



Notes

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Government Documents at the IPFW Helmke Library

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The IPFW Helmke Library is a depository for United States government documents and collects Fort Wayne area and Indiana documents extensively. Most government publications at IPFW are catalogued and included in IUCAT. In addition to depository items IPFW maintains a fine collection of access tools for government document information, including the CIS Index and CIS Serial Set Index.

IPFW became a United States Depository library in 1964. For a medium-sized academic library, IPFW houses a fairly large government documents collection. The library currently receives on deposit about 45% of the items available for selection. The selection of item numbers has been based upon curriculum emphasis at IPFW and the perceived needs of the citizenry of Northeast Indiana. With graduate programs in Business, Education and SPEA it has been important to collect extensively in census, labor, commerce, education, environment, and congressional documents.

The digitization of United States government materials has come none to soon for the IPFW library. The U.S. Government documents are housed in a very limited space on the second floor with no growing room, except through weeding and change to a high density format. We began actively to select any documents issued in electronic format as soon as that option was given. In addition we were the first depository library in Indiana to register for and install the customized WAIS client software for GPO Access.

In 1994 we began to implement our Public Information Reference Service (PIRS) via the world wide web. PIRS is an electronic library of local, state, federal and international government information. Through PIRS we seek to enhance access to electronic government information through a well-organized web interface. In addition to locating and organizing sources of electronic government information, PIRS goes a step further by actively converting key local printed documents into electronic format and by compiling information and developing local resources. For example, a current project is to take the printed Allen County Code and convert it for web use, complete with links to the Indiana Code provided by the IU School of Law. Unfortunately for us, much of the Allen County Code does not exist in digitized format and needs to be rekeyed. We have also compiled local information (for example, election statistics and directories of public officials) and have begun to prepare bibliographies of local documents on topics of interest. Mostly, though, we do a lot of begging, the time-honored method of developing local (and other) document collections. As soon as we see - or hear about - a new publication, we beg for a copy both in print and in digitized format.

[The IPFW PIRS home page](http://www.lib.ipfw.edu/581.0.html) (<http://www.lib.ipfw.edu/581.0.html>) has links to Fort Wayne area government information, Indiana and other states' local government information, Indiana and other state government information, U.S. Government information and foreign national governments and multinational organizations information.

Some features of our www pages are:

- a standard header on every page that identifies IPFW as the source of the page.
- a basic vanilla presentation with very few graphics to slow down information retrieval
- a PIRS search system that searches every word on every page on the PIRS/Library server.
- a footer that automatically supplies the page's URL, the date last modified, and an opportunity for the user to send a message to the page's creator.

The Indiana page includes links to an extensive list of Indiana agencies and programs (some as yet undiscovered by the State of Indiana itself!) Another page, "Indiana Information by Subject" provides a long list of topics that link to both governmental and non-governmental information. Some of the topics include Indiana authors, Indiana history, election statistics, public school data, Indiana earthquake data, and professional sports teams.

The U.S. Government Information page, like every other web page, is always under construction. Currently, Hot Topics heads the list of categories from which to choose. The Hot Topics page contains a combination of issues of interest in the news, issues of interest to classes being offered on the IPFW campus, and issues that relate to special events or speakers on the IPFW campus. Hot topics usually remain for six months, longer if the issue is still of interest on campus. The U.S. Government alphabetical listing of sites is an attempt to include in one alphabetical index all of the government-sponsored web sites. This is the most difficult list to keep current. GPO Access is available through a multitude of links from our web page to our EINet client, GPO access gateways nationwide, and Purdue's WWW gateway. Other categories available on the U.S. Government Information page are links to the full-text of some major U.S. government documents, full-text copies of IPFW guides to U.S. Government Information, some of the major U.S. Government WWW sites, such as FEDWORLD, DefenseLink, Thomas, and the White House, some of the major U.S. Government resource pages created by non-governmental organizations, mostly universities, and access to components of the U.S. Depository system, including the Government Printing Office, Depository Libraries, and Patent and Trademark Depository Libraries.

The Foreign National Governments and Multinational Organizations Information page is only in the groundbreaking stage of construction. It opens with a Hot Topics category where students can explore information on Bosnia and the assassination of Yitzhak Rabin. The UN is featured prominently as are other multinational organizations such as the European Union, NATO, and the World Bank.

Government documents offer a unique opportunity for libraries to create a truly electronic library. Because government publications are not restricted by Copyright law, and the U.S. government has mandated that documents be converted to electronic format as soon as possible, libraries have a wealth of information to locate, organize, convert, and make accessible to the public. The IPFW library is planning to apply for grant monies to increase access to electronic government information by soliciting funding to convert more local documents to electronic format, mount more government CDs on local and IU systemwide networks, and improve access by supporting cataloging of electronic documents in IUCAT so that patrons can be made aware of alternate access points to documents not found on the shelf in the library.

URL: <http://www.indiana.edu/~inula/notes/>

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