

Title: An Informed Citizenry in the Present and the Future: Permanent Public Access to Government Information for Indiana Citizens

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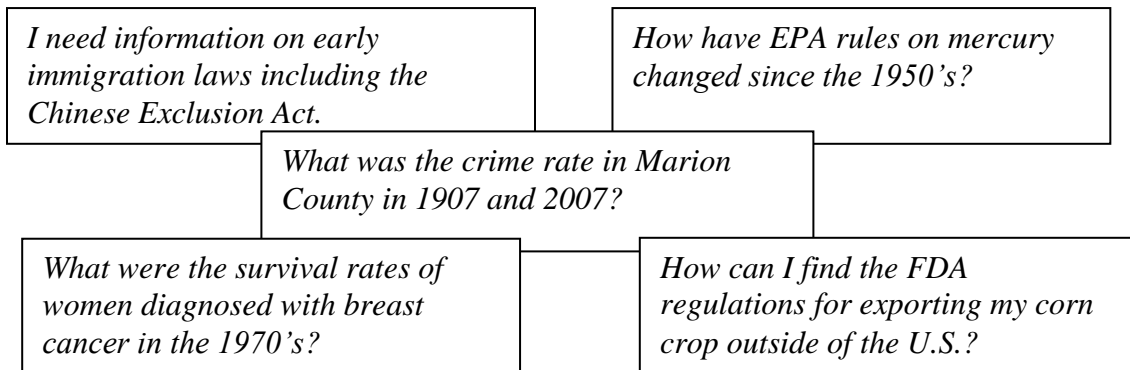
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Article Text:

A popular government without popular information, or the means of acquiring it, is but a Prologue to a Farce or a Tragedy, or, perhaps, both. Knowledge will forever govern ignorance; and a people who mean to be their own Governors, must arm themselves with the power which knowledge gives.

James Madison, Letter to W.T. Barry, August 4, 1822

Navigating the maze of government organizations and complex resources can be a challenge. Sometimes when you get that dreaded question that involves government documents, you break out in a cold sweat or you want to run the other way. Fortunately, there is a group of libraries, librarians, and staff that love and are experts in navigating the government information maze and finding the answers. They are your Indiana Federal Depository Libraries and Librarians and they are here to serve your government information needs.



Foundations of knowledge

The Federal Depository Library Program (FDLP) was established by Congress to ensure that the American public has access to government information. From the beginning of the republic, America's founding fathers realized the power of an informed citizenry in creating a democracy. In 1789, the House of Representatives provided for the printing and distribution of the laws and proceedings of the new Congress. In 1813, Congress passed the first legislation authorizing the distribution of public documents to libraries. The publications reflect the political, economic, social, scientific, and cultural history of the nation. The U.S. government produces information on almost every topic and in every format available. This printed output constitutes not only the single largest and richest collection of materials for the study of the history of the United States, but also a wealth of current information such as statistics on population, health, education, and employment; government contracts and loans for business, education, and housing; and scientific and technical reports on the environment, space, and health to name just a few.

No library has a complete collection of United States government publications. The Government Printing Office (GPO) was established in 1861 as a printing facility responsible for the production and distribution of government materials, not a library responsible for collecting and preserving documents. Publications were sent to designated Federal Depository Libraries for housing, maintenance, and use by local citizens.

Collections in Indiana

There are currently 33 federal depository libraries in Indiana: 21 academic, 6 public, 5 law, and 1 state library/regional depository library. Approximately half of these libraries were added after the 1962 Depository Library Act which allowed the House of Representatives to

name two depository libraries per congressional district and each senator to name two depository libraries in the state. Within these libraries, Indiana has several sizable historical federal depository library collections.

The oldest and most complete collection is located at the Indiana State Library established in 1825. Its federal documents collection began with the Congressional documents of the 16th Congress of 1819 (Miller, 1980). State libraries were among the first entities identified by Congress to receive regular distributions of government publications. The Indiana State Library was designated a regional federal depository in 1962. Regional depositories are required to accept all materials available for distribution and retain them permanently, with some exceptions. In addition, other depository libraries in the state are required to send lists of any documents they wish to discard to the regional depository to allow the library to fill any gaps in their collection.

The next oldest and most complete collection in the state is located at Indiana University's main campus in Bloomington, Indiana. Indiana University (IU) began as a state seminary in 1824 and became Indiana College in 1828. The first book collection was donated by IU's first President, Andrew Wylie, in 1829 (Lowell, 1957). Shortly thereafter, the Joint Resolution of December 31, 1830, by Indiana's General Assembly authorized the deposit of two boxes of documents received from the federal government for the new library (Joint Resolution). Since then, the IU library has made a concerted effort to acquire as many government documents as possible. In addition, IU has purchased many of the commercial products that have improved and increased access to government documents. All government documents since 1976 are

included in its online catalog, IUCAT, and IU is currently cataloging its historical collection as it is moved to its secure preservation facility, Auxiliary Library Facility (ALF).

In addition to the Indiana State Library and Indiana University, Purdue University, the University of Notre Dame, and Allen County Public Library have significant federal depository collections. Purdue University has been a federal depository since 1907 when land grant colleges and universities became congressionally-designated depository libraries. Purdue University libraries have also purchased a variety of commercial indexes and collections to enhance access to these documents. Approximately 40-50% of its documents collection is cataloged in its online catalog, THOR. The University of Notre Dame is listed in the first report of distributions to depository libraries in 1859 by the Secretary of the Interior. The Allen County Public Library has the largest public library collection in the state. It became a federal depository in 1896 and has maintained a very large government documents collection since that time.

Changes and challenges in the digital age

With the advent of digital production of government information and the decline of print production, the Government Printing Office (GPO) turned its attention to the preservation of and continued access to the print heritage of our nation. In 2003, GPO began discussing a plan to create a national bibliography and online catalog of all government documents, and to locate and digitize all documents not currently in electronic format. At the same time, the nation's federal depository libraries began a discussion of the need to build multiple complete archives of tangible documents throughout the nation to ensure preservation and access to those documents. Early in this discussion, Indiana's federal depository libraries recognized that they had sufficient

retrospective collection depths to explore the creation of a complete archive of federal documents in Indiana.

Indiana's Rise to the challenge

In 2004 at the request of the Indiana University Council of Head Librarians, the Documents librarians from IU's nine depository libraries convened to discuss building a complete, retrospective federal depository collection in IU's newly erected Auxiliary Library Facility . The IU Documents Group issued a report that outlined the primary goals of a federal documents archive at IU: 1) enhance access to government documents and information; 2) free staff from more routine activities in order to concentrate on value-added activities (such as building databases, working on digital projects, etc.); 3) save space, processing time, and duplication of effort; 4) fill in collection gaps; 5) provide full cataloging and reliable delivery from the archive; and 6) establish a base that could be expanded to include other Indiana depositories.

In 2006, the Dean of IU Libraries, Pat Steele, wrote to Judith Russell, Superintendent of Documents, to officially express IU's intent to serve as a "light" repository for historical federal documents. A "light" repository collection is available for delivery outside the archive, with the assumption that this tangible archive would serve as a backup to a publicly accessible digital collection. This is in contrast to a "dark" archive where the collection does not circulate. While IU was proceeding with its plan, an Association of Research Libraries conference on "The Future of Government Documents in ARL Libraries," attended by the directors of Indiana University, University of Notre Dame, and Purdue University, inspired a proposal to the

Academic Libraries of Indiana (ALI) to extend the IU Documents Group plan to all federal depository libraries in Indiana. ALI members discussed the concept of creating an archive of federal documents from the rich collections in Indiana and overwhelmingly approved of and took leadership in implementing this goal.

Indiana Light Archive for Federal Documents

An Indiana Light Archive for Federal Documents Working Group was formed consisting of the directors and government documents librarians from IU, Purdue, the University of Notre Dame, and the Indiana State Library. The group adopted IU's goal of developing one comprehensive, well-preserved, secure, centralized collection of federal documents in tangible format.

The first step in achieving this goal was to bring the proposal to the entire Indiana federal depository library community for their feedback and support. In August 2006 forty-one depository librarians and directors, representing all but ten of Indiana's depositories, attended a meeting at the Indiana State Library. In an amazing show of unanimity, all agreed that Indiana should proceed towards a shared, collaborative light repository for federal documents. The next step was to gain the approval of the Superintendent of Documents, Judith Russell, to proceed with the plan.

Indiana's federal depository librarians and library directors hosted "The Legacy Collection in a Digital Age: The Indiana Plan for a Light Government Documents Depository: A Meeting with the Superintendent of Documents" in September 2006 at the Indiana State Library. Judith

Russell was impressed by the degree of consensus for this project among Indiana's federal depository library community and Indiana's emphasis on using the archive to increase public access to government publications and information. She agreed to take Indiana's proposal back to GPO to determine its compliance with Title 44 of the United States Code which governs the management of federal documents by federal depository libraries, GPO, and the Superintendent of Documents.

In October 2006 at a meeting with the Superintendent of Documents and other GPO staff during the annual Federal Depository Library Conference in Washington, D.C., Indiana received the green light to pursue the creation of a light archive for federal documents in Indiana with the understanding that:

- ✓ All participants of the light archive will sign a selective housing agreement that describes which libraries are involved, which parts of the collection they are responsible for, and what support services they will provide, and a plan of action should a participant need to exit the agreement that ensures the continued preservation of the collection
- ✓ In the near term, the shared light archive collection will be a distributed collection housed at IU, Purdue, Notre Dame, and the Indiana State Library
- ✓ All publications included in the light archive will be cataloged
- ✓ Participants will provide interlibrary loan and reference services for those areas of the collection for which they are responsible
- ✓ All depository libraries will subscribe to five-day delivery from Indiana's courier service
- ✓ Indiana may revise its *Disposal Guidelines* to reflect availability of documents in the distributed light archive

- ✓ Nothing in the disposal guidelines will cause Indiana to be without a comprehensive collection of Federal depository resources

What began as a project involving only the Indiana University federal depository libraries was now an unprecedented collaboration involving all of the depositories in Indiana. Until an archival facility large enough to house 200 years of federal documents is ready, the Indiana State Library, Indiana University, Purdue University, and University of Notre Dame agreed to become collection stewards responsible for building a distributed archive.

The Indiana Light Archive planning group has met monthly since April 2006 to develop a detailed plan for implementing this project. By fall 2007, the group had grappled with the issues of determining collection assignments, adopting cataloging standards, identifying preservation best practices, establishing delivery criteria, refining disposal guidelines, and outlining reference, instruction, training, and professional development responsibilities. The result is the *Indiana Light Archive Collection Stewardship Guidelines* and *Memorandum of Understanding/Cooperative Agreement* solidifying the collection stewards' partnership in the Indiana Light Archive for Federal Documents project.

In brief the *Indiana Light Archive Collection Stewardship Guidelines*:

- ✓ Assigns specific areas of the government documents collection based primarily upon the strength of the Steward's existing collection and the current area of institutional research interests, e.g., Purdue – Department of Agriculture and NASA; the Indiana State Library

– Census; Indiana University – State Department; and University of Notre Dame –
Department of Labor

- ✓ Creates a role for other Indiana federal depository libraries as Collaborators to assist the four Stewards in all areas of development
- ✓ Maintains preservation standards for print and microform materials compatible with professional best practices and within institutional resources with materials stabilization a minimum
- ✓ Establishes a delivery commitment that all items will be loanable/deliverable in a timely manner, except for very fragile and rare items, with the understanding that users will use electronic versions of physical documents whenever possible
- ✓ Commits Stewards and Collaborators to provide or ensure standard bibliographic records in WorldCat/INCat and to develop a cataloging plan for all un-cataloged materials within two years
- ✓ Revises Indiana's *Guidelines for Disposal of U.S. Government Depository Documents* to permit Indiana's federal depository libraries to keep only those tangible documents necessary to serve their constituents (current documents received from GPO still cannot be discarded until they are five years old under U.S. Law) and introduces an online "Needs and Offers" database to replace the requirement that libraries prepare disposal lists for post-1976 documents and eventually pre-1976 documents as well
- ✓ Asks Stewards and Collaborators and all other Indiana federal depository librarians to focus on maintaining and expanding their reference skills, and provide professional development and training to librarians throughout the state in finding and using government information resources

Through the process of developing the Collection Steward Guidelines, the planning group has discovered that Indiana libraries possess sufficient retrospective collection depth, support of Indiana federal depository library community and library administrators, cataloging, delivery, and preservation skills, and the will to make this project not only feasible but also desirable.

Full implementation of the *Guidelines* awaits the signing of the formal *Memorandum of Understanding/Cooperative Agreement* by the Indiana State Library, Indiana University, Purdue University, and University of Notre Dame University libraries. It is currently being reviewed by each institution's legal advisors. In the meantime, the Indiana Archives for Federal Documents Group continues to develop an Indiana federal documents group in INCAT, fine-tune the Needs and Offers Database, complete collection assignments, and work with GPO to build the National Bibliography.

The process of developing the *Stewardship Guidelines* has strengthened the partnerships between Indiana's federal depository libraries, the Indiana State Library, GPO, and other federal depository libraries nationwide. At the annual Federal Depository Library conference in October 2007, GPO praised Indiana's efforts as a model for other state or regional Light Archives. Other Midwest states have approached Indiana to begin a plan to develop a Midwest federal depository archive. Indiana is now eager to begin working on a plan to build a physical and digital archive of Indiana state documents. Furthermore, it is hoped that the Light Archive for Federal Documents will serve as a model for other collaborative remote storage projects within the state of Indiana.

Benefits of the Archive to You

While the Indiana Light Archive for Federal Documents has obvious benefits for Indiana's Depository Libraries, it will also benefit all libraries and library users in Indiana. Government documents that contain information useful to all citizens of every age will be identified, cataloged, and made accessible through INCAT. Delivery mechanisms are in place to supply them when needed. With this increased access, all libraries across the state will be able to offer government documents on demand to citizens who want and need to stay informed of the actions of the United States Government. The expertise to use these government information resources will continue to be available on demand from Indiana's government documents librarians located strategically around the state of Indiana in every Congressional district. In fact, the Stewardship Guidelines "asks Stewards and Collaborators and all other Indiana federal depository librarians to focus on maintaining and expanding their reference skills, and provide professional development and training to librarians throughout the state in finding and using government information resources."

To contact a librarian directly, see the directory of Indiana's Federal Depository Libraries at <http://www.lib.purdue.edu/govdocs/dir-depo-lib.html>. In addition, Web resources and guides are available at all of Indiana's Federal Depository Libraries; link to them at <http://www.lib.purdue.edu/govdocs/ind-depo.html>. For copies of the Stewardship Guidelines and more information about this project, go to the Indiana Light Archive for Federal Documents Web site at: <http://bl-libg-doghill.ads.iu.edu/gpd-web/fdlp/ilitweb.html>. And stay tuned for news of better and more complete access to Indiana's state documents.

We would like to acknowledge the other members of the ALI Indiana Light Archives for Federal Documents Committee: Lou Malcomb (Indiana University), Chair, Bert Chapman (Purdue University), Laura Bayard (University of Notre Dame), Bobbie Brooker (Indiana State Library), Katie Springer (Indiana State Library), Anika Williams (Indiana State Library), Judith Violette (Indiana University-Purdue University Fort Wayne)

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