government agencies. These electronic publications are typically made available in HTML or PDF format, although other formats, such as raster images of maps, are also available. The Government Printing Office (GPO) has, in early 2014, also begun to make publications available in formats for e-readers (e.g., .epub). In addition, the Library catalogs continuing electronic resources (i.e., websites) for government agencies and entities where appropriate. There are approximately **3,484** electronic government documents titles currently in the Library's catalog. These counts do not include tangible titles that also have links to electronic versions, of which there are **3,121**. This makes a total of **6,605** government titles available in electronic format, or **16%** of the collection.
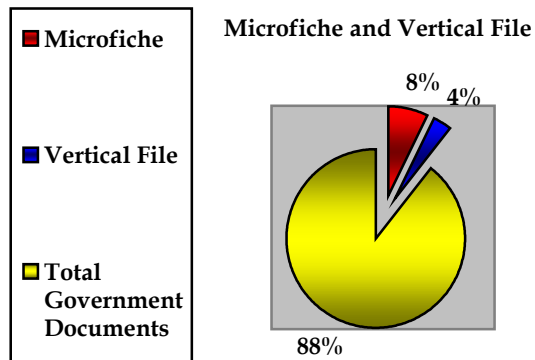
Maps

The Library's tangible map collection currently contains **1,475** titles, and government document maps account for **1,260** of these holdings, making up the majority (**85%**) of this collection. The largest categories of maps include geological and soil surveys, census series, CIA, weather, and topographic maps. Of the map classes that the Library does not select, nautical maps and charts make up the majority.

Figure 3: Distribution of Government Publications by Format

16%

☐ Total Documents

■ Available Electronically

From 1987 until 2012, the Library had a Selective Housing Agreement with the University's Geography Department for the receipt, processing, housing, and maintenance of FDLP maps (primarily those produced by the U.S. Geological Survey). Thus, many depository maps were shipped directly to the Geography Department. Upon cancellation of the Selective Housing Agreement by the Geography Department, these maps (approximately **1,300** items after disposal of duplicates and superseded) reverted back to the Library. The cataloging project for these maps is ongoing. To date, **586** cartographic items have been added to the Library's collection.

Microfiche

A significant percentage of the Government Documents Collection is in microfiche format. There are currently **3,421** government document microfiche titles, not including the substantive collection of non-cataloged Y4 microfiche and older fiche that has been LC classed and filed in a different location. The Government Documents Collection cataloged microfiche is located on the 2nd floor. Non-cataloged Congressional microfiche is located on the 4th floor.

Microfiche and Vertical File

■ Microfiche

■ Vertical File

☐ Total Government Documents

8% 4%

88%

Vertical File

Items that are not suitable for shelving with the main collection due to size or format are located in the vertical file. Vertical file items include pamphlets, posters, Braille publications, and other items, especially those of an ephemeral nature. There are currently **1,505** titles in the GPO vertical file.

Audio-Visual Materials

The Government Documents Collection contains **76** total audiovisual titles. These titles include **28** videos, **27** kits, and **21** pieces of software. This does not

include non-software CDs and DVDs, which are not located in the AV center, but are integrated with the Library's main collection.

Serials

Of the total Government Documents Collection, **3,141** are serial titles. Government document serials are often irregular in publication frequency, and determining active and ceased publications can be difficult. Government documents periodicals include monthly, quarterly, and weekly journals. Annual reports from government agencies also make up a significant portion of the serials in the Government Documents Collection, though many were originally cataloged individually, making an accurate count of government serials difficult. When discovered, any individual records that should have been cataloged as serials are modified or added to existing serials records.

ACCESS TO ELECTRONIC RESOURCES (Defined Access)

Since the last Government Documents assessment, GPO's legacy system, GPOAccess, has been replaced by the Federal Digital System (FDsys). The Library selects **32%** (**2,042** item numbers out of **6,385** available) of the online-only titles available from the Government Printing Office, and currently receives approximately **66%** (**2,042** item numbers out of **3,113** total item numbers selected) of its total government publications selections solely in electronic format. In addition, many government publications received in tangible format are also available digitally.

The library's defined access is rated a **3** (Study or Instructional Support level).

Databases

The Library provides online access to several government databases through the FDsys web portal (http://www.gpo.gov/FDsys/). These databases are varied in subject and coverage. Most are full text. In addition to many other functions, FDsys serves as a metasearch for these databases, which are arranged by collection. Some of the most utilized collections include:

- Bound Congressional Record
- Budget of the United States Government
- Catalog of U.S. Government Publications
- Code of Federal Regulations (CFR)
- Congressional Databases (Bills, Calendars, Committee Prints, Documents, Hearings)
- Congressional Record and Congressional Record Index
- Consumer Information Center
- History of Bills
- Independent Counsel Investigations
- Journal of the House of Representatives
- List of CFR Sections Affected
- Medline/PubMed

- Public Papers of the Presidents
- Public and Private Laws
- Supreme Court Decisions
- United States Code

In addition to the collections available through FDsys, there are also other government web portals geared towards specific subject areas, such as Science.gov (http://www.science.gov/) and American FactFinder (http://factfinder2.census.gov/faces/nav/jsf/pages/index.xhtml).

The Library also has access to government databases (e.g., ERIC) through such general multi-disciplinary database providers as EBSCO and Gale. The government also allows depository libraries no-fee access to databases such as the Homeland Security Digital Library (http://www.hsdl.org/).

Websites

The Library catalogs selected government websites and provides access to them by linking through the Library's catalog. These sites are reviewed, evaluated, and selected by the Electronic Resources/Documents Librarian, or added at the request of a Subject Specialist. These sites can include individual web pages which form discrete publications, or entire sites or portals (e.g., the abovementioned Science.gov). In addition, all FDLP libraries are mandated to have a web presence. The Library complies with this mandate by maintaining the Government Resources LibGuide (http://libguides.jsu.edu/government). In 2012, this LibGuide was created to replace the Library's Government Resources Access web pages. It contains information about and links to government resources parsed by type (i.e., Federal, International, State & Local), as well as highlighting new and notable publications.
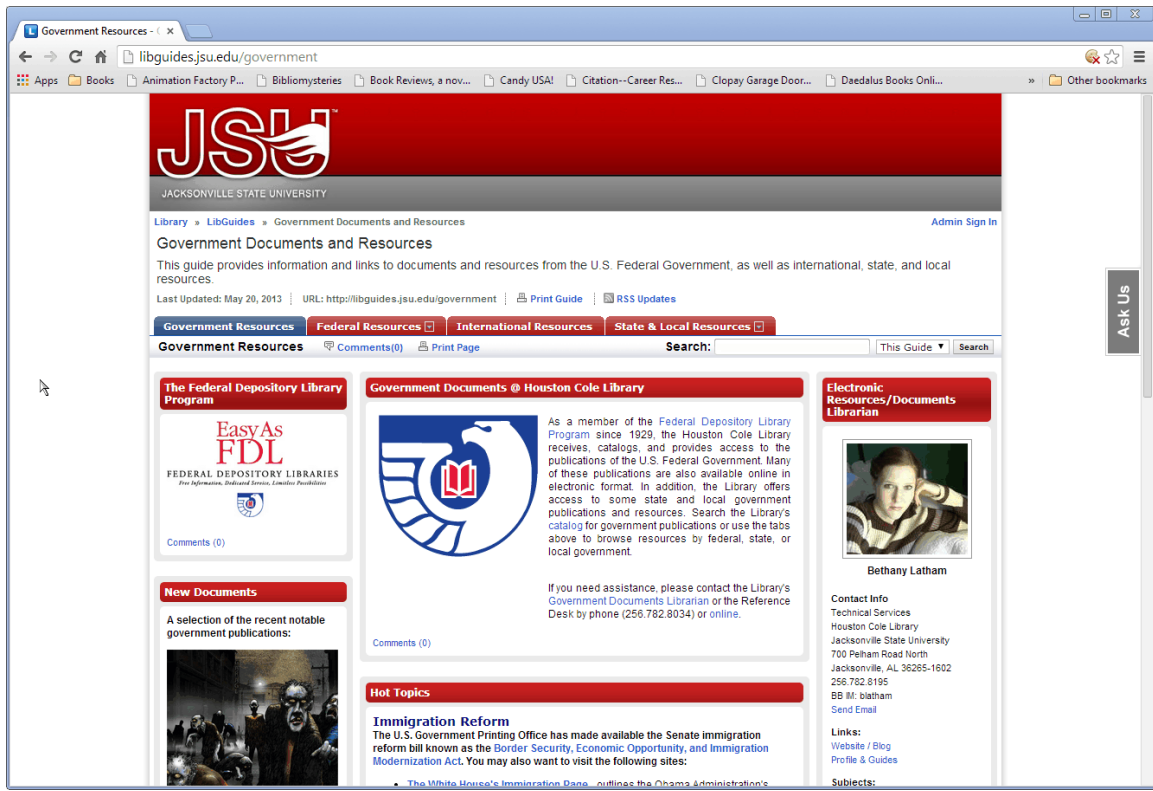
Figure 4: Government Resources LibGuide

ACQUISITIONS AND FUNDING

All items in the Government Documents Collection are received free-of-charge from GPO through the Federal Depository Library Program. For libraries that are not members of the FDLP, GPO provides a small selection of these publications for purchase, though most are not available at all outside the depository distribution system. Without FDLP membership, the Library would incur considerable cost to provide access to some of the valuable resources that it currently receives for free. Using the prices found in the GPO product sales catalog database,[4] a sample selection of the expenditures that would be incurred over the course of one fiscal year for a few of the Library's widely used government publications is provided below in order to show the benefits of depository status.

Title	Amount
Code of Federal Regulations	$1,804.00
U.S. Code	$5,040.00
Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance	$111.00
Federal Register	$929.00
Census of Population and Housing	$2,800.00
Current Population Reports	$101.00
Digest of Education Statistics	$67.00

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[4] http://bookstore.gpo.gov/

FCC Record	$813.00
Federal Acquisition Regulation	$463.00
Congressional Record	$503.00
Public Papers of the President of the United States	$300.00
Foreign Relations of the United States	$207.00
Budget of the United States Government	$218.00
Total	**$13,356.00**

BIBLIOGRAPHIES

Bibliographies examined have revealed the following percentages. Please see comprehensive checklists for more detailed data.

Title	Listed	Held	Percent Held
Current Bibliographies			
*Essential Titles for Public Use in Paper or Other Tangible Format**	48	46	96%
Federal Depository Library Program Basic Collection	22	22	100%
Guide to U.S. Government Publications, 2014	23,214	2,805	12%
The United States Government Internet Directory, 2012	1,766	183	10%
Totals	25,050	3,056	12%
Retrospective Bibliographies			
Maps Available for Selection	142	39	27%
Guide to Popular U.S. Government Publications	1,370	701	51%
Subject Guide to U.S. Government Reference Sources	1,302	496	38%
Suggested Core Collection for Small to Medium Academic Libraries	1,000	489	49%
Totals	3,814	1,725	45%
Total	**28,864**	**4,781**	**17%**

* Though the Library provides access to 96% of these titles, only 75% of them are currently selected in print format.

Essential Titles for Public Use in Paper or Other Tangible Format[5]

Title	Library Holdings by Format
Agricultural Statistics	Print (retrospective) & Electronic (current)
Budget of the United States Government	Print, CD (retrospective) & Electronic (current)
Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance	Print & Electronic
Census of Population and Housing: Population and Housing Unit Counts	Print & Electronic
Census of Population and Housing: Summary Population & Housing Characteristics	Print & Electronic
Census of Population and Housing: Summary Social, Economic & Housing Characteristics	Print & Electronic
Census of Population and Housing: Social, Economic & Housing Characteristics	Electronic

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[5] Revised edition (11/2008); available from the FDLP desktop at: http://www.fdlp.gov/requirements-guidance/collections-and-databases/1443-essential-titles

Title	Library Holdings by Format
(Outlying)	
Code of Federal Regulations	Print & Electronic
Condition of Education	Print & Electronic
Congressional Directory	Print (retrospective) & Electronic (current)
Congressional Record	Electronic
Congressional Record (daily)	Electronic
Constitution of the United States, Analysis and Interpretation	Print & Electronic
Consumer Price Index (CPI) Detailed Report	Print & Electronic
County and City Data Book	Print & Electronic
Crime in the United States	Print, CD & Electronic
Digest of Education Statistics	Print & Electronic
Economic Census	Print (retrospective)
Economic Indicators	Print & Electronic
Economic Report of the President	Print
Federal Register	Print, Microfiche & Electronic
Foreign Relations of the U.S.	Print & Electronic
Green Book (Committee on Ways and Means)	Microfiche & Electronic
Handbook of North American Indians	Print
Harmonized Tariff Schedule of the U.S.	Print
Health US	Print & Electronic
Letters of Delegates to Congress, 1774-1789	Print
List of Sections Affected (CFR)	Print & Electronic
Monthly Labor Review	Print & Electronic
North American Industry Classification System Manual (NAICS)	Print & Electronic
Occupational Outlook Handbook	Print & Electronic
Producer Price Index (PPI)	Electronic
Public Papers of the President	Print & Electronic (current)
Social Security Bulletin	Print & Electronic
Social Security Handbook	Print & Electronic
Sourcebook of Criminal Justice Statistics	Print, CD & Electronic
State and Metropolitan Area Data Book	Print
Statistical Abstract of the United States	Print & Electronic
Treaties and Other International Acts of the United States	Print
Treaties in Force	Print
U.S. Government Manual	Print & Electronic
United States Code	Print, CD & Electronic
United States Congressional Serial Set	Microfiche (retrospective) & Electronic
United States Reports	Print & Microfiche
World Factbook	Print & Electronic

Federal Depository Library Program Basic Collection[6]

Title	Library Holdings by Format
American FactFinder	Electronic

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[6] Revised edition (03/2009); available from the FDLP desktop at: http://www.fdlp.gov/requirements-guidance/collections-and-databases/1442-basic-collection

Title	Library Holdings by Format
Ben's Guide to U.S. Government	Electronic
Budget of the United States Government	Print & Electronic
Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance	Print (retrospective) & Electronic (current)
Catalog of U.S. Government Publications	Electronic
Census of Population and Housing: Summary Social, Economic & Housing Characteristics	Print & Electronic
Code of Federal Regulations	Print & Electronic
Daily Compilation of Presidential Documents	Electronic
Congressional Directory	Print (retrospective) & Electronic (current)
Congressional Record	Electronic
Constitution of the United States, Analysis and Interpretation	Print & Electronic
Economic Indicators	Electronic
Economic Report of the President	Print & Electronic
Federal Register	Print, Microfiche & Electronic
Historical Statistics of the United States, Colonial Times to 1970 – Bicentennial Edition	Print & Electronic
Occupational Outlook Handbook	Print & Electronic
Public Papers of the President	Print & Electronic (current)
Social Security Handbook	Print (retrospective) & Electronic (current)
U.S. Government Manual	Print & Electronic
United States Code	Print, CD & Electronic
United States Reports	Print & Microfiche
USA Counties	Electronic

Guide to U.S. Government Publications[7]

Listed	Held	Percent Held
23,214	2,805	12%

The United States Government Internet Directory, 2012[8]

Subject	Listed	Held	Percent Held
Finding Aids	15	6	40%
Agriculture, Fishing & Forestry	55	7	13%
Arts & Culture	29	3	10%
Business & Economics	127	16	13%
Defense & Intelligence	182	11	6%
Demographics & Sociology	21	9	43%
Education	149	9	6%
Employment	43	9	21%
Energy	43	0	0%
Engineering & Technology	54	1	2%
Environment & Nature	149	13	9%

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[7] Batten, Donna (2013). *Guide to U.S. Government Publications, 2014.* New York: Gale Cengage.
[8] Hattis, Shana Hertz (2012). *The United States Government Internet Directory, 2012.* Lanham, MD: BernanPress.

Subject	Listed	Held	Percent Held
Government & Politics	117	18	15%
Health & Safety	183	23	13%
History	22	1	5%
International Relations	60	11	18%
Law and Law Enforcement	122	15	12%
Legislative Branch	33	7	21%
Libraries & Museums	77	7	9%
Parks & Recreation	15	3	20%
Presidency	21	0	0%
Physical and Earth Sciences	126	8	6%
Social Welfare	75	4	5%
Transportation	48	2	4%
Total	**1,766**	**183**	**10%**

Guide to Popular U.S. Government Publications[9]

Subject	Listed	Held	Percent Held
Accidents and Accident Prevention	20	5	25%
Aeronautics and Space Sciences	43	25	58%
Aging and Senior Citizen Issues	21	14	67%
Agriculture and Horticulture	53	22	42%
Alcohol and Substance Abuse	25	17	68%
Arts and Humanities	7	5	71%
Automobiles and Transportation	9	2	22%
Business and International Trade	81	44	54%
Careers and Occupations	27	16	59%
Children, Infants, and Youth	29	14	48%
Citizenship, Immigration, and Naturalization	11	5	45%
Climate and Weather	10	4	40%
Computers and Data Processing	27	13	48%
Constitution and Historic Documents	5	4	80%
Consumer Information and Protection	13	8	62%
Copyrights, Patents, and Trademarks	8	5	63%
Crime and Criminal Justice	16	11	69%
Customs	8	2	25%
Debate Topics	19	10	53%
Demography, Genealogy, and Vital Records	15	15	100%
Disaster Preparedness and Emergency Management	11	7	64%
Education	181	119	66%
Energy	82	38	46%
Environmental Protection and Ecology	33	13	39%
Families and Family Planning	5	2	40%
Food and Nutrition	28	14	50%
Foreign Area Studies	17	14	82%
Forests and Forestry	8	1	13%
Freedom of Information	5	0	0%
Geology	4	0	0%

[9] Hoffman, Frank W. and Wood, Richard J. (1997). *Guide to Popular U.S. Government Publications.* Englewood, CO: Libraries Unlimited.

Subject	Listed	Held	Percent Held
Grants	10	4	40%
Handicapped and Physical Disabilities	19	11	58%
Health and Medical Care	22	12	55%
History and Historical Preservation	4	3	75%
Hobbies	3	0	0%
Housing	28	10	36%
International, Social, and Political Developments	7	5	71%
Labor and Employment	56	28	50%
Libraries, Museums, Archives, and Information Science	18	12	67%
Maps and Atlases	12	7	58%
Military Affairs	77	38	49%
Mines and Prospecting	20	2	10%
Physical Fitness	2	1	50%
Postal Service	5	2	40%
Posters and Decals	23	2	9%
Public Assistance, Poverty, and Social Security	16	7	44%
Public Buildings, Landmarks, and Historical Sites	37	10	27%
Recreation and Outdoor Activities	14	4	29%
Science, Engineering, and Technology	7	3	43%
Standard of Living	16	14	88%
Taxes and Taxation	11	9	82%
Telecommunications and Mass Media	18	5	28%
Travel	8	1	13%
United States Government	67	38	57%
Veterans and Military Retirement	13	4	31%
Wildlife	13	7	54%
Women's Issues	17	8	47%
Total	**1,370**	**701**	**51%**

Subject Guide to U.S. Government Reference Sources[10]

Subject	Listed	Held	Percent Held
Bibliographic Aids	33	11	33%
General Works	95	48	51%
Biographical Sources	4	2	50%
Library Science	24	14	58%
Economics and Business	157	72	46%
Education	52	23	44%
Geography	17	6	35%
History and Area Studies	99	34	34%
Law	60	29	48%
Political Science	128	58	45%
Recreation and Hobbies	8	1	13%
Sociology	67	23	34%
Statistics and Demography	32	19	59%
Urbanology	7	5	71%
Science and Technology	37	5	14%
Agriculture	69	15	22%

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[10] Hardy, Gayle J. and Robinson, Judith Schiek (1996). *Subject Guide to U.S. Government Reference Sources (2nd ed.)*, Englewood, CO: Libraries Unlimited.

Subject	Listed	Held	Percent Held
Astronomy	17	5	29%
Biological Sciences	12	4	33%
Earth Sciences	45	10	22%
Energy	27	14	52%
Engineering	29	7	24%
Environmental Sciences	37	9	24%
Medical Sciences	131	48	37%
Transportation	44	10	23%
Architecture	20	9	45%
Fine Arts	8	2	25%
Literature	11	7	64%
Music	8	3	38%
Performing Arts	10	3	30%
Philosophy and Religion	2	0	0%
Total	**1,290**	**496**	**38%**

WITHDRAWALS

Unlike other materials, the Government Documents Collection must adhere to strict deselection guidelines specified by governmental mandate. In accordance with GPO policy, as stated in *Legal Requirements & Program Regulations of the Federal Depository Library Program*,[11] government documents can be discarded one of four ways:

1. *Superseded materials*. These are items that have been replaced by a newer edition/version and/or whose SuDoc call number is found in the *Superseded List.*
2. *5 year rule.* The Library must retain government publications for a minimum of 5 years. After 5 years have elapsed, they can be discarded, provided that they have been approved by the Regional Librarian and offered to every depository in the state.
3. *Duplicates.* Duplicate items can be discarded, regardless of how long they have been retained.
4. *Substitution.* It is permitted to substitute "official" online versions for tangible publications, and discard the tangible. The "official" online version must be produced and maintained by GPO or a source authorized by GPO.

During FY 2013, the Government Documents Department withdrew a total of **764** items. The majority of these items are ephemeral titles or tangible items deselected in favor of electronic versions.

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[11] *Legal Requirements & Program Regulations of the Federal Depository Library Program* (2011). Washington, D.C.: Library Programs Service, U.S. G.P.O., 6.

FEDERAL DEPOSITORY LIBRARY GUIDELINES

The U.S. Federal Government has outlined minimal collection development and maintenance guidelines for all Federal Depository Libraries in Section III of the *Legal Requirements & Program Regulations of the Federal Depository Library Program.*[12] These guidelines are herein examined to determine the extent to which the Library is in compliance.

Collection Development

1. **Depository libraries must develop depository collections to meet the needs and format preferences of their primary library users and the general public.**
   Compliance. The Electronic Resources/Documents Librarian conducts a zero-based review of selections on a yearly basis and liaises with Subject Specialists to add new relevant publications and deselect those that are not useful. Formats are constantly examined for obsolescence, with preference often given to digital versions, and digital versions are also added to the records of tangible documents when available. Electronic resources are evaluated and new titles added monthly using WEBtech Notes and the New Electronic Titles lists.

2. **Each library must demonstrate knowledge of their library community's needs.**
   Compliance. The Library's core constituency is made up of the students, faculty, and staff of Jacksonville State University. To provide for their needs, the Electronic Resources/Documents Librarian keeps abreast of university curricula, programs, and initiatives, and uses this knowledge to select items that will support the current and anticipated instructional, research, and service programs of the University. Consideration is also given to serving the general public in the surrounding community, through knowledge of the demographics of Jacksonville and Calhoun County.

3. **The foundation of a depository library collection includes both tangible (e.g. print, microfiche, CD-ROM/DVD) and online content. Depository libraries must provide access to FDLP content, including:**
   a) **Publications selected, distributed, and received through the Federal Depository Library Program,**
   b) **The FDLP Basic Collection,**
   c) **Publications available through official FDLP partnerships,**
   d) **Online publications cataloged in the Catalog of U.S. Government Publications (CGP), including publications found**

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[12] *Legal Requirements & Program Regulations of the Federal Depository Library Program* (2009). Washington, D.C.: Library Programs Service, U.S. G.P.O., 4-5.

in the Federal Digital System (FDsys); demonstrated through a combination of cataloging, creation of Web pages, or integration of online material into traditional library finding aids such as subject guides.

Compliance.

a) All selections available through the FDLP are reviewed and evaluated on a yearly basis, adding new publications and deselecting those no long deemed useful. All currently selected tangible and intangible items are fully cataloged. In addition to the Library's catalog, access is also provided to some electronic resources through the Library's website and subject guides.

b) The Library selects and provides access to 100% of the titles designated as the FDLP Basic Collection.

c) The Library provides access to a variety of resources made available through FDLP partnerships, especially those being digitized by entities partnering with the FDLP.

d) The Library includes both catalog records for and links to online publications found in the CGP and FDsys, as well as including them in subject guides.

4. **Selective depository libraries may only select one tangible format of a publication or series.**
   Compliance. The Library attempts to select only one tangible format of publications, primarily print. Every effort is being made to phase out microfiche and other obsolete tangible formats.

5. **All libraries must select item numbers 0556-C and 1004-E. These item numbers are used when an important title is distributed to all depository libraries.**
   Compliance. Both these item numbers are included in the Library's selection profile.

Collection Maintenance

1. **If a library receives a duplicate copy of a publication, the duplicate may be discarded immediately or offered on a discard list to the regional depository library.**
   Compliance. The Library's Government Documents Department has disposal procedures in place that comply with all aspects of this guideline; duplicate copies of government publications are immediately discarded, unless a Subject Specialist specifies they wish to keep duplicates.

2. **All depository materials must be housed in a manner that facilitates timely access.**

Compliance. The Library's government publications are housed within the Library's main collection, ensuring they enjoy the same ease of access as all other library materials.

3. **Each depository library is entrusted with the custody of depository materials and must ensure that they are properly preserved and protected from theft, deterioration, or damage, in a manner comparable to other library collections and in a way that facilitates their use. FDLP resources must be included in the insurance coverage for the library's collection**
Compliance. The Library does provide security for its government publications that is comparable to that of the rest of the Library's collection (e.g., they are security stripped), and they are likewise included in its disaster management plans. Government publications, like other library materials, are also sent for mending and binding as necessary. It should be noted, however, that though the Electronic Resources/Documents Librarian attempts to find replacement copies via Needs and Offers lists for government publications that have been lost or damaged, it is often not possible to find a replacement, and there is no system in place for buying replacements, as there is with the general library collection.

4. **All facilities housing depository materials must meet the standards set forth in the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) or have a reasonable alternative to ensure access.**
Non-compliance. The Library's physical building is not, and has never been, ADA compliant. Some examples include lack of handicapped accessible doors and areas of the floors (specifically the stacks) that are too narrow to provide wheelchair access. However, every effort is made to provide access to government publications for those with disabilities, according to the individual's situation.

5. **Microfiche viewing equipment must be available to users if the format is in the depository collection.**
Compliance. Though an attempt is being made to phase out government fiche for new acquisitions, there is still a considerable retrospective collection of government documents microfiche. Thus, the Library provides microfiche machines for the utilization of this collection.

6. **If tangible electronic media cannot be viewed on public computers, at a minimum, the library must be able to circulate the material or provide alternate means of access to the content.**
Compliance. The Library's public access computers on each floor have drives which allow viewing of tangible electronic government documents such as CDs and DVDs. In addition, the majority (with the exception of those located in the audio-visual department) is shelved in the Library's circulating collection, and thus they are available to patrons for check-out.

SUMMARY
Tangible Collection
Strengths
After careful examination of total holdings and checklist comparisons, it is felt that the tangible elements of the Government Documents Collection are currently adequate to support the needs of the Library's user community. Through the increasing use of electronic links in the catalog records of tangible documents, the Government Documents Collection provides access to appropriate titles in a variety of formats that adequately support the teaching and research activities of the University, in addition to meeting the information needs of the 3rd Congressional district. The Collection is particularly strong in the subjects of social sciences, political science, science, medicine, U.S. history, and education; in addition, the Collection is especially valued for the detailed statistical information it provides on a variety of subjects. The fact that the Library's Government Documents Collection is primarily cataloged using LC classification (an additional step many libraries neglect, since copy-cataloged documents usually come with SuDoc classification rather than LC) and integrated into the Library's main collection gives it much greater visibility, browsability, and usage than the segregated collections to be found in many university libraries.

Through aggressive adherence to a policy of removal of all superseded items, selection of resources only in useful formats, and replacement of ephemeral publications with electronic substitutes, the Government Documents Department has considerably reduced the number of ineffectual publications and formats within the Collection. This is especially true in the area of vertical file and microfiche publications, which have been aggressively weeded and screened for selection. The Government Documents Department is continually working to address the issue of obsolete formats and redundancy, and it is felt that the selection and retention policies of the Government Documents Collection are now more appropriate to the Library's needs than they have been in the past.

The Library's current selection percentage (31%) is adequate for a medium-sized academic library with JSU's user community, and it also meets and exceeds the goal set forth in the recommendations section of the last assessment ("The Library's goal before the next assessment should be to increase its selection percentage to at least 30%"[13]).

Weaknesses
One complaint about the Library's tangible Government Documents Collection is that it is lacking in certain retrospective resources useful for historical research (e.g. the Library's Serial Set is incomplete). This weakness is due to the nature of the selection/deselection process of government publications through the FDLP. Publications may be selected one year, dropped during the next update cycle, and then selected again the following year. This can quickly create gaps in sets. Though there are some exceptions, unlike traditional publications, if a

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[13] Latham, Bethany. (2005). Government Documents Collection Assessment, 21.

government publication is "missed," during selection one year, it usually cannot be found, purchased, and added later on. Publications are often dropped at the behest of Subject Specialists and sometimes re-added at a later date. The government itself sometimes, without warning, ceases to offer a title even though that title is still being published. To help better explain these gaps and keep track of why and when a publication was dropped, and at whose request, the Electronic Resources/Documents Librarian has, since 2005, kept a database of this information, along with records on exactly what is added each year.

The nature of the depository system further complicates the selection process. GPO will occasionally add items to a depository's selection profile without their having actually been selected by that depository. GPO also provides some publications only to regional libraries, refusing to allow selectives to add them to their profiles. The selection process itself is another issue: rather than being able to select by title, FDLP publications must be selected using item numbers. Some of these item numbers are cross-referenced to a single publication, but many represent entire classes of publications for which no clear description is given (e.g., "Agricultural publications, miscellaneous"). This makes it difficult to ascertain what the Library will be acquiring until the publications actually begin arriving, at which point they must be retained for 5 years before discarding.

The retrospective subject bibliographies show respectable percentages for the Government Documents Collection, as do the GPO-provided checklists. The main discrepancy comes from the *Guide to U.S. Government Publications*, which returned a very small percentage (12%) and *The United States Government Internet Directory* (examined under the Electronic Resources section). It should be understood that the *Guide* is an alphabetical listing by title of *every* federal government publication, regardless of whether or not it was distributed through the FDLP (and thus, available for selection to the Library). Also, the manner in which the *Guide* is organized can skew results. Some examples: a single map series may have well over 1,000 entries, whereas the Library only collects the few entries related to Alabama; a single circular title may represent 500 entries, of which only 2 are relevant to the Library; a multitude of hearings and committee reports, which are not, generally speaking, individually cataloged by the Library, are also included in the *Guide*'s title lists. It is unfortunate that there are not bibliographies arranged by subject being currently published for government documents. The latest available date from the 1990s, and current bibliographies are necessary to provide a more accurate gauge for the Library's collection than can be found through a straight title count from the *Guide*.

Though Library patrons have recourse to regional and other depositories when the materials they seek are not available through the Library's depository, they are usually unwilling to travel to Tuscaloosa or Montgomery, where the nearest regional 100% depositories are located. And though these regional depositories should, theoretically, have all government publications distributed through the FDLP since their date of admission, the reality is that their collections are

incomplete, and many resources are uncataloged, effectively making them impossible for users to find.

One other issue of late has been that, with federal budget cuts have come the demise of certain key resources, especially those, such as the *Statistical Abstract of the United States*, which were formerly published by the U.S. Census Bureau and selected by the Library. This situation has noticeably impacted the Government Documents Collection in a negative way, and the Library has attempted to mitigate the problem through purchase of resources such as Proquest's Statistical Abstract product.

Electronic Resources
Strengths
The advent of born digital content that replaces or supplements tangible government publications has provided an opportunity to up the Library's selection percentage and provide greater access to more resources for Library users without the need to worry about shelf space or the cost of physical processing. Thus, electronic resources have profoundly increased ease of access to government publications. The Library offers access to a multitude of full-text government resources that Library users can utilize through any computer with Internet access. These electronic resources are fully cataloged and easily discoverable. In addition to government publications and websites, the Library also provides access to government web portals (e.g., Science.gov) in order to facilitate subject searching within electronic government resources. Subject browsing is further enhanced through the Library's Government Resources subject guide, which highlights new resources and compiles and parses resources into state, local, federal, and international resources, and has provided a revamped web presence as recommended by the previous assessment.[14] GPO has also recently (in early 2014) begun to make some of its digital publications available in ebook (i.e., .epub) format, which is a step forward that will be welcomed by tablet and mobile users.

Weaknesses
While some attempts have been made through FDsys, the government's infrastructure for authenticating, but especially for preserving electronic publications, is inadequate. As has been demonstrated with the *Statistical Abstract*, all it takes is one bad budget year for key government resources to disappear altogether, and this is especially true of electronic resources. While the information they contain should not be ephemeral, the format in which they are presented certainly is. Were FDsys to be defunded, all the electronic resources available through it would vanish, and the result would be catastrophic for the Library's electronic Government Documents Collection. Likewise detrimental are situations such as that which occurred in 2013, where a U.S. Federal Government shutdown due to an inability to agree on a budget caused nearly

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[14] Latham, Bethany. (2005). Government Documents Collection Assessment, 21.

every government website to go dark, denying users any access to the information contained within these sites.

Government publications outside FDsys (i.e., those housed on the issuing agency's servers, which make up the vast majority of government publications) are in even more danger from lack of preservation. The last assessment recommended that the Library obtain server space and technology to organize and archive electronic government resources of particular interest and/or importance,[15] but due to budgetary considerations, this has not been pursued. The Library's electronic government documents often disappear from agency websites and, without local preservation, there is then no way to provide access for the Library's users. This is demonstrated with resources such as American Factfinder (http://factfinder2.census.gov/faces/nav/jsf/pages/index.xhtml), the portal provided by the U.S. Census Bureau to offer access to census data. Unbeknownst to depository libraries, the Census Bureau planned to maintain only the latest census plus the one previous on this website. Many libraries, ours included, discarded their tangible 1990 census materials (primarily DVDs that contained the detailed statistical tables), because the information was available (supposedly permanently) through American FactFinder. When the 2010 Census was released and added to the site, the Bureau removed the 1990 Census, and libraries were, essentially, left up a creek.

In looking at the percentages from *The United States Government Internet Directory* (12%), it is also obvious that the Library's electronic Government Documents Collection is lacking overall, but especially in the areas of education and history. The cause for this lies primarily with the selection process for electronic resources, and the difficulty inherent in managing them. When an item number is selected for an online-only version of a government publication, the Library is never notified by GPO when electronic publications that correspond to its item selections are available (or, in the case of serials, when the latest issue/volume has been produced). New Electronic Titles lists are published by the government each month, and the Library scans them for new titles to add, but these lists often do not seem to correspond with the titles the government says are available through the item selection process. It should also be noted that these are *titles*, discrete electronic publications, rather than websites or portals, which make up a substantial portion of the entries in the *United States Government Internet Directory*. GPO has no system in place to notify depository libraries of new governmental websites that may be of interest to them, so the location, selection, cataloging, and access of resources such as these is a matter of pure serendipity.

The 2005 assessment noted that it was anticipated the Library would soon receive 95% of all its government publications exclusively in electronic format.[16] This statement was based on information from GPO itself, which repeatedly used

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[15] Latham, Bethany. (2005). Government Documents Collection Assessment, 21.
[16] Latham, Bethany. (2005). Government Documents Collection Assessment, 6.

the figure of 95% for the number of government publications it would soon be offering solely in electronic format. As can be easily seen from the potential selection pool, namely that online-only publications make up only 63% (6,385 out of 10,175 item numbers available for selection) of the titles available from GPO, this figure was overly ambitious, and the transition to digital has been much slower than GPO anticipated. Whether this is a strength or a weakness depends upon one's perspective, but it is anticipated that this percentage will slowly increase in future.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

The following recommendations are submitted with the intention of improving the Government Documents Collection and assuring that it is suited to the needs of the Library's user population:

- The Government Documents Department should continue to closely scrutinize items collected to determine their value to the collection, and act on their disposition accordingly.
- The Library should try to acquire (through the use of local and national Needs and Offers lists) publications to complete or supplement the Library's incomplete retrospective governmental resources.
- The Government Documents Department should continue to provide access, finding, and use aids for electronic government resources.
- As mentioned above, as government publications have become increasingly available electronically, the trend at the Library has been to replace tangible documents with electronic resources, even when the tangible version is still available. The Library should be extremely cautious in what it chooses to replace, given the ephemeral nature of government information supposedly "permanently" available on the Internet.
- Given the fact that many supposedly permanently available electronic resources disappear and are never restored by GPO, it is suggested that the Library obtain server space and technology to organize and archive electronic government resources of particular interest and/or importance.
- More online guides/research handouts should be developed to help students find and navigate government Internet resources.
- The Library should place a standing order for *The United States Government Internet Directory* (published annually by BernanPress), review it each year, and use it as a checklist bibliography to locate and acquire electronic government titles and websites. In this way, it is hoped a more robust electronic resource collection can be developed in key subject areas.