Heard It Through the GOVDOC-L Grapevine

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Contents

Background, Purpose and Methodology

When taking the "beginner librarian" course, Reference Sources and Services, I found the book "Tapping the Government Grapevine" indispensable to unraveling the structure and role of the Center for Disease Control within the hierarchy of the U.S. government. The title stuck with me.

As a requirement for Government Information Resources, I'd subscribed to the GOVDOC-L listserv and enjoyed reading the queries and responses that flew fast and furiously among the government documents librarian community. I became curious to see how I could "tap this grapevine." On May 28, 2003, while considering the paper topic, "What does it mean to be a government documents library in the 21st century," I sent a tentative inquiry to Keith Weimer, Government Information librarian at Boatwright Memorial Library of the University of Richmond. In a GOVDOC-L exchange, Mr. Weimar had described a course he was teaching that piqued my interest. His reply was so kind and well crafted that I decided to approach the entire listserv.

But what would I ask? Being a novice govdoc student, I had difficulty trying to focus and limit my questions – there were so many possibilities. I remembered "Tapping the Government Grapevine" and combined this, for inspiration, with the 1960's rock and roll song, "Heard it through the grapevine," and patterned questions based on concepts in its verse. Somehow it seemed to work. Several librarians claimed they responded because they found the approach refreshing.

This is first and foremost an engaging personal learning process, requiring an investigation of resources and terminology in greater depth than might have been accomplished otherwise given the short time frame (four weeks) of this summer course.

Perhaps more intriguing was a glimpse into how documents librarian ended up in this field, and given the frustrations and challenges, why they stay the course. Of particular value to me was the simple act of getting my name out on the GOVDOC-L listserv, and being able to put a personality to the names that appear daily in my email account. Roselle (2001) discussed the importance of this particular listserv in opening channels of communication among librarians and consolidating a sense of community, especially for newer documents librarians.

The results of this paper might well prove of interest to the fellowship of government documents librarians in general as a review of their peers' pet resources. It might also assist budding librarians who are undecided on the direction of their career, or having determined to take a swing on the government documents' librarian grapevine, the best way to get a firm grip. Note the wide variety of publications that find government information resources worth reporting, and you have a better understanding of how you need to assess your community of users and its needs. If nothing else, the bibliographic journey provided a quick overview of the history and changing significance of many of the favored resources.

On Friday, June 6, 2003, I took the plunge and sent a brief introductory statement and questionnaire (Appendix I) over the GOVDOC-L listserv. As the message was released to the listserv on Saturday afternoon, few answers were forthcoming until early the following week, when a flurry of emails appeared in my account. As of June 17, thirty-one individuals had responded.

As soon as a response came in, an acknowledgement of thanks was made, and in some cases additional information requested (clarification terms new to me -- DDM, for example), but I tried to keep follow-up questions to a minimum.

I was also fortunate to spend time with Mary Fetzer, Government Documents Librarian of Rutgers University, in class and one-on-one, exploring in greater detail the challenges facing even highly experienced government documents librarians.

Because my initial interest had been more along the lines of "what it means to be a government documents librarian in the 21st century" I had already begun to mine the major government information periodicals, especially *Government Information Quarterly* and the *Journal of Government Information* and to a lesser extent*, The Journal of Academic Librarianship, References Services Review* and *Serials Librarian*. Quite a few articles that I had retrieved to learn about "21st century gov docs librarians" naturally addressed issues that were of concern to my respondents, and form the core of research to date on the second and third questions of my inquiry.

I then tabulated the responses to my first question: what resource(s) would you miss most if lost? I expressly crafted a somewhat nebulous question, as I felt it would provide a more open forum.

The next step was to canvas recent publications dealing with libraries, information technology and government information. Citations were found using a variety of resources, listed in no particular order: Index to Library and Information Science, Library and Information Science Abstracts, ERIC, Academic Search Premiere, Lexis-Nexis, Web of Science, ABI-Inform and Digital Dissertations. I went through each database using simple search methods and search terms such as "FDLP", "GPO Access", "American

Factfinder," etc. Naturally, modifications had to be made, especially to terms such as EDGAR (became "EDGAR and SEC") and Thomas, which needed a qualifier "Library of Congress" to weed out articles with Thomas as a proper name. Where annotated, I have located and at least skimmed the article for relevance and interest. In all other cases, the articles are included as needing further investigation.

Heard it through the grapevine, not much longer would you be mine

In keeping with my musical theme, the response to "what resource(s) would you miss most?" brought to (my) mind rap music. I had expected more consensus on favorite documents, with large clusters of "must-haves" such as GPO Access, Thomas, and Statistical Abstract of the United States. Several mentioned what others took for granted – a computer and Internet access -- while a few cited materials with a peculiarly narrow focus, such as Patent Gazette and National Criminal Justice Reference Service that satisfied their particular clientele. With little commonality in the answers, I learned that librarians rely upon the following:

"Don't Nobody Mess With This Gov Doc Resource" Rap

Well, some like **Google** and **Google's Uncle Sam,**
Gotta have my souped-up computer **computer;** I am
tied to the '**Net.**
(Makes you look like a "wizard" to the information-challenged set.).
Couldn't live without LC **Thomas,** man, he's the best,
Tho' others want their **GPO,** with **Access** and the rest.
Code of Federal Reg, please let that stay (in print).
To quite a few librarians the **Stat Abstract's** worth a mint
They tell their patrons seeking stats, this is the place to go --
Though caution (they're librarians) that online's "a pain" and slow.
FDLP Desktop and **MoCat** have pride of place for some,
All things **Census** rate a nod, **American Factfinder** more than one.
Those who're charged with managing docs look to **Marcive** as a guide

For **Shipping Lists** and more.
But if you're searching older stuff, you have to turn to **Poore**.
Back again to cataloging, it just won't go away,
For souls devoted to its cause, **Autographics'** and **DDM** hold some sway.
My Andriot, my Andriot a patriot or two have said,
And note this **Guide to Gov't Pubs** is the best govdoc they've read.
The **Patent Gazette** is fun for one (gotta wonder at her post),
Two did mention **EDGAR**, good for info on IPOs.
Some vote the **Federal Register** and **Congressional Serial Set,**
For others, **Congressional Record**, and **U.S Code** needs met.
For those with crime and stats in mind
NCJRS and **Criminal Justice Stats** combine.
Newer stuff you need to know can all be found online**:**
Firstgov, Lexis-Nexis' Congressional Universe,
STAT-USA, Findlaw are all considered "finds".
But don't forget relationships as keys to finding facts.
But while **Foreign Relations of the United States** may keep you warm,
GOVDOC-L will "scratch your back."

It was apparent from information provided about the librarians' personal backgrounds and interests, their libraries, and the types of patrons they serve, that there is a wide divergence in the type and even format of materials on which they depend. There is, of course, a lesson here for those who would seek to "train" government documents librarians. Clearly there is a need for internship experience or formal training (preferably on-going) to understand government documents in general, and the specific high-traffic needs of each library community. This point is supported by researchers in the field. Yang (2001) reports that as far back as 1978, researchers Guilfolye and Tomerlin "indicated that government documents librarianship, as taught in library schools, was inadequate to deal effectively with government publications. They suggested the need for a practicum or internship". He further cites a 1983 article by Reeling that advocates continual updating of skills through more formal education.

This resource question was framed to fit the lyrics of a song, and was expected to result in a list of most-used or favorite resources.   However, the "what would you miss most if you *lost* it" seemed to strike a chord with librarians. This fear of "losing" important resources, through no fault of their own library, is a real one for documents librarians.   Karen Aughinbaugh of Fresno County Free Library finds it frustrating when the "government drop[s] the ball on disseminating some crucial resources" citing the U.S. Industry and Trade Outlook.   Cindi Wolff, University of California, Berkeley, is one of many who agreed.   "Having to deal with a government that changes hands/parties, and then changes directions as to what it thinks are 'important' information resources" is a problem documents librarians must face. She gave as an example (cited more than once) "the Bureau of Labor Statistics didn't see the need to do the Handbook of Labor Statistics anymore…." Mary Fetzer feels that document availability is "not reliable. The agencies have short-term memories and don't see the need to keep things historically."   Even if the government agency had the will to continue a report, sometimes the means are missing, notes Diane Calvin of Ball State University. "What I find confounding is serial titles that disappear without warning, often because the agency can no longer fund the research or publication of them" a tactic attributed by another librarian to "misguided budget-cutters" (Tim Dodge, Auburn University).

I'm just about to lose my mind…

People say you believe half of what you see
And none of what you hear
I can't help being confused

A large number of librarians felt that the challenges facing a 21st century government documents librarian (I'm just about to lose my mind) were the same as those

issues that proved most confusing – either to them personally or to communicate to other staff or patrons.

Just as I was surprised by the diversity of answers pertaining to resource preferences, I was amazed by the common thread woven through the challenges government documents librarians say they face. Keith Weimer of Boatwright Memorial Library, University of Richmond, captured in one paragraph most if not all of the related elements that his peers mentioned.

> Government information is a complicated body of material, and managing a federal depository collection according to established procedures for processing and organizing information requires in-depth knowledge, staff and student assistance and time to devote to learning the collection and maintaining one's knowledge and skills. Government information is complicated because of the nature of the federal bureaucracy. Documents are produced by agencies whose interests, mission, and jurisdiction often overlap or seem to overlap. It's not easy to tell how the contents of "National Transportation Statistics" differ from those of "Transportation Statistics Annual" or from "Transportation Indicators". Take a look and see what I mean: http://www.bts.gov/

A review of the challenges and frustrations cited brings up key issues that lent themselves to a country and western song:

My SuDoc Darling

Ain't got enough time,
Ain't got enough help,
My boss ain't got no sense --
We're just a bare-bones depository and they're sittin' on the fence.

Once, darling, you dressed in paper, then to microfiche you changed
Last week you wore a PURL. It's gone. My patron is deranged.
My students think the government knows everything or naught
They think into their laps should fall all info that is sought.
I know I need to keep abreast of technological advances,
'Cause those who come to my ref desk just want to do Web dances.
I tell them all my story,
'bout Stars and Stripes and Ol' Glory
And I watch their eyes glaze over
And I watch them run for cover.
So I tell them what they want to hear,
How I'll share the docs I hold so dear,
Oh….
I wish I had it (truly), and if I did I'd find it for you
but my Sudoc darling left me for a prettier [agency's] face.

Virtually everyone who responded found keeping up with changes wrought by technology a formidable task. In fact, those very words were a constant refrain. The following statements began with "keeping up with/keeping ahead of":

- transformation of government docs from print to microfiche to tangible electronic to web-based electronic formats

- agency changes, and call number changes

- new titles, especially the internet only titles;

- sheer range of subjects and publications; [that] information is less centralized, both in location and types of documents that are produced

- the changes, especially the computer related responsibilities

- patrons' wants and needs

With so much effort being expended just to stay abreast of demands, and less credence being given to the need for specialization (both of staff and location) with regard to government documents, are documents, as Arleen Talley of Enoch Pratt Free

Library, Baltimore cleverly puts it "the 'Rodney Dangerfield' of the library field?" She

writes:

> They get no respect from those who don't understand them. It's a challenge to
>
> keep new staff from being afraid of them. It's also a challenge to keep
>
> administrations' hand off them when they want to free up space. Because of
>
> cataloging issues, documents are often viewed as expendable."

This fear of expendability -- of documents and those who love them – is shared by

many librarians and seems rooted in the belief that because so few people seem to

understand them, it's difficult to communicate their worth. Karen Aughinbaugh claims

her greatest challenge is "convincing our administration of the continued value of

remaining a Depository." She laments, "The system is usually very mysterious to our

patrons, as it often seems to our non-document staff." "It's almost as if documents

librarians know a foreign language," says Suzanne Colligan, Buffalo and Erie County

Public Library, Central.

Savvy gov docs librarians seem to know that the system is going to

become increasingly less supportive, and to serve their communities they will have to

adapt. The question posed by Aldrich, Cornwell and Barkley in 2000 is even more valid

today: is the function of librarians that of "maintaining depository library collections and

services, any longer necessary given new information technologies?" The answer:

yes…but differently.

Collections still need to be maintained, and more importantly, made accessible,

whatever their format. What is happening, it appears, is that as Joe and Jane Citizen

become familiar with certain freely available government resources, they learn to answer basic questions on their own. But for research-level inquiries (Aldrich, 2000), the Web is as confounding as the SuDoc system to all but those highly trained in its intricacies. In many instances, even government documents librarian have difficulty navigating web sites and prefer to point patrons to more user-friendly print sources.

In addition, the average person doesn't fully understand what information the government *should be* making available, and hence wouldn't question the import of its absence if it weren't. While preserving documents is a noble cause, it seems secondary to creating an understanding among the citizenry of the *need* for preservation. What can these documents do for you? How can libraries get people to "begin using government documents to their full potential" (Joan Goodbody, Michigan Technological University) and to understand that "these skills are part of being an informed citizen?" (Judith Downie, California State University, San Marcos)

Several other librarians who responded to this survey grasped the implication voiced by Shuler (2003) that their future focus needs to swing more dramatically from "identifying and collecting specific reports" to

> Invest[ing] more time and energy making sure our communities understand how government works, and how they can use the information resources to make the government work better, or use the information resources to make their own…lives better. Yes, we can continue to work with other players in preserving electronic (and paper) government information, but it is no longer the primary duty of government information librarians.

Is it any wonder that government documents librarians entertain "a sense of uncertainty" (Aldrich, 2000) as new layers of responsibilities are added while few are being taken away? Library literature suggests that librarians are coping just fine, and using their new demands as a catalyst to forge strong new partnerships within and without their immediate communities, using traditional networking skills, but increasingly, those engendered by the Internet. That which doesn't kill me…

I don't mean to give the impression that documents librarians take an "us versus them" attitude about their work. Those who responded to my questions were uniformly pleased to be working with documents, despite the frustrations, and indeed relished the need for flexibility and continual learning to remain at the top of their game.

As I learned from my brief venture into "GOVDOC Land" government documents librarians are generally passionate about their jobs.

- I went to library school to BE a gov docs librarian – I wanted to try to be as smart as the documents librarians I worked for at the time (Cindi Wolff)

- I …like that it deals with a reality that committed, energetic people can change through taking political action (Jill Vassilakos-Long, California State University, San Bernadino).

- I've enjoyed the learning involved in growing into this job, and the expertise I now feel having 18 years of it under my belt. Nevertheless, there are always questions that keep me humble. (Diann Weatherly, University of Alabama at Birmingham)

- I think that if I were moved to an area where I could not work with documents, I would be miserable (Laura Sare, West Texas A&M University).

And my favorite…

- I'm driven by public service …I love gov docs with a passion! (Grace-Ellen McCrann, City College of New York).

Rock 'n' roll doesn't suit this theme, nor rap or C&W. I think the appropriate background music here is "Ode to Joy".

Annotated Bibliography

I. The Challenges and Frustrations of Government Documents Librarians

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How to handle the pressures of decreasing staff and importance (gov doc being absorbed into reference), and increasing responsibilities and challenges of handling both print and electronic resources. The impact of the Web on user expectations and need for technological expertise.

Barnum, G. (2002.) Availability, access, authenticity, and persistence: Creating the environment for permanent pubic access to electronic government information, *Government Information Quarterly*, 19, 1: 37-43.

Pro-librarian stance on preservation of publication versus preservation of access.

Drake, M.A. (2002, June). The U.S. Census Bureau in the 21st century: data, data, data, *Searcher,* 10, 6: 10-

Professor Drake questions the ability of librarians (except for younger ones with more mathematical and statistical training) to provide necessary levels of assistance to patrons utilizing census data. Also: how to preserve this data for future generations?

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Bibliographic overview of government information published between May and November 2000. Main concerns determined to be partnerships, Freedom of information and privacy, FDLP, digital government, citizen involvement and the issues of archives, cataloging and serials control.

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> How government documents librarians use the Web, especially the GOVDOC-L listserv to communicate more effectively and efficiently, and to create a community of learning and exchange of ideas.

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> What it will take for librarians to thrive in a new world of government publications that doesn't revolve around the GPO – or them.

Shuler, J.A. (2002). Libraries and government information: the past is not necessarily prologue. *Government Information Quarterly*, 19, 1: 1-7.

> Gov doc world – librarians, too -- must become more corporate and cooperative.

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VanFleet, C. and Wallace, D.P. (2003. Spring). Virtual libraries – real threat: technostress and virtual reference. *Reference and User Services Quarterly*, 42, 3: 188-191.

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Yang, Z. Y (2001, July-Aug). An assessment of education and training needs for government documents librarians in the United States. *Journal of Government Information,* 28, 4: 425-439.

Concludes that few MLS program offer sufficient training in government documents; indeed, it should be lifelong. Offers practical advice on how to "get up to speed" and the importance of having a firm grounding in the structure and function of the US government and its agencies.

II. Census and American Factfinder

Anonymous (2002, June). American Factfinder Tips. *South Dakota Business Review*, 60, 4:.20.

> Quick tips on how to request census tracts within a state; review of "search geography" features; quick answer routes for trivia buffs; and information on one-day seminars hosted by the Census Bureau.

Griffin, L. (2002, Oct.1) American Factfinder (Census). *Library Journal,* 127, 16: 34-

> Quick review of the first census to come out in DVD and on the web. "Factfinder also offers some nice GIS mapping with the ability to create maps for many key demographic areas."

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IV. Federal Depository Library Program
www.fdlp.gov

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www.gpoaccess.gov

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> Article discusses the value of www.regulations.gov, a website developed by the Office of Management and Budget and the EPA "to make it easier to participate in Federal rulemaking - an essential part of the American democratic process. On this site, you can find, review, and submit comments on Federal documents that are open for comment and published in the *Federal Register*, the Government's legal newspaper" (quote taken from the opening paragraph of the article, which is also the opening paragraph of the regulations.gov web site.)

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VII. FirstGov
www.firstgov.gov

Griffin, L. (2002, Oct. 1). FirstGov. *Library Journal*, 127, 16: 32.

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Most interesting in look at how government and business are working together to make government information accessible.

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The place to go for accessible community information, using three gateways: Citizen Gateway, Locate In-Person Services Near You, and Facts and Figures About Your Community.

"Even hardened cynics may have to admit that the thing (Firstgov) looks very promising." Doesn't require a lot of background in government bureaucracy to navigate successfully – emphasis on "transaction and topic" rather than agency handling it. Briefly discusses international dimension.

VIII. GOVDOC-L

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www.gpoacess.gov

Anonymous. (2001, Mar). GPO Access surpasses 200,000 title mark. *Information Today*, 18, 3: 29.

> Quick overview of GPO Access, the importance of PURLs to create perpetual access, and the interaction between GPO server documents and those web sites hosted by agencies.

Farrell, M. (2000). U.S Depository Library council electronic transition report, *Government Information Quarterly*, 17, 3: 331-48

Griffin. L. (2002, Oct. 1). GPO Access. *Library Journal*, 127, 16: 32-34.

Hattery, M. (2002, Feb) GPO Access: official federal government information at your fingertips. *Information Retrieval and Library Automation*, 37, 9; 1-4

Murname, G. (1999)/. The Federal Register free on GPO Access, *Searcher*, 7, 6: 46-58.

Powell, M.S. (2000) The US Federal Depository Library Program and U.S. Government information in an electronic environment: issues for the transition and the millenium *Inspel,* 34, 2: 103-14

X. Guide to Government Publications

Wiley, D. L. (2001. May/June). Internet Blue Pages: The Guide to Federal Government Web Sites, 2001-2002 ed. *Online,* 25, 3: 93-94.

> Review of Laurie Andriot's book, companion to her print manual. Wiley believes best value is in the description of the sites, rather than the links, which become outdated too quickly.

> Cullen, R. (2001). Internet Blue Pages: The Guide to Federal Government Web Sites, 2001-2002 ed. *Online Information Review*, 25, 3: 215-216.

> More exhaustive review, including suggestions valuable to librarians, especially helping people understand the need for effective search terms.

XI. Lexis-Nexis Congressional Universe
www.lexis.com

Golderman, G. and Connelly, B. (2002, Fall). Lexis-Nexis Congressional Universe. *Library Journal*, p. 54.

Short review of topics covered by database. Reviewers consider it a "premiere search tool for accessing the working papers of the US Congress 1970 to present."

Meszaros, R.L. (1999, Feb. 1). Congressional Universe. *Library Journal*, 124, 2: 128.

Short but sweet guide to features of the database and how to navigate.

O'Leary, M. (1998, Sep). Lexis-Nexis opens new info universes. *Information Today*, 15, 8: 14, 66.

Discusses how Congressional Universe (CU) draws upon the expertise of both CIS (parent company) and Lexis-Nexis, marketer of CU, Statistical Universe and Academic Universe. CU as a hybrid of the CIS Index to Publications of the US Congress for indexing and abstracts; Lexis-Nexis and other publishers provide full-text access.

XII. Marcive

Copeland, N.S. and Snyder, M., (2000, Sept/Oct). Marcive's Shipping List Service: Colorado State University Libraries' experience. *Journal of Government Information,* 27, 5: 547-58

Hanson, H. and Schalow, J. (1999, Winter). Two aspects of quality in technical services: automating for quick availability, and identifying problems, effecting solutions. *Library Collections, Acquisitions and Technical Services*, 23, 4: 433-41

Maszaros, R. L. (1999, April 15). Marcive WebDocs. *Library Journal*., 124, 7: 154-156.

Review of web version of GPO CAT/PAC database, including Marcive's shipping list records "for access to titles not yet cataloged" with coverage to 1976. Considered a "must-have" for all documents-oriented libraries.

Womble, K. (1999). Retrospective conversion and cataloging of a major academic map collection: the University of Washington story. *Cataloging and Classification Quarterly*, 27, 3-4: 413-28.

XIII. National Criminal Justice Reference Service

Jacso, P. , (2000, Dec.). Peter's Picks & Pans: National Criminal Justice Reference Service. *Econtent*, 23, 6: 74-7.

Vander Meer, P.F. (2002, Sept/Oct). One Click to Crinimal Justice. *Online,* 26, 5: 48-53.

XIV. Statistical Abstract of the United States

Meszaros, R.L. (1999, Oct.). Statistical Abstract of the United States. *Library Journal*, 124, 16: 145-.

> Review compares the relative merits of the print and CD-ROM versions of this indispensable source, including tables missing from the CD-ROM due to copyright issues. Dated material for our purposes, but a warning against complacency on the part of the purchaser.

XV. Statistical Universe
www.lexis-nexis.com/statuniv

Bates, M.E. (1998). Statistical Universe, *Database*, 21, 5: 96.

> Value-added benefits of joint project between Lexis-Nexis and CIS Discussion of high cost with thoroughness and ability to link to library holdings, versus free availability on the web.

XVI. STAT-USA

Hunt, J. (1999, April). STAT-USA Part 2: What's in it for you? *Business Information Alert*. 11, 4: 1-4.

Hunt, J. (1999, May). STAT-USA: What's in it for you? *Business Information Alert*. 11, 3: 1-5.

Mearkle, H. R. and Brumm, C. (1998, Aug). USA Trade premieres: New Commerce Department Service helps users select and analyze trade stats, create custom reports. *Business America,* 119, 8: 27-28.

> STAT-USA and Census team up to provide USA Trade for import and export statistics. Compares value-added features to National Trade Data Bank.

Silver, B. C. (1999, May 15). STAT-USA. *Library Journal*, 124, 9: 54.

> One paragraph review that hints at the heft of this authoritative statistical gem.

XVII. Thomas
www.thomas.gov

Petersen, A. (1999, Feb. 4). Watching the Web, *Wall Street Journal*, Eastern edition, p. 7.

Designed for the layperson, this is a cut-to-bone overview of the virtues of Thomas, including the ability to include, in all its "uncut, uncensored glory" Kenneth Starr's report on the Monica Lewinsky scandal. Also reviews www.capweb.net ("like an online congressional yearbook) and http://voter96.cqalert.com/welcome.html "geared toward average voters who want context as well as facts. Discusses the "rate your Rep" section where voters can compare their stances on issues with the officials they elected.

Initial Inquiry on GOVDOC-L

Greetings Government Documents Librarians!

I'm a grad student in the Rutgers University MLS program, taking government documents resources with Pat Reeling. Finding the one-month compressed schedule a bit daunting, but wouldn't miss this class for the world. Enjoying tremendously the give and take (and banter) of your listserv, which prompted my interest in doing a paper on "heard it through the government librarians' grapevine" (hey, a girl has to have some fun with this stuff).

I hope it isn't too much of an imposition to ask for responses to three questions (I'd ask more, but the end of the semester comes all too quickly, and I know you're busy):

If you're inclined to answer, please use my personal address: krisfitz@att.net

1. What resource(s) would you miss most if you lost it? I know this is open-ended and subject to a range of interpretations; I intend it that way.
   Don't you know that I heard it through the grapevine
   Not much longer would you be mine…

2. What's the most challenging aspect of your position?
   I'm just about to lose my mind

3. What do you find most confounding about government documents, either communicating to patrons or on a personal level (what area is most hazardous to your mental health?)
   People say you believe half of what you see
   and none of what you hear
   I can't help being confused

As a field of personal interest – what background do you bring to government documents? And are you in this area by virtue of keen desire/happenstance? I guess I'd better stop…

Of course, I'll acknowledge input appropriately, and forward a summary when completed.

Thanking you in advance,

Kristen Fitzpatrick

Respondents as of 6/18/2003

Marcy Allen
Government Information Librarian
University Libraries
Western Illinois University

Karen Aughinbaugh
Government Documents Librarian
Fresno County Free Library

Dorothy Buice
Assistant Government Documents Librarian
Brooklyn Public Library

Diane Calvin
Head of Information Services
University Libraries
Ball State University

Hui Hua Chua
Electronic Government Librarian
Thomas Cooper Library
University of Southern Carolina

Suzanne Colligan
Reference Librarian
Humanities and Social Sciences Department
Buffalo and Erie County Public Library, Central

Tim Dodge
History Subject Specialist
Reference Department
Ralph Brown Draughon Library
Auburn University

Judith Downie
Humanities Librarian
California State University San Marcos

Andrew Evans
Documents/Legal Reference
Washburn University Law Library

Mary Fetzer
Government Documents Librarian
Rutgers University

Linda Franklin
Lakeland Public Library
Lakeland, FL

Dierdre Freamon
Government Documents Assistant
Seton Hall University Law Library

Donna Gautier
Government Documents Associate
Ina Russell Library
Georgia College and State University

Joan Goodbody
Reference/Instruction Librarian
Government Documents Coordinator
Michigan Technological University

Maryke Huyding
Government documents Coordinator
Wyndham Robertson Library
Hollins University
Roanoke, VA

Erhard Konerding
Documents Librarian
Wesleyan University Library

Jeanne Lauber
Langdale Library
University of Baltimore

Robert Lopresti
Librarians for Huxley College
Government Information
Head of Reference and Instruction
Wilson Library
Western Washington University

Grace-Ellen McCrann
Chief, Government Documents Division
Cohen Library
The City College of New York

Sharon Partidge
Documents Librarians
Jefferson County Public library
Lakewood Library – Colorado

Wilma Reeder
Serials/Government Documents Librarian
Snowden Library
Lycoming College

Laura Sare
West Texas A&M University

Mae Schreiber
Associate Professor of Biology
Bierce Library – Reference Dept.
University of Akron

Arlene Talley
Federal Documents Librarian
Enoch Pratt Free Library – Baltimore

Jill Vassilakos-Long
California State University, San Bernadino

Diann Weatherly
Documents Reference Librarian
Mervyn H. Sterne Library
The University of Alabama at Birmingham

Keith Weimer
Government Information Librarian
Boatwright Memorial Library
University of Richmond

Mary Williams
Muskingum College
New Concord, Ohio

Cindi Wolff
Federal Documents Librarian
University of California, Berkeley

Alan Zellner
Government Information Librarian
Earl Gregg Wem Library
College of William and Mary