

Government Documents Collection Development Project: A Monumental Task



PHASE 1 Weeding

1 month (May 2015) ; 435 staff hours

GOAL

To evaluate the existing collection and then weed the collection primarily at the federal department/agency level and secondly, at the item level.

SUMMARY

The full collection was evaluated by the project manager and the decision was made to only keep print documents from a few selected government department/agencies based on the relevance of the material to the curriculum and research focus of the university. We refer to these as "favored agencies". Phase 1 weeded the documents in the non-favored agencies unless it had historical value and met the retention criteria. A total of 71,000 volumes were weeded from non-favored agencies during Phase 1. 300 previously uncataloged and undiscovered historical documents were moved to the Special Collections department. After this initial mass weeding, only 18 shelf ranges of documents were left for Phase 2.

PHASE 2 Cataloging

29 months (June 2015-Nov. 2017) ; 8,720 staff hours

GOAL

To make the documents discoverable in the Library's online catalog. This phase focused on retrospective cataloging of the remaining print collection from the "favored agencies" (18 ranges = 2,124 shelves) and simultaneously search for electronic versions. Additional weeding was performed for outdated and irrelevant information.

SUMMARY

Phase 2 reviewed 18 ranges (=2,124 shelves) of the "favored agency" documents, making sure they were cataloged in Voyager. A dedicated team of metadata specialists encountered many cataloging challenges in the 2.5-year duration of Phase 2. The challenges encountered are due to the ways some of the Government Departments organize their documents which was also compounded by the various library practices of binding monographic documents together. The team dealt with 'bound-with' and 'classed as collection' cataloging scenarios. Over 8,000 print documents were additionally cataloged and over 40,000 electronic versions were added to the online catalog to replace their print equivalents. There were 48,610 documents with outdated or duplicated information that were weeded out. During this phase many federal documents housed at the Library Collections Depository (LCD) offsite storage, were also weeded.

PHASE 3 Inventory

5 months (July 2017-Nov. 2017) ; 144 staff hours

GOAL

To inventory and perform shelf reading of the legacy print collection, after the retro cataloging and weeding accomplished in Phase 2. To review print documents remaining at the offsite storage facility.

SUMMARY

The inventory was limited to SuDoc call numbers A through X (250 shelves), excluding the SuDoc call number Y. We had recently finished reviewing the SuDoc Y call number section in Phase 2 from June 2016 through May 2017 and given their nature as strictly monographic, they were handled and processed without any complications. The inventory was completed in 5 months which included removing of extraneous and no longer needed document records in the online catalog.

Additionally, the remaining print collection at the Library Collections Depository (LCD) offsite storage was evaluated and weeded.

PROJECT SUMMARY

BACKGROUND

UTA Libraries was designated a federal depository in 1963. For 50 years the library received physical copies of federal documents. In 2014, the library stopped receiving print documents and instead started receiving electronic copies only. The documents collection that the library had been collecting for 50 years had never been weeded properly and approximately 50% of the material on the shelves were not cataloged and therefore, not discoverable. The physical collection occupied 31 ranges of shelving (= 3,780 shelves or 10,080 ft.). There was also a sizable print collection housed at the library's offsite storage facility (Library Collection Depository).

OBJECTIVES

In January 2015, the UTA Libraries Access & Discovery program unit made the decision to conduct an ambitious 3-phase Government Documents Collection Development project. The project accomplished several objectives.

- Weeded the very large print collection of outdated and irrelevant documents.
- Cataloged the legacy print collection, making it discoverable in the library's online catalog.
- Whenever possible, replaced print documents with electronic equivalents.
- Freed up shelf space and provided much needed public space that was repurposed for student success services.

STATISTICS

PROJECT TOTALS	
DOCUMENTS WEEDED / DISPOSED	Titles: 108,843 Volumes: 119,610
ONLINE EQUIVALENTS (substituted for print copies)	40,215
ITEMS CATALOGED (previously uncataloged items on shelves)	8,580
STAFF HOURS	9,299

PROJECT CONCLUSION

The Government Document print collection now occupies 504 shelves (7 ranges) on the Central Library's 3rd floor. The print collection will not continue to grow since the library now only receives electronic documents (starting in 2014). Other print documents are housed at the Library Collection Depository (storage facility). Additionally, over 40,000 electronic titles of favored agencies' documents were added to the catalog to replace weeded print copies. The legacy collection (print and electronic), completely cataloged and discoverable, will provide valuable historical primary resource for researchers. The space on the Central Library's 2nd floor that used to house the 50 year old Government Document collection is now a bustling space dedicated for student study/collaboration and success programs, designated as the library's Academic Plaza (<http://library.uta.edu/academic-plaza>).

UT Arlington Libraries

PROJECT TEAM MEMBERS:

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Lea Akins, Hanh Nguyen, Swati Ray, Stuart Rosenberg

What helped our workflow efficiencies?

- Utilized automated processes to generate disposal lists, perform batch withdrawals, record clean-up in Voyager, others.
- Support and special permissions granted by the Regional Depository Library
- Volunteers who helped with the massive initial weeding.
- Dedicated and skilled metadata specialists, and hardworking student assistants
- Supportive Stacks Management group that helped with moving and shifting collection and handled all withdrawals at offsite storage.
- Cooperation of housekeeping/facilities staff who provided enough recycle bins and emptied them regularly.

Space before project. Print collection (BELOW) on 31 ranges of compact shelving. Physical footprint occupied one entire side of the library's 2nd Floor.



Repurposed student collaborative space (BELOW) after weeding and relocating collection. Legacy print collection now occupies 7 ranges on the library's 3rd Floor.

