## In This Issue

- Ten Years of TRAIL
- Enriching the Experience for Government Documents Student Workers
- Science, Agriculture, and Nutrition

# DttP

## Documents to the People

Summer 2016 | Volume 44, No. 2 | ISSN 0091-2085

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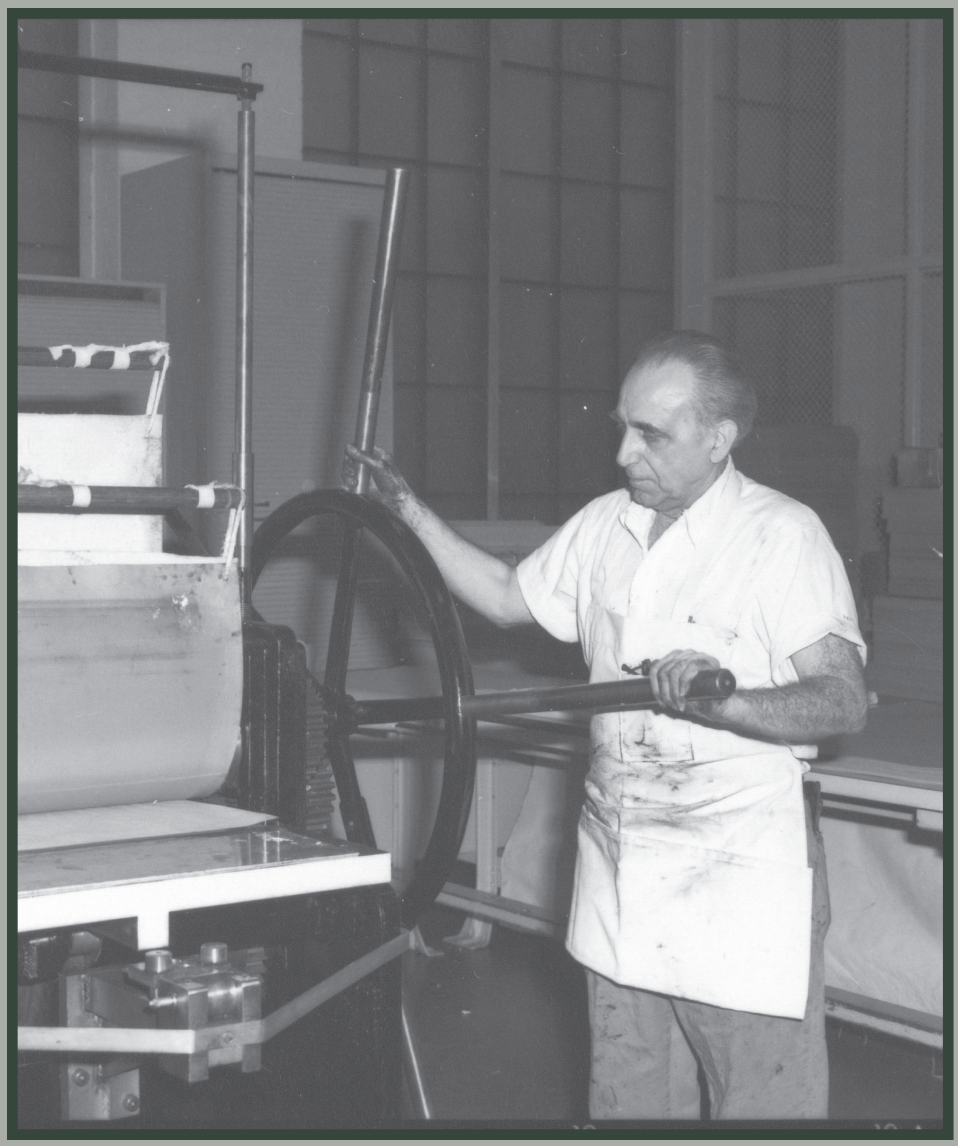

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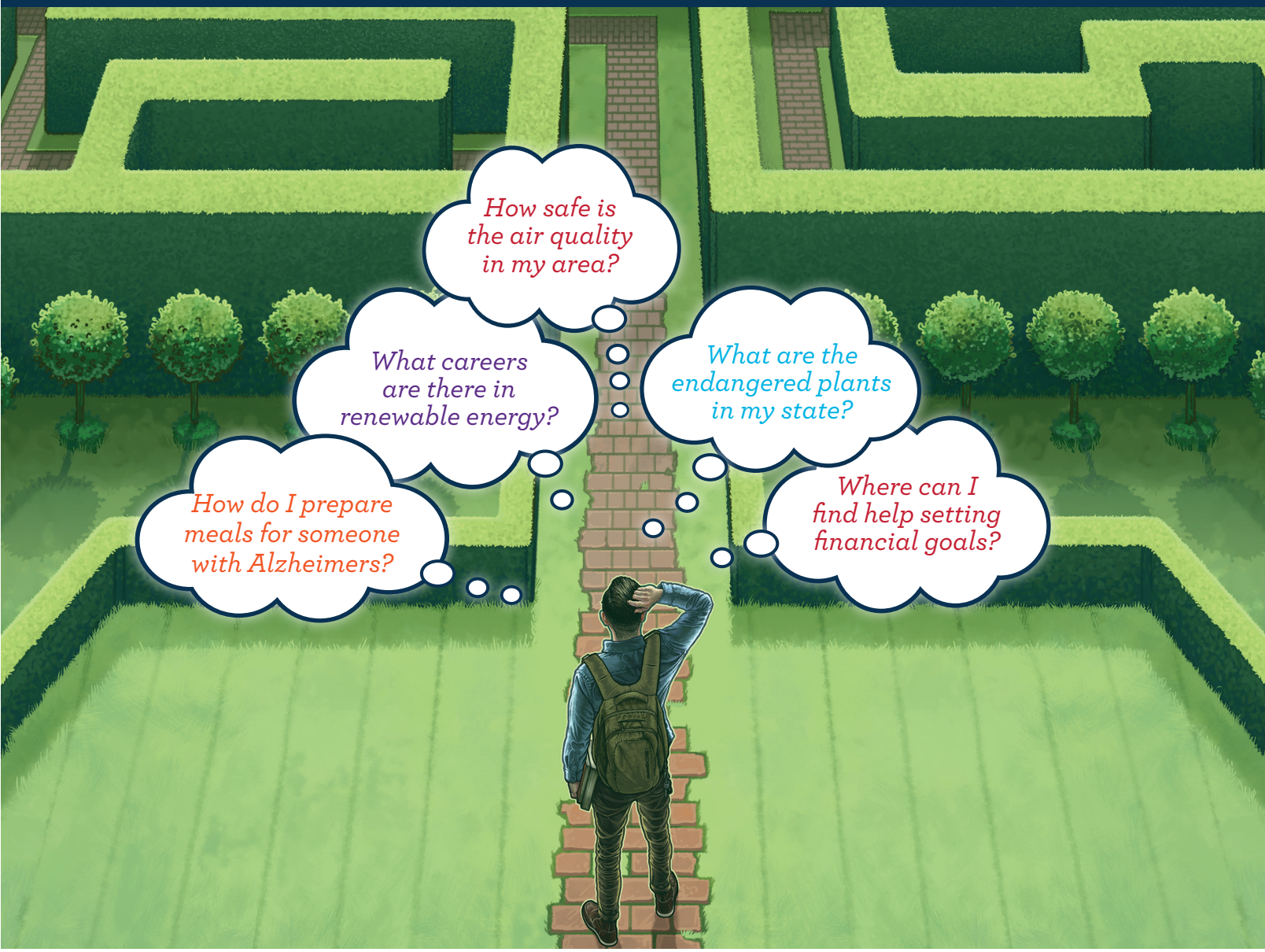


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*DttP:* **Documents to the People** (ISSN: 0091-2085) is published quarterly in spring, summer, fall, and winter by the American Library Association (ALA), 50 East Huron Street, Chicago, IL 60611. It is the official publication of ALA's Government Documents Round Table (GODORT). Periodicals postage paid at Chicago, IL and additional mailing offices. **POSTMASTER:** Send address changes to DttP, 50 E. Huron St., Chicago, IL 60611.

*DttP* features articles on local, state, national, and international government information and government activities of GODORT. The opinions expressed by its contributors are their own and do not necessarily represent those of GODORT



**Distribution Manager:** ALA Subscription Department, 50 E. Huron St., Chicago, IL 60611. 1-800-545-2433, press 5; fax: (312) 280-1538; subscriptions@ala.org

**Subscriptions/Claims:** *DttP* is sent free to ALA/GODORT members on a per volume (annual) basis. For subscriptions, prepayment is required in the amount of $35 in North America, $45 elsewhere. Checks or money orders should be made payable to "ALA/GODORT" and sent to the Distribution Manager. Changes of address and claims six months of the date of issue should be sent to the Distribution Manager. To purchase back issues, write to: UMI, 300 North Zeeb Rd., Ann Arbor, MI 48106.

**Contributions:** Articles, news items, letters, and other information intended for publication in *DttP* should be submitted to the Co-Lead Editors. All submitted material is subject to editorial review. Please see the wiki for additional information: wikis.ala.org/godort/index.php/*DttP*.

**Indexing:** Indexed in Library Literature 19, no. 1 (1991) and CSA Worldwide Political Science Abstracts 33, no. 1 (2005), and selectively in PAIS 33, no 1 (2005).

**Editorial Production:** ALA Production Services — Chris Keech, Tim Clifford, and Lauren Ehle.



DttP
Documents to the People
**Summer 2016 | Volume 44, No. 2 | ISSN 0091-2085**

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**About the Cover:**

This 1976 photograph by Joan Schilling shows the printing of the Declaration of Independence from a copper plate engraved in 1823. It is part of *1976 Printing of the Declaration of Independence from the Copperplate made by Engraver William J. Stone in 1823 , 4/1976 - 4/1976* and is available electronically from the National Archives at https://catalog.archives.gov/id/6922225.

# Editor's Corner

Elizabeth Psyck

# THIS IS YOUR LAST PRINT ISSUE OF *DOCUMENTS TO THE PEOPLE*.

Hopefully you've heard about this before now, but just in case you haven't, rest assured that we have had a LOT of serious conversations about this change and the impact it will have on GODORT's membership and DttP's readership.

The good news is, DttP will be shifting to an online platform where you'll be able to access current and back issues (no more having to email me to get a copy of an article!). This also means that articles will be easier for non-GODORT members to find and read, which makes authorship a lot more attractive. (Hint. Hint. You didn't think I'd write an editor's corner without trying to convince you to submit, did you?)

*DttP*'s new home will be journals.ala.org/dttp. We're working on an alert system where you will be able to sign up to get an email whenever there is a new issue of DttP available, and more information will be coming soon, so keep an eye out! In the meantime, to get an idea of what our platform will look like, check out the other ALA journals hosted on the OJS platform: https://journals.ala.org.

# From the Chair

## Some Last Thoughts on Leadership, Tradition and Change

Stephen Woods

*Because of our traditions, we've kept our balance for many, many years. Here in Anatevka, we have traditions for everything... How to sleep, how to eat . . . how to work . . . how to wear clothes. For instance, we always keep our heads covered and always wear a little prayer shawl. This shows our constant devotion to God. You may ask, "How did this tradition get started?" I'll tell you.*

*I don't know. But it's a tradition . . . and because of our traditions. . . . Every one of us knows who he is and what God expects him to do.*

—Tevye, *Fiddler on the Roof*

My daughter's high school recently did a wonderful production of the classic musical, *Fiddler on the Roof*. It's a timeless message of a father's love and devotion for his daughters in the midst of incredible cultural and political change. I've seen this musical many times in my life, but I was struck afresh with the incredible tension Tevye felt as a father between "what was expected" and the future happiness of his daughters.

GODORT has been around long enough to create many traditions. If Tevye is right, traditions serve an important role in helping leaders know what is expected of us. The problem is that once our traditions no longer reflect who we are, it becomes difficult for leaders to know what is expected of them. This in a nut shell is the predicament that GODORT finds itself facing. We simply have a choice whether or not we are willing to create new traditions that align with our current expectations and the future happiness of our members or not.

For my final column I would like to focus on this topic of expectations, looking at some of the ways those shape how we can look at leadership in our community.

### Leadership and Expectations

What expectations should we have of leaders in a volunteer organization? Most would agree that the expectations are different from those that come with a salaried position, but in what ways? If we wanted to I suppose we could compare things such as skills, time and other factors to determine how one quantitatively differs from the other. However, this approach would never fully satisfy the multitude of opinions that would emerge from an exercise like this. We would all simply have different expectation about what quantities are realistic.

The more helpful question to address is: What expectations leaders have of themselves? I would submit that a leaders expectations are shaped and defined by the incentives that convince them to take on these roles. These incentives may come from external force such as job responsibilities, promotional expectations, or even collegial pressure. However, often there are internal incentives associated with the leader's personality that play a critical role. These are often described in negative or positive reflections by their followers with words like caring, ambitious, or even driven.

Gallup's Strength Finder survey (www.strengthstest.com/strengthsfinderthemes/strengths-themes.html) of leadership characteristics identifies 34 different types of internal incentives. The purpose of this taxonomy is to encourage people to lead out of their strengths and to also help people understand the power behind understanding their own motivations. It is internal incentives that get to the heart of good leadership. When the external reasons for leading either no longer exist or are outweighed by egregious circumstances then "who you are" is all that is left.

Does this imply that a leader's internal incentive will always circumvent tough circumstances? Certainly not. Over the years, GODORT memberships' expectations of its leaders and the leaders own expectations of the positions in which they agreed to serve, have not always aligned. There are multifarious reasons for why this is true, from declining membership, to expanding responsibilities of its members, as well as local institutional budgetary constraints, just to name a few. The bottom line is that in some cases the internal incentives no longer outweigh some of our leadership opportunities. So how do we move forward?

### Leadership with a Focus

Are we simply asking too much of our leaders? Most would agree that our members no longer have jobs that will allow them to simply focus only on issues related to government information. What this means is that our leaders are being pulled in many different directions at work, requiring them to be involved in many other professional domains. Consequently, our leaders have less time to devote their efforts solely to one organization.

One way to handle this dilemma is to provide leadership opportunities that have a very specific set of focused responsibilities that a prospective leaders would be willing to take on.

For example, rather than expecting our taskforce coordinators to be involved in all the activities of the working committees, they could serve a very specific function focusing on information dissemination through programming, webinars, and discussion groups.

## Leadership in the Virtual World

We are aware that the traditional expectation that our leaders physically attend ALA conferences is becoming more unreasonable to due to budgetary constraints. Even though we recognize that some activities require some physical presence at ALA meetings, there are many technological solutions that provide our leaders with alternate opportunities for providing leadership.

However, some are making assumptions about technology that makes it more difficult to recruit excellent leaders. First, we cannot assume that all of our leaders have the technical savvy to run virtual meetings or to provide virtual leadership. Second, it is one thing to understand how to use technology and quite another thing to know how to provide leadership virtually.

We need to seriously reconsider what types of mechanisms and training we can provide for our leaders so they can effectively use the new solutions technology offers. We want them to be able to conduct virtual meetings and project with the same confidence that they would have if they were conducting a face-to-face meeting. We don't want technology to be a barrier that would keep potential leaders from volunteering.

## Creating New Traditions

GODORT has a cohort of new government information specialists emerging in our midst who have a wonderful mix of internal incentives to lead. At the same time, there is also a strong leadership cohort of members that no longer identify with a traditional government documents department. It is imperative that we position ourselves to not simply change, but to create new traditions for GODORT that reflect who we are and the changing world in which we work

As Tevye did, we need to and ask "How did these traditions get started?" Do they reflect who we are? And are they useful. If not, we need to make some new traditions.

# By the Numbers

## Weather and Climate Go Together

Katrina Stierholz

Which government information webpages are used most frequently? Does it surprise you that weather pages are used more than any other government information pages? (For details on the pages used, see Campbell's column on the Digital Analytics Program in the previous issue of *BTN*). The weather.gov domain had **over 14 million visits in the past 7 days** (when I checked). Every day, the weather is in the news: flash floods, tornadoes, rain, drought, snow, lightning, heat, hurricanes, and cold. Intense weather can be hazardous and costly: Every year people lose their lives and their property to weather events. This column focuses on weather and climate data sources that can help people become "weather-ready and climate-smart" in terms of making their businesses and communities resilient to extreme events.

Collecting weather data has a long history in the United States. The weather interests of Thomas Jefferson and Benjamin Franklin are examples of early efforts to collect weather information from across the United States. Weather information was collected and distributed to support and protect shipping, the military, farming, and fisheries. In 1870, President Ulysses S. Grant established a formal weather office. Initially located in the War Department (1870–90), the weather service was later moved to Agriculture (1890–1940) and finally into the Commerce Department, under the **National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration** (NOAA). These historical parent agencies reflect the importance of weather to various constituencies. NOAA and the **National Weather Service** (NWS) are assigned the C 55 SuDoc classification.

Weather data collected over a long period and aggregated into long-term averages of atmospheric conditions determine the range of what is considered a "normal" climate for a particular place and time of year, and in turn, become climate data. As science and industry focus on the effects of climate change, climate data are vital to planning and understanding the impact of a changed climate on people and property.

### Weather Data (quick answer: weather.gov)

The NWS is responsible for producing weather forecasts and measuring weather in the United States. The NWS has 122 field offices throughout the United States and produces over 76 billion observations each year.[1] These regional offices are the source of most of our regular weather forecasts—we may read them online from the local office or get them from news organizations or weather organizations that use the public domain data and forecasts made available by the NWS. These public domain data allow others to offer alternate forecasts.

Use weather.gov to locate current weather forecasts and data. In addition to its 122 field offices (list at www.srh.noaa.gov/jetstream/nws/wfos.htm), the NWS also has over 10,000 volunteer weather observation stations across the country that provide additional weather data. Over 290,000 trained severe weather spotters supplement those stations. Together these professionals and volunteers provide timely, accurate reporting on current weather conditions. In addition to collecting data on the weather as it happens, NWS meteorologists compile forecasts using current weather data and models. The forecasts are available as data, as maps, and as models. All of the information you need for a local forecast or local weather data collection is available at weather.gov (with the exception of weather data for lawsuits, which require certified data but can be retrieved from NOAA by request).

To access current forecast data for your local area, the best site is your local **Weather Forecast Office** (WFO), part of the network of 122 field offices. Use weather.gov as the starting point and your zip code as the location. From that point, each field office has a three-letter code assigned to it. I love weather and know that the local code for St. Louis is LSX (weather.gov/lsx). Knowing the local code for your forecast office may be nearly as useful as learning the local code for your airport. For each forecast office website, expect to find current weather, local forecasts, historical data, and a forecast discussion describing uncertainty around the immediate forecast. Forecast discussions are particularly useful for understanding current conditions and the immediate future. Each forecast office has a slightly different selection of information, particularly in the climate section, as every area has its own unique weather patterns.

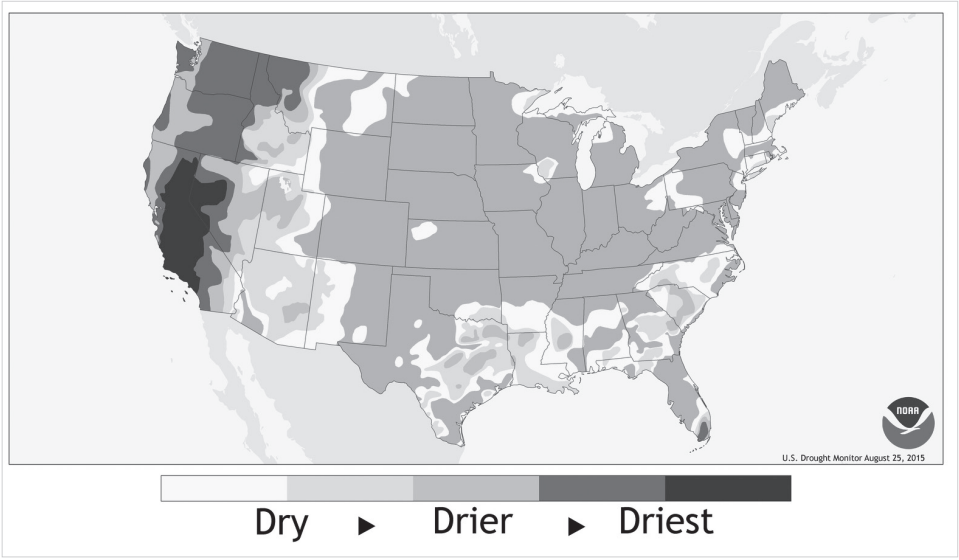
The NWS is also responsible for providing marine, ocean, and space weather in addition to aviation, hurricane, and hydrologic information. Through the NWS, you can locate forecasting and weather conditions for lakes, oceans, air, rivers, and the atmosphere as well as forecasts (think *Perfect Storm*).

### Weather Acronym Helper

CPC: Climate Prediction Center
NOAA: National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
NWS: National Weather Service (a department within NOAA)
WFO: Weather Forecast Office

## Climate Data (quick answer: climate.gov)

Climate is the long-term pattern of weather in a particular area, usually based on a 30-year average.[2] Climate data, including past weather conditions and long-term averages, are available in several places: your local WFO, the Climate Prediction Center's (CPC) data page, climate.gov, and the National Centers for Environmental Information. All of these organizations are part of NOAA; the first two are within the NWS. The website, climate.gov, is produced in NOAA's Office of Oceanic and Atmospheric Research Climate Program Office.




**Drought map of the United States for May 3, 2016. https://www.climate.gov/maps-data/data-snapshots/usdroughtmonitor-weekly-ndmc-2016-05-03?theme=Drought.**

Climate is also more than the long-term average of weather. Earth's climate system provides the context in which weather happens—in other words, the state of the climate system influences the odds that certain types of weather are more or less likely to happen. NOAA leads and participates in research to advance understanding of how Earth's climate system works, where and why the climate system is changing, and the causes and effects of change.

Your local WFO provides preliminary local historical data and climate information for your area. To find these data, go to the "Climate" section of the forecast page for your WFO (weather.gov/xxx, or to access it directly, go to climate.gov/climate/index.php?wfo=xxx, where xxx is the WFO symbol). From this page, all the local data are available in a tab (typically called Local Data/Records). Monthly and seasonal temperatures are generally available and often provide over 100 years of data. In addition, many WFOs provide unique resources for their area. In other words, if your area has tornadoes, expect to find reports on the historical frequency and severity of tornadoes.

NOAA's Climate.gov is a public-friendly source of timely data and information about climate. The site provides four areas: (1) News & Features is a popular-style online magazine for the public covering topics in climate science; (2) Maps & Data provides terrific visualizations of weather data and the dataset gallery provides access to data and tools for visualizing those data (see image 1, the drought map of the United States for May 3, 2016); (3) Teaching Climate offers resources for educators, mapped to grade ranges and learning standards; and (4) the Climate Resilience Toolkit (toolkit.climate.gov) offers tools, information, and expertise to help people manage their climate-related risks and opportunities and improve their resilience to extreme events.

The third site for climate data and forecasts is the **Climate Prediction Center** (www.cpc.ncep.noaa.gov). The CPC provides weather outlooks for a series of time periods (weeks, months, and a season). The CPC releases hurricane outlooks and El Niño predictions. This Center is part of the National Centers for Environmental Prediction (www.ncep.noaa.gov/); the various centers within that group address climate and long-range prediction for the many types of weather that NOAA monitors. The CPC also provides links to comprehensive time-series weather and climate data for research use.

Finally, for a comprehensive collection of climate data, the National Centers for Environmental Information (https://www.ncei.noaa.gov) offers over 20 petabytes of climate data for a wide range of climate-related observations and measurements that are well suited for both climate research and decision-making. This site offers a search by type of data, linking data from many different NOAA sources into a single place.

## Special Resources

In addition to the NWS, a few other agencies provide specialized weather information and forecasts. The U.S. Department of Agriculture provides weekly weather and crop bulletins (www.usda.gov/oce/weather/) with agriculture-specific maps and information highlighting the weather risks to crops and commodity prices. The historical bulletins are available back to 1971 (perhaps a birthday gift—a bulletin from the week of your birth!). In addition, the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) (http://wonder.cdc.gov) provides weather-related data in terms

of public health, such as measuring particulate matter, sunlight, and heat waves. It is easy to forget how much health is impacted by weather and climate; the CDC data are a handy reminder.

American's health, security, and economic well-being are closely linked to weather and climate. People want and need timely access to information and data to understand where and how weather conditions are changing and help them make decisions on how to manage risks and opportunities they face in their communities and businesses. In addition, librarians may find these resources a fresh way to present concepts and exercises in data literacy.

**Katrina Stierholz** (Katrina.L.Stierholz@stls.frb.org) is Director of Library and Research Information Services, Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis.[3]

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3. The views expressed in this column are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the position of the Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis or the Federal Reserve System.

# State and Local

## Capturing the Moment: Local Government Publications

Shari Laster and Aimée C. Quinn

When it comes to identifying and accessing government information sources, publications from local government offices and departments can be one of the toughest areas out there. Local or municipal governments are typically categorized based on the category of government subdivision they fit, such as counties, cities, towns, or districts, but they are more frequently requested and accessed based on the surrounding geography. Some functions can be carried out in partnership with other government entities, as when a water or parks district works in concert with a county government; or when agencies at the regional level work directly under the mandate of a state or provincial government.

For a historic overview of issues and practices related to local government information covering 1987–2000, the series of bibliographies compiled by Kathy A. Parsons, Margaret T. Lane, Gayle C. Christensen, and others on behalf of GODORT's State and Local Documents Task Force is an interesting source to peruse.[1] In the titles of these articles and reports, one finds similar opportunities and issues faced today in identifying, collecting, describing, and managing these materials. While the internet has drastically improved immediate accessibility to government publications, it has also endangered older publications, which may be one site update away from inaccessibility.

The number of local governments that make content available online continues to grow, and the types of information and services offered expands. In particular, public access to government information is the primary reason local governments venture into e-government, and remains a crucial reason for expanding their electronic offerings, along with saving money.[2] Some jurisdictions continue to make resources available in print to serve the needs of local users, or to meet specific legal obligations, while others have transitioned to electronic distribution in order to save the costs associated with printing and distributing materials.

Although making publications available on a website can increase their discoverability, navigating government websites is not always intuitive, particularly when content is posted with minimal metadata. Issues of the digital divide and e-government have also received attention in recent years.[3] As research has noted, there can be substantial differences in the amount of content local governments make available online. Factors including professional management, socioeconomic characteristics, and local population can affect the availability of e-government resources and services.[4] A recent study exploring online public records from Florida counties and school boards also found that differing levels of professionalism in web design affected the amount of content available on these government websites.[5]

Because local government publications are less widely disseminated, an active collection program is important for ensuring the future availability of these resources. In particular, documents published solely to the web are at risk for succumbing to link rot, whether through the process of routine maintenance activities, or as a result of web design changes, administrative reorganization, or human error. In particular, when documents are composed of multiple parts, as with an HTML page that organizes multiple PDF documents, active collection and curation improves the likelihood that the content will be discoverable and usable in the future.

While finding time to undertake a local government publication project is no doubt a challenge, the time spent can be justified by the creation of an entirely unique collection for the library that can, with proper steps taken to describe the content and make it available, perhaps become a showcase collection. It is also an opportunity to improve connections between a library and the surrounding community, which can help with referrals and outreach.

For a new project, it's wise to start small—in this case, with the geographically closest jurisdictions. It's also a good idea to identify other libraries and archives that may have complementary collections to identify gaps or determine which materials are of particular interest in the local community. Also, determine what local resources are available for creating a unique collection within the library: is there interest in building a collection in print or in collecting digital documents for future availability? Can the metadata be created as part of existing workflows or as a special project? If the capacity is not available to create full bibliographic records, how else can the materials be organized and made accessible?

Once a list of jurisdictions of interest has been identified, review the websites of these jurisdictions to identify materials potentially of interest for the collection. Documents and publications in print format can often be requested directly from agency offices. If an office is required to make a certain number of copies available for public inspection, one or more of these copies may be "free to a good home" after the public review period. In some cases, offices may have extra copies sitting around, and administrative staff may be happy or even relieved to learn that a library is interested in taking care of these materials for the long term.

Digital publications available in PDF or HTML format can be saved to a local server or institutional repository, or printed and bound for local users. Local government websites are also excellent candidates for web harvesting. For example, an academic library hosting its university's archives may already have procedures in place for capturing web content from the university's administration. Databases and other complex resources may take more creativity and collaboration to collect, but working with government agencies to ensure long-term access to their content can be framed as an opportunity for the library to serve its local community.

One final point to ensure permanent access to local collections is to document the reasons and agreements for the collections. Make certain library administrations are informed and agree to the rationales prior to initiating agreements with outside organizations. Ensuring these steps from the outset will ensure the future of these projects in the long-run especially as staffing and technological changes take place.

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# Legislation Committee Update

John Shuler

As the new Chair, it is my hope that GODORT's Legislation Committee can, in a structured and deliberative fashion, help our membership become more engaged advocates for the broad access to civic/government information resources and services. The Legislation Committee can help librarians—whether GODORT members or not—recognize how the seemingly multifaceted initiatives other private and public interest groups attempt to shape government information policy—and why our members now to become more directly involved in these conversations and efforts.

Our Association's traditional and future advocacy goals seek to sustain a robust set of laws, regulations, policies and/or judicial decisions necessary for the democratic and transparent availability of government information.

I also think GODORT's legislative advocacy needs to embrace a more comprehensive program of education, advocacy and study about what happens at the state, regional, local, and international levels of government. It seems, to me at least, that the past quarter century of partisan politics demands a new kind of librarian advocacy. The way the national, state and local governments now must interact with each other, especially with the widespread of use of e-government tools and services, I think expects a different kind of government information librarian perspective.

The ways we can inform Association members, and the profound challenges to our democratic ideals of open government information, happens in a much more dynamic and interdependent fashion among all levels of government and though all kinds of libraries—whether formal depositories or not.

I think the Legislative Committee can lend a great deal to helping GODORT members understand what it means to be a practicing librarian who can take a leadership role in their library and/or organization to make the best choices for the collection, organization, public service and curation of all kinds of government information resources. It can be a form of advocacy and civic engagement that recognizes the limitations or resources of the local institution, but also help that institution understand that every "public" library in our democratic community enjoys the responsibility, availability and obligation to think about their civic purposes to reasonably engage their communities (and collections or services) in the robust support of an open, engaged and accessible system of government information resources and services.

Part of this will draw upon our traditional formats of paper and print (and a level of advocacy to demand their proper preservation and curation going forward deeper into our digital age). Nearly two hundred years of librarian expertise, knowledge and practice fashioned from depository library our collective depository practice is one of our profession's essential tools that bind the technologies of democracy with the civic purposes government information. This is experience that ALA and its members need now as much more than ever.

So, as incoming Chair of Legislation, here are three basic goals I would like to see coming out of the annual San Francisco conference and working towards our two conferences in 2016, as well as help GODORT build on its existing excellent expertise in government information advocacy now and over the next five years.

1. Build on our existing methods/tools/organizations of advocacy that inform GODORT members about critical issues that directly affect the accessibility and curation of government information resources/services that speak to all levels of government. This supports our long-standing cooperative working with other ALA mechanisms of advocacy that speak to tactical and immediate threats or opportunities to government information at the national level (e.g. ALA's Washington Office, GIS and Legislation Committees.) But this also suggests that the Legislation Committee can/may take a stronger role in working with other GODORT committees to make necessary links and connections within their work/agendas that include critical and interdependent legislative, legal and policy issues.
2. Find common cause, purpose and ways to work with other Library Associations, the GPO Depository Library Council community, as well as state and regional library associations. Success in this kind of broad-based cooperation means these other national associations and groups could readily find and include the thinking, experience, expertise and advocacy of GODORT members in these larger advocacy conversations about a robust system of government information access, service and curation.
3. Develop ways of communicating and creating opportunities of engagement/discussion to engage GODORT members (and other interested library workers) beyond the Midwinter and Summer national conferences and their venues of meetings. This may include digital communications, digital

conferences, or calls for participation at other regional/national library group meetings.

I look forward to working with GODORT members over the coming year, and beyond, as we build on our earlier successes and challenges.

**John Shuler** (johnalfredshuler@gmail.com) is an Associate Professor, and Bibliographer/Liaison for College of Urban Planning and Public Administration, the Jane Addams College of Social Work, as well as the Government Information Librarian at the University of Illinois at Chicago's University Library.

# Ten Years of TRAIL

Daureen Nesdill, Laura Sare, Alice Trussell, Marilyn Von Seggern

The year 2016 marks the tenth year the members of the Technical Report Archive and Image Library (TRAIL) have been providing open access to US federal technical reports (figure 1). Because TRAIL has created a substantive open access resource over the last ten years, it seems appropriate to look back and reflect on the work of TRAIL.

## History

Historically, many library patrons and librarians have viewed government documents as a collection of unknown and difficult-to-find materials. Their indexing and call numbers often vary from that of other library resources, and finding the key to unlocking those mysteries fell to a select few librarians.

The Superintendent of Documents Classification system (SuDoc), fundamentally a classification based on agency names, presents challenges to patrons because call numbers change as agencies are created, dissolved, or merged with other agencies. An assigned SuDoc call number may not be used by a library depending on the organization and arrangement of government documents within that library.

Technical reports, a subset of government documents, can be even more challenging to discover and access. These reports, the communications of government research progress in technology and science, contain important information serving specialized audiences of researchers. Even older reports, dating back to the 1920s, may be of interest to engineers, scientists, and also researchers in other fields. Most institutions have librarians who actually know the location of the reports and how to find them. Library users seeking information often need to talk to these specialized librarians, who facilitate discovery of the gems hidden on shelves and in drawers. Over the years, paper reports were replaced by microcards, microfilm, and microfiche to save paper and storage space. Unfortunately, these formats required bulky reading equipment, further impeding access. The bulky technology and variation in cataloging coupled with the transition to the use of electronic resources rendered legacy reports virtually invisible. Library users now depend on easily accessible electronic resources and have left the printed reports on library shelves.


**Figure 1. A logo was created to celebrate ten years of TRAIL.**

Concerned about the inaccessibility of the wealth of science and engineering information contained in government technical reports, in 2004 librarians at the University of Arizona (UA) began conversations with other engineering librarians across the US. A vision of digitized, freely available federal technical reports created a spark of enthusiasm.

UA librarian, Maliaca Oxnam held informal sessions with members of the Engineering Libraries Division of the American Society for Engineering Education (ASEE) to gauge interest and enthusiasm. As a result of that interest, UA submitted a proposal to the Greater Western Library Alliance (GWLA) for a project that would identify, digitize, and provide open access to technical reports published prior to 1976. The project was selected by GWLA to move forward, and in concert with the Center for Research Libraries (CRL) a formal agreement was announced in the spring of 2006.

**Table 1. Information from a survey of librarians resulted in a listing of the top ten federal agencies whose publications should be considered for digitization first.**

| | |
|---|---|
| 1 | Department of Energy, DOE |
| 2 | Environmental Protection Agency, EPA |
| 3 | National Aeronautics and Space Administration, NASA |
| 4 | US Department of Agriculture, USDA |
| 5 | National Bureau of Standards, NBS |
| 6 | US Geological Survey, USGS |
| 7 | Atomic Energy Commission, AEC |
| 8 | National Advisory Committee for Aeronautics |
| 9 | US Army Research |
| 10 | US Bureau of Mines |

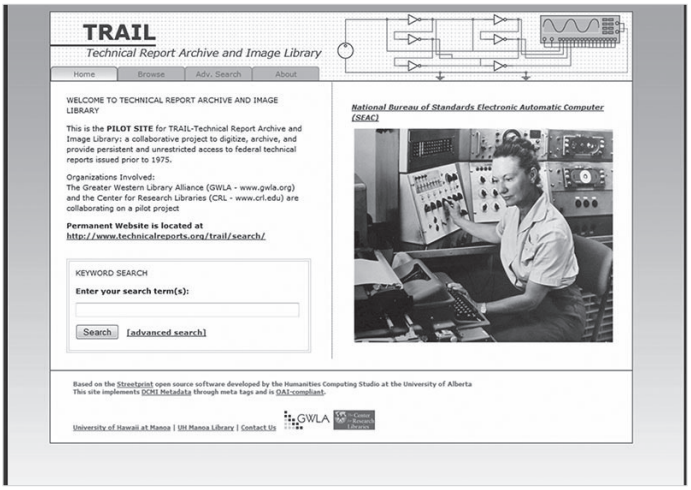


**Figure 2. The pilot TRAIL website from 2009 was created at the University of Hawaii-Manoa. The site no longer exists.**

Soon after the announcement a fortuitous opportunity emerged. The Linda Hall Library, in Kansas City, MO (LHL), was interested in digitization and agreed to work on the project and conduct a cost analysis by digitizing 200-500 reports. A task force of representatives from six academic libraries, in addition to representatives from LHL, GWLA, and CRL met at the Center in August 2006. During that meeting, an ambitious plan was developed to gather, digitize, and establish a prototype website to host digitized technical reports. The goal was to have a website up and running within eight months using a budget of $65,000. The National Bureau of Standards (NBS) Monograph Series was chosen as the first series to be digitized due to its unique depth and breadth of information. A small subset of Atomic Energy Commission (AEC) reports from the Division of Biology & Medicine were also chosen for digitization.

Since the six institutions involved in the project spanned four time zones, GWLA hosted a web-based workspace to enable the task force to communicate and store project documentation. Weekly conference calls moved the project forward. A 'call for interest' survey was sent to science, technology, engineering, math (STEM) and government documents librarians through numerous listservs, asking respondents which agencies' content should be the project's highest priority. The enthusiastic responses to the November 2006 survey were gathered from eighty-four individuals representing sixty-one university libraries and sixteen government agencies and special libraries. From the results the top ten agencies whose collections were priorities for digitization were identified (table 1).

It was Robert Schwarzwalder, while a librarian at the University of Hawaii at Manoa (UH Manoa), who volunteered his institution's resources to create and host the file storage and website page for the pilot project using Streetprint. The digitized reports from LHL and commercial scanning vendors were sent to UH Manoa to be loaded onto servers and made accessible through the pilot website. Before the website could go live, a name for the project had to be determined. Various names and acronyms were proposed and TRAIL, an acronym for Technical Report Archive and Image Library, was selected. The website for accessing reports with the new name and logo went live in March, 2007 (figure 2). Shortly afterward the University of Michigan (UM) contacted GWLA and offered to host the TRAIL website. The discussion surrounding that offer fell through, but it led to an offer to join the UM Digitization Project and have the technical reports digitized through the Google Books Program. Because the UM Digitization Project is able to scan materials at no cost to TRAIL, the overall cost of scanning materials was considerably reduced.

TRAIL started attracting attention. An invitation was received to present to the Commerce, Energy, NASA, and Defense Information Managers Group (CENDI) at the May 2007 meeting in Washington, DC. The CENDI meeting was an important step in facilitating communication with government agencies.

The original members of TRAIL were engineering librarians plus one government documents librarian. Five additional government document librarians were recruited in 2008 to increase the project's expertise in government documents. Now the project had an even split between engineering and government document librarians. Working groups were formed to address the various types of tasks, such as collecting reports for processing, processing the documents to be digitized, developing and maintaining a website about the project, and addressing the technology issues with scanning.

## The Workflow

The basic workflow has not changed substantially since the beginning of the project**.** Two workflow streams for digitization were developed. While all content was sent from partner institutions to UA for processing (reviewed, inventoried, cataloged and shipped), in the first stream, material of uniform page size was sent to the UM Digitization Project for scanning and providing online access. The preference was for donated items that could be deconstructed for the scanning process and not returned to the owning library.

The second workflow stream consists of the reports requiring special handling. Publications with maps, foldouts or anything warranting nondestructive scanning were initially digitized by vendors and stored on servers at UH Manoa. In 2008 the UM Digitization Project began depositing its digitized collection in the HathiTrust Digital Library, often referred to as just HathiTrust. As a result, all TRAIL documents scanned through the UM Project are now deposited in HathiTrust.

By 2009 the project was outgrowing the capacity of the pilot website. Mel DeSart, librarian at the University of Washington (UW) offered the expertise of the library's IT department in developing a search engine and interface (figure 3). At the same time the University of North Texas (UNT) agreed to provide servers for the non-Google scans. The new interface being developed by UW would therefore have a search engine able to search both HathiTrust and UNT content for TRAIL reports. UNT also volunteered to scan the reports containing maps, foldouts or anything warranting nondestructive scanning. Thus UNT took over both third party digitization vendors and UH Manoa's positions in the workflow.

Two major events occurred in 2010. TRAIL won the LexisNexis/GODORT/ALA "Documents to the People" award (figure 4). This increased the project's visibility in the government documents community. The second event was the administrative move of TRAIL from GWLA to CRL and becoming the Center's newest Global Resources Network. In addition to administrative expertise, CRL provides online workspace and a web presence, www.crl.edu/programs/trail. As a result of the move, bylaws were adopted and TRAIL became more formally organized. The elected positions of chair, chair-elect and secretary were established along with a steering committee as the governing body. The four working groups, Collections, Processing, Technology and Communications were formalized. The elected position of treasurer was added in 2012.

While TRAIL was a GWLA initiative, the institutions belonging to GWLA provided financial support for the project. Once TRAIL moved administratively to CRL, a new support structure had to be developed. In 2011 a new member recruitment task force was established, which later morphed into a

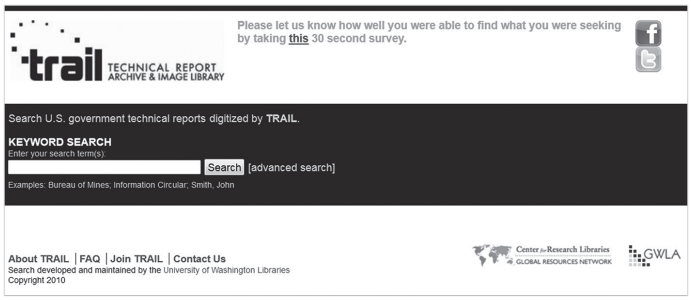


**Figure 3. The present TRAIL website for searching technical reports was created at the University of Washington. www.technicalreports.org/trail/search/**

working group. Membership is important to TRAIL not only for financial support, but because members demonstrate support for the project through content and volunteer assistance. As of December 2015 TRAIL had thirty-nine member institutions.

Four core working groups, http://www.crl.edu/grn/trail/working-groups, move TRAIL forward by focusing on specific aspects of the overall process. Each working group and the Steering Committee have separate scheduled time for conference calls and workspace on CRL's Confluence. The Collections Working Group is responsible for all aspects of the TRAIL project related to the identification, selection, and acquisition of report series for scanning. All aspects related to the cataloging, scanning, and deposit of the resulting electronic TRAIL materials into the appropriate archive are done by the Processing Working Group. The Communications Working Group is responsible for all communication and promotion regarding TRAIL, such as providing descriptive project content on the TRAIL web pages, assisting other working groups with communication development, and oversight and general help with reference questions sent to TRAIL. The responsibility assigned to the Membership Working Group is for recruiting additional organizations and individuals to become members of TRAIL, for creating and conducting orientation sessions for new TRAIL members, and for all member-specific communication within TRAIL.

## Changes in Philosophy

### Years of Coverage

Initially, selection of the reports to be digitized was based on the results of the initial survey, print format, and publication date prior to 1976. The date limiter became problematic early on, since some series that began decades earlier continued years past 1975. It was decided to complete these series rather than adhere to the 1975 cutoff date. In 2014 the reference to "pre-1976" in the Goals and Bylaws was eliminated.

Non-print Formats Member institutions were requesting microforms be digitized since this format was difficult for library patrons to use and microform collections took up valuable space in libraries. In 2011 TRAIL initiated a pilot project to digitize

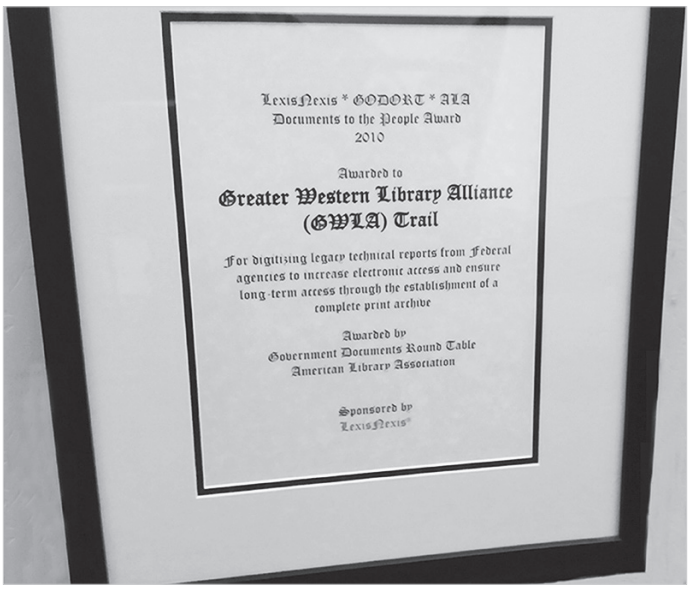


**Figure 4. TRAIL won the LexisNexis/GODORT/ALA "Documents to the People" award in 2010.**

technical reports on microform in response to these requests. Workflow and standards were investigated and a decision to have UNT be responsible for microforms was agreed upon.

### Harvesting

The National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) officials contacted TRAIL and requested assistance in locating some of their missing National Advisory Committee for Aeronautics (NACA) reports on microfiche. Library personnel at University of California, San Diego, (UCSD) a TRAIL member, were just completing an assessment of UCSD NACA microfiche. They contacted TRAIL about reports they owned that were not listed on NASA servers. The two groups were put in contact and worked together to complete the collection and as a result TRAIL was able to harvest the entire digitized NACA collection. A decision was then made by the Steering Committee to work with other federal agencies in harvesting useful collections.

### Personal Members

In 2014, TRAIL was advised that some of the CRL Global Resources Network groups have provisions in their bylaws to include "personal members." These are personnel at institutions or organizations that are not members of TRAIL who are interested in participating in TRAIL's Working Groups and activities. Discussions about how personal members could assist TRAIL with its goals for the future ensued and in early 2015 the TRAIL bylaws were amended to include personal membership. By December 2015, TRAIL had nine personal members from two federal agencies, six universities and one public library.

## Series Selection

Some of the more well-known and readily available sci-tech government series were among the first to be digitized. These included technical report series from the NBS, the Bureau of Mines, and the Fish and Wildlife Service. Libraries engaged in weeding projects or downsizing for moves or remodeling donated many items. Other donated volumes were second copies and no longer needed.

When most of a series is digitized the missing pieces are identified on the TRAIL Needs List, www.crl.edu/grn/trail/current-activities/needs-list. At that point TRAIL accepts the pieces in any way they can be sent—as returnable loans or as microfiche, for example.

As widely held series neared completion the TRAIL Collections Working Group moved on to other agencies and series. Examples include United States Earthquakes 1928–62 and 1963–68, produced by the Coast and Geodetic Survey (now the National Geodetic Survey) of the Department of Commerce, the Federal Energy Administration (later merged with the Department of Energy) Conservation Papers and other series, and the Biological Services Program (Department of the Interior) report series.

Another major set of government technical report series were those from the AEC, established in 1945 and abolished in 1974. Research done in the 1940's leading up to the development of the atomic bomb and continuing after the war with peacetime uses of atomic energy resulted in numerous laboratory technical report series. Some were generated directly by government labs and others were produced under contract with research and commercial entities such as Armour Research Foundation, General Electric, Babcock and Wilcox Company, Battelle Memorial Institute, DuPont de Nemours and Company, and General Dynamics Corporation.

Copyright becomes an issue when private entities are involved, even when the reports are issued in government series from the AEC. Some technical report series from government laboratories such as Argonne, Brookhaven, Livermore, Sandia, and Hanford were classified, but many had no restrictions and were distributed to academic libraries. Even items in these series could run into copyright restrictions, however, if a photograph or any other part of a report had private ownership or authorship. If TRAIL is aware of a copyright restriction, the report will not be freely available. As the number of TRAIL-generated technical reports grew in HathiTrust it was noticed that many were inaccessible due to copyright restrictions. The problem was investigated and found to be due to the absence of a cataloging record field indicator for government documents. Though

some are still not available due to valid copyright restrictions, the addition of this field code has opened many to full view.

A need was recognized for brief descriptions of series to provide some background on the sponsoring agency to users of TRAIL. Summaries including the history of the agency and any other pertinent information are included for most series on the Collections Working Group site at www.crl.edu/grn/trail/current-activities/series-list.

## Progress by the Numbers

TRAIL has now digitized and made available more than 50,000 US agency technical reports, all accessible from the TRAIL interface at www.technicalreports.org (fig. 3). Thirty-seven percent of the collection resides in the UNT Digital Library and the rest in HathiTrust. Detailed holdings and use statistics are not available from HathiTrust at this time, but UNT Digital Library statistics provides an estimate of TRAIL's digitizing effort and the use it is receiving. In November 2015, the TRAIL holdings at UNT resulted in a page count of over one million, a document count of over 18,500, and usage totals of over two million. Based on UNT Digital Library statistical reports, the TRAIL content receives the highest use of any collection in the Library. The number of uses has grown from 4,705 in 2010 to 554,743 in 2013 and 623,383 in December 2015. TRAIL's objective to provide the public with full-text access to federal technical reports has been making steady, substantial progress during the past ten years.

## Future Plans

As TRAIL moves into its tenth year, the future looks bright. TRAIL, no longer a start-up organization, is working to improve upon the foundation developed over the last ten years. TRAIL will expand on the institutional cooperation and partnerships that provided a solid foundation. A future goal of TRAIL is using technology to improve discovery and usability of the information in the collection. An area of focus will be the website interface. A technology task force has been established to address issues such as the metadata required to increase discovery of material. Discussion among the members of TRAIL have occurred about how to apply text mining to increase the usefulness of the reports, which have broad content both in subject and type of information. The reports may include pages of data, charts, standards, and series of reports on a single research topic (e.g., Strontium 90).

TRAIL will be creating additional outreach opportunities through Internet-based services. An announcement will be made in 2016 when the TRAIL-related Libguides go live. TRAIL also does outreach through Social Media.

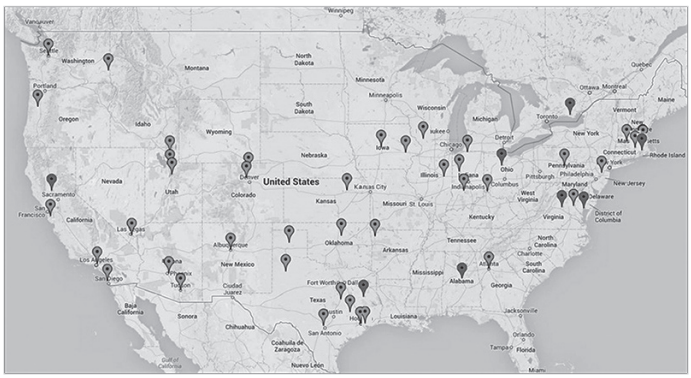


**Figure 5. The locations of institutional and personal members of TRAIL as of December 2015 including both the US and Canada. The red pins are institutional members and the green pins are personal members.**

TRAIL's Facebook page is Technical-Report-Archive-Image-Library-TRAIL, the Twitter account is @TRAILTechReport and the Wikipedia page can be found at en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Technical_Report_Archive_%26_Image_Library. The Communications Working Group is responsible for maintaining these services.

Members of TRAIL are also reviewing processes and procedures to determine what present procedures are working, and what can be improved. TRAIL is documenting activities to provide more transparency to current members. This will also provide potential members with information about TRAIL. Another initiative is to establish metrics so that statistics can be gathered from both HathiTrust and UNT regularly to demonstrate the importance of TRAIL.

At the ten-year mark TRAIL has thirty-nine member institutions and nine personal members (figure 5). The most recent addition to member institutions is the Government Publishing Office. They will be bringing their expertise in cataloging technical reports and join the group in the conversation about the future of TRAIL. If you are interested in joining the conversation, TRAIL invites you to learn more about TRAIL and become a member at www.crl.edu/grn/trail/about-trail.

**Daureen Nesdill** (daureen.nesdill@utah.edu) is Research Data Management Librarian, University of Utah. **Laura Sare** (lsare@tamu.edu) is Government Information Librarian, Texas A&M University. **Alice Trussell** (alitrus@ksu.edu) is Engineering Librarian, Kansas State University. **Marilyn Von Seggern** (m_vonseggern@wsu.edu) is Government Information Librarian, Washington State University Libraries.

# Enriching the Experience for Government Documents Student Workers

Josh Sopiarz

Acknowledging that student employees fill essential positions in academic libraries across the country is not a particularly radical act. Indeed, it would appear that things have *always* been this way. Still, something new is undeniably afoot and the idea that we can be doing more for our student employees is spreading. For years now we have asked students to work late into the night during the week or on weekends, often without direct supervision. More and more we have been asking them to shoulder significant responsibilities at public service desks when other library professionals are unavailable. Our students have responded heroically, and their presence, more than ever, allows academic librarians to pursue other professional activities—to teach, conduct research, perform service, and travel to conferences.

At the same time, we ask ourselves: what more can we be doing for our students? How can we be sure work in the library translates into real skills and experience that will benefit them personally and professionally after graduation? Are we growing the "whole student" or not? All this is to say that along with recent trends a significant body of work has evolved on the topic of student employees in the twenty-first century academic library. What is missing still, however, is any discussion on Government Documents student workers, specifically. In an attempt to address this omission, the following details some opportunities available to Documents supervisors looking to enhance the experience for their student workers.

## Documents vs. Traditional Student Employees

In many instances the work Documents student employees does looks the same as the work of their peers in other departments. Bradley Tolppanen and Janice Derr mapped those tasks nicely in their 2009 "A Survey of the Duties and Job Performance of Student Assistants in Access Services." Through their survey, Tolppanen and Derr demonstrated that of 85 regularly assigned academic library tasks 19 can be classified as "core" after determining that 60% of their survey respondents assigned those specific tasks on a daily or weekly basis. These core tasks run the gamut from "checkout/renew/discharge library materials" which 97.8% of respondents assigned daily or weekly to "oversee library detection gates and respond to alarms" assigned by 62.4% of respondents.[1] The authors characterize the tasks on this list as "all basic" and "rather straightforward," but they also stress that they are "essential."[2]

Without question, Documents student workers perform many of these core "basic" and "essential" tasks. They "shelve stacks and periodicals collections" and "search for books and other items (missing, lost, claimed returned)," etc.[3] In addition, however, Documents students perform unique tasks their peers in more traditional library employment roles do not. We ask our students to immerse themselves in a separate Documents lexicon as they learn the SuDocs classification scheme; compile discard lists; deal in shipping manifests, irregular items, and seldom heard of government agencies; and we challenge them to familiarize themselves with alien systems and media like FDsys and microfiche. By virtue, the uniqueness of the work they do tends to have an isolating effect on our Documents student employees.

There are other differences worth noting, too. Chiefly, that Documents students very often belong to much smaller departments than their peers. Circulation, reference, and technical services departments are (typically) larger than Documents departments and they tend to employ the majority of an academic library's student workers. Students in those departments have more and better opportunities to make friends, study with peers during down times, and participate in peer-to-peer

learning while on the job. Even so, there are great opportunities for Documents students. And these opportunities have the potential to benefit both students and supervisors in exciting and meaningful ways.

## Unique Circumstances

Some of the same circumstances mentioned above—smaller departments, isolation—can also be a boon to Documents supervisors and their student workers. For one, supervisors can work more closely with students when there are fewer of them, thus Documents supervisors are often able to get to know their students better both personally and professionally. Similarly, students in these situations are afforded an inside look into the daily lives of a living, breathing, practicing library professional in ways their peers are not; understanding flows both ways in these situations. Also, fewer students means supervisors can pay better attention to the tasks at hand since managing fewer people translates to less time spent on clerical tasks like keeping track of timesheets, making schedules, tracking down substitutes if a student flakes on a shift or if something comes up, and other time-sucking minutiae. This also benefits students as they receive more direct attention from their supervisors.

One last, and probably, obvious thing worth mentioning is that the turnover rate amongst student employees in academic libraries is notoriously high. The rate is so high, in fact, one library administrator used it as an excuse to eliminate student worker positions in favor of another more predictable model.[4] Still, (assuming they supervise fewer students than their circulation, reference, or technical services peers) the Documents supervisor has the advantage here. Supervisors with fewer students are better able to anticipate their students' plans and schedules term-to-term. In many instances, because they have fewer student employees to manage, Documents supervisors can work with their students and plan for the future with a kind of certainty a lot of other library supervisors cannot. It is not out of the question for a Documents supervisor to meet with his/her student workers each semester to glean whether or not they intend to stay on doing Documents work in the library for the duration of the next term. This sort of foresight breeds consistency and allows the Documents supervisor to plan potentially significant projects with confidence.

In this clearer and more stable environment Documents supervisors are better able to hand select the best-qualified student employees, retain them, and assign them higher order tasks that will benefit both the supervisor and the student employee. Further, operating in this way Documents supervisors can institute a system whereby student workers cycling out of the library because they are graduating or taking a job or internship can train their replacements in the department. Training student employees takes up an unnecessarily large amount of a supervisor's time each term. Planning ahead and teaching students to train their peers is one way to both free up significant time each term and allow students to get the kind of experience potential employers will be looking for when they review candidate resumes.

Tolppanen and Derr discovered that fewer than 8% of supervisors assign their students higher order tasks such as peer training, processing materials, or data entry.[5] And in a study of their own, Lori Mestre and Jessica LeCrone at the Undergraduate Library at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign confirmed that completing higher order tasks enhances students' skills and potential for employment post-graduation. In addition, they assert, libraries "gain perspectives and contributions that can potentially help staff and librarians better relate to their public," and "help free up their time so they can focus on other areas."[6] Documents supervisors have the opportunity and the motivation to assign these, and other even more exciting and ambitious, higher order tasks. In doing so, they help students immensely while also creating time for their own professional endeavors.

Research demonstrates that library student employees are eager for higher order work assignments and experiences. The benefits to both supervisors and students have been proven as well. But before assigning tasks, if they are to truly maximize the benefits for everyone involved, Documents supervisors must:

- Plan ahead and be deliberate when creating assignments;
- Make intentions and expectations clear;
- Set achievable goals and enact reasonable deadlines;
- Remain flexible;
- Conduct assessments and solicit feedback as necessary, and;
- Remember student employees are—above all else—students first, and that their own academic work has priority.

So, what might this look exactly?

## Example

By summer 2015 I had been thinking a lot about how I could enhance the experience for my Documents student workers. Partly, I was unhappy having them sitting in a cubicle, isolated, sifting through superseded documents and compiling discard lists and the like while their peers in access services were loosed on the building, manning service desks, maintaining the "big" collections, and forming friendships. At the time my library

employed 15 student workers. The 2 students in Documents never worked together (there is not room) and had few chances to socialize (commiserate?) with each other on the job. At the same time university administration was pushing for enhanced student experiences and more peer-to-peer participation. My university was eager to implement High Impact Practices (HIPs) across the board, and I began to plan appropriate activities for my student worker. By the time the term started I was down to just a single student working 37.5 hours a month.[7]

Earlier in his library career I was able to arrange for my student to be cross-trained to work the circulation desk. While not necessarily a "high impact" move, the cross-training diversified his skill set and afforded him the opportunity to work and form social bonds with the other students in the library. Also, he was earning a good reputation in the library as an eager and reliable team member. As library projects arose, I was often asked if my student would like to lend a hand. These requests led to a first-of-its-kind meeting with my Documents student to discuss truly diversifying his student employee experience. During that meeting I asked if he was comfortable working with other library supervisors and made clear that he was able to decline projects at any time. He seemed eager to contribute.

Keeping in mind that I wanted my students participating in as many HIP opportunities as possible moving forward, I was happy to see my Docs student agree to help the library's archivist and web manager with two projects digitizing syllabi and historical copies of the student newspaper early in the Fall 2015 term. To be sure, finding the time to work at the circulation desk or on these digitization projects required patience and inter-departmental planning (archives and web services had no students of their own). All this also involved a good deal of schedule shuffling to make sure service points were covered, deadlines were met, and that Documents work continued uninterrupted.

I believe it was all worth it as I found my student was glad for the experience and that the supervisors were generally thrilled to have the help he provided. More, I recognized the experiences seemed to positively embolden my student employee. In a short time, he met more students and library staff and faculty and he comported himself more confidently when in groups with these people. Soon he was speaking more confidently about the library and even started identifying projects he would like to tackle. It was not long after that that he graduated to proposing projects and timelines for completion to me.

For example, after just a couple months in this newly diversified role, my student worker approached me with ideas for processing a sizable collection of books a long-time faculty member had donated to the library. He was aware of an app we could use to keep track of the collection and later transfer the data to Microsoft Excel in case we wanted to add the data to our website or digital repository. He was happy to inform me of this app and demonstrate its usefulness for the kind of project we were facing. I learned a great deal from that proposal and I believe the student gained invaluable insight and practice, too. As I write, he is at work on the donation project.

As the Fall 2015 semester wound to its end, I conducted a first of its kind (for me) assessment to gauge how well (or not) the new more deliberate efforts to enhance the Documents experience were working. I decided to conduct a mid-year assessment so that there would be time to make adjustments during the spring semester while business as usual was the norm in the library rather than the summer when scheduling gets tricky and activity slows considerably. I was impressed to learn just how involved the projects my student had assisted on had been. I was similarly excited to see that the student found the experiences worthwhile. And, although he did lament that much of his work at the circulation desk was clearly lower order, he identified that the more-involved projects offset the malaise. Most promising was the student's indication that he would like to continue doing higher order work.

Interestingly, when asked about developing friendships with the other student workers my student seemed politely indifferent. I wonder if this aspect of student employment is as important as I initially thought. I realize that everyone is different, but based on the findings in the study conducted by Heather Jacobson and Kristen Shuyler I expected more interest.[8] Because of this revelation, I have decided to deemphasize the socialization aspect in favor of a more "wait and see" approach regarding social relationships. It is something I will remain mindful of as new students cycle in and out of the Documents department—and, potentially, as the roster of Documents students expands in the future.

Based on the student's mid-year assessment responses and my anticipated needs I have planned ways for my current student employee to contribute to three significant projects during the Spring 2016 term. Documents obligations remain the priority and all tasks are to be worked on during the allotted 37.5 hours/month. By design, there are no strict deadlines in place at this time. I plan to conduct an end-of-the-year assessment at the conclusion of the Spring 2016 term. Before that, the student and I have agreed that he will:

- Help compile data for a research project. Note, this student is not technically a research assistant. As such, our agreement is much less formal (no strict deadlines, no original research work, and nothing that would expose the student to any liability of any kind).

- Contribute to an oral history project the University Library (specifically the Documents department) and the University's Veterans Affairs office is implementing. We are taking steps to also contribute to the Veterans History Project (Library of Congress).[9]
- Assist with the training of a new Government Documents student worker.[10]

I realize the tasks we have arranged for the upcoming term might seem ambitious for an undergraduate student working part-time in the Government Documents department. That said, this student is a true go-getter with a great attitude and work ethic. While I realize not all student employees are the same, I would argue that Documents supervisors have the opportunity to be picky and ultimately hire exactly this kind of student if that is what they wish to do.

## Conclusion

When given opportunities our students consistently demonstrate that they eager to be challenged and contribute to the library mission. To harness and maintain their enthusiasm, Documents supervisors need to be deliberate in their hiring and supervisory practices from the very beginning of the process. Doing so even at the interview and hiring stages ensures we have the most qualified and best-prepared students possible working for us. Interview students like you would interview candidates for a fulltime staff position. Be upfront about expectations and your desire to partner with new hires to set and achieve high-impact goals. Bring existing student employees onboard early in the training process to convey expectations and facilitate peer-to-peer learning. Introduce students to staff and faculty in other departments—and introduce them to administration, too. Encourage cross-training and be available to train other student employees or have your student do it under your supervision.

While not all students will feel comfortable proposing new projects or solutions to existing ones, we can always encourage our student workers to speak up and hear them out when they do; they might surprise us. Documents supervisors have a great opportunity to both challenge and learn from their student employees so long as they are willing and able to be deliberate, flexible, and ambitious. Our students might not ever approach us with ideas first, but that should not prevent us from challenging them and encouraging them to participate in higher-order tasks and assignments.

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# Science, Agriculture, and Nutrition

## The Government Documents that Influenced a Nation's Food and Diet

Charmaine Henriques

Since its creation in 1862, the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) has published bulletins, reports, pamphlets, posters and a variety of other informational resources. These materials have facilitated the crafting of strategies that have shaped the nutritional standards of the country but also records scientific and technological advances in farming, agriculture and food production. These publications (dating back from the 1800s to the present) help tell the stories of how U.S. federal agricultural policies have advanced the health and welfare of a growing American population.

### Nutritional Guidelines and Dietary Recommendations

For over a century, the United States government has tried to impact the eating habits of it's' citizens. The road to U.S. nutritional guidelines and dietary recommendations began in the late 1890s with the federally funded research of Dr. Wilbur Olin Atwater. Atwater, the first director of the Office of Experiment Stations (OES) for the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), published *Principles of Nutrition and Nutritive Value of Food* as a farmer's bulletin in 1902 (the bulletin was reissued in 1910 with corrections and without change in 1916).[1] His studies focused on the composition and preparation of food, digestion, and fats, proteins and carbohydrates as well as other food related topics. His notions on the dangers of the one sided diet, the needless use of expensive food and the advantage of having several moderate meals a day remain similar to the views of today in relation to proper eating habits and nourishment.

Atwater's research on food composition and nutrition, paved the way for the USDA's first food guide, 1916's *Food for Young Children*, by Caroline Hunt, a Scientific Assistant in the USDA's Office of Home Economics.[2] *Food for Young Children* included meal plans and recipes for dishes such as meat stews, tapioca and rice pudding, milk toast and coddled eggs. Furthermore, the publication divided food into five food groups with a daily serving suggestion of food from each group, as Hunt states, "A little child who is carefully fed in accordance with his bodily needs (as these are now understood) receives every day at least one food from each of the following groups:

1. Milk and dishes made chiefly of milk (most important of the group as regards children's diet); meat, fish, poultry, eggs, and meat substitutes.
2. Bread and other cereal foods.
3. Butter and other wholesome fats.
4. Vegetables and fruits.
5. Simple sweets."[3]

Hunt and Helen W. Atwater would go on to collaborate and *How to Select Foods* appeared in 1917.[4] Akin to its' predecessor, *How to Select Foods* had dietary recommendations based on the same five food groups in *Food for Young Children* but its' advice was aimed at the general population instead of individuals between the ages of three to six and its' suggestions would remain in effect through the 1920's. In the early 1930s, due to the monetary limitations because of the Great Depression, Hazel Stiebeling (who would later become the Bureau Chief of the USDA's Bureau of Human Nutrition and Home Economics) created USDA Circular No. 296, *Diets at Four Levels of Nutrition Content and Cost*.[5] The Circular identified four different food plans at four cost levels outlined by twelve major food groups to buy and use to meet a week worth of nutritional goals.[6]

### The Food Pyramid

World War II lifted the United States out of its' economic troubles but the nation's food supply would have to be cautiously allocated in order to guarantee soldiers serving on the front lines would have proper nutrition.[7] In 1943 the USDA released the Basic Seven food guide as the leaflet, *National Wartime Nutrition Guide* (revised as the *National Food Guide* in 1946)

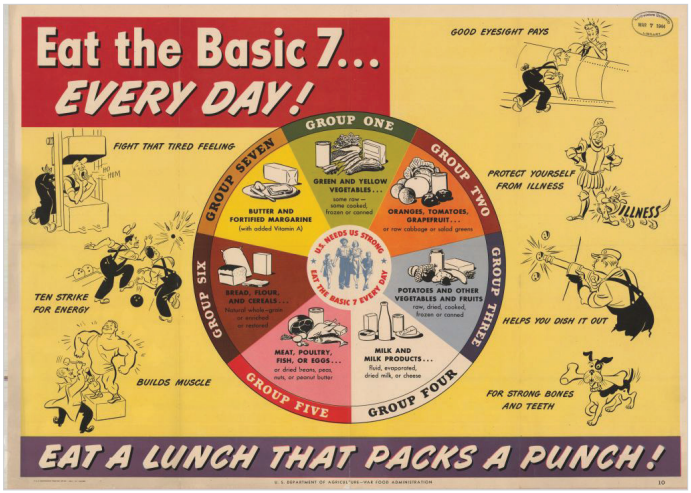


**Figure 1. The Basic Seven Food guide**

to help maintain nutritional standards under wartime rationing.[8] As a part of the War effort eating healthily and conserving food became a patriotic duty for the civilian population. Nutritional information that was found in circulars, bulletins and leaflets now would be shared visually to encourage compliance with new dietary standards.[9] The poster that introduced the Basic Seven food group to the populace was colorful and consisted of a circle similar to a pie chart and each of the pie pieces include the names and a graphic representation of one of the food groups introduced in the food guide. The food groups were:

1. Green and yellow vegetables
2. Oranges, tomatoes, grapefruit
3. Potatoes and other vegetables and fruits
4. Milk and milk products
5. Meat, poultry, fish, or eggs
6. Bread, flour, and cereals
7. Butter and fortified margarine

The center of the poster depicted a family and the slogan "U.S. Needs Us Strong . . . Eat The Basic 7 Everyday"; equating good citizenship with healthy eating habits (see figure 1).[10]

The USDA and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) joined forces in 1978 and appointed a task force of scientists from their two agencies to develop nutritional guidance statements to advise the public about current knowledge of the relationship between diet, health and disease; this would eventually lead to the 1980 joint release of the USDA's and HHS' first edition of *Nutrition and Your Health: Dietary Guidelines for Americans*.[11] *Nutrition and Your Health: Dietary Guidelines for Americans* was a brochure of 7 dietary guidelines statements that was partly based on the 1979 *Surgeon General's Report on Nutrition and Health* and has been released jointly by both agencies every five years since its original appearance in 1980.[12]

In 1992, the USDA released the Food Guide Pyramid (www.cnpp.usda.gov/fgp). This became a generally acknowledged nutrition education tool which sought to express the types of food to eat each day and the recommended servings of those foods. It was divided into six horizontal segments containing depictions of foods from each segment's food group. The Bread, Cereal, Rice & Pasta Group was the base of the Pyramid with the suggestion of 6–11 servings a day. The middle of the Pyramid consisted of the Fruit Group with 2–4 servings on the right and on the left the Vegetable Group with a daily serving of 3–5. The last two groups that were located at the top of the Pyramid were the Meat, Poultry, Fish, Dry Beans, Eggs, and Nuts and the Milk, Yogurt & Cheese which both had a serving suggestion of 2–3. The tip of the Pyramid was reserved for Fats, Oils, & Sweets which were to be used sparingly (see figure 2).[13]

The USDA Food Pyramid was updated in 2005 and renamed MyPyramid (www.cnpp.usda.gov/mypyramid). Gone were the horizontal sections with food and serving size suggestion. They were replaced with colorful vertical wedges of orange,

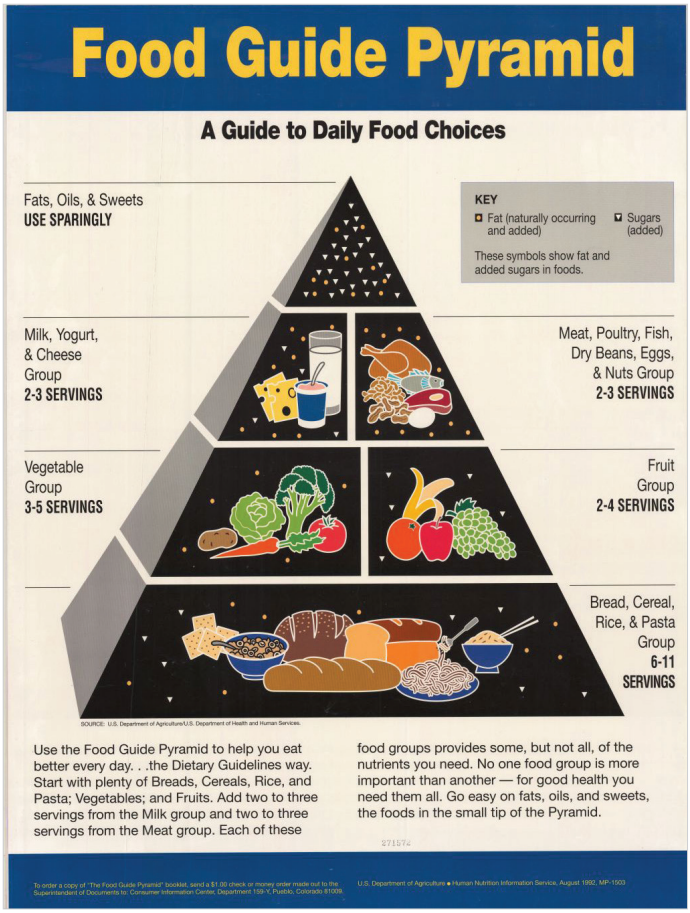


**Figure 2. The 1992 Food Pyramid**

green, red, yellow, blue and purple with the depiction of the different food groups at the bottom of the pyramid. The new food groups became: Grains, Vegetables, Fruits, Milk & Meats and Beans. Stairs were added to the left side of the pyramid with an image of someone climbing them to represent exercise and food intake recommendations were no longer measured in servings but the common household measurements cups and ounces. Additionally, different posters were created for pregnant and nursing mothers, preschoolers and kids (see figures 3 and 4).

On June 2, 2011, First Lady Michelle Obama, USDA Secretary Tom Vilsack and Surgeon General Regina Benjamin released the federal government's new food pyramid, which was not a pyramid but a plate; specifically MyPlate (www.choosemyplate.gov/). MyPlate's intent was to inspire healthy eating by aiding in building a healthy plate at meal times. It is divided into four distinct grids, with fruits and vegetables taking up half of the plate, and grains and protein making up the other half. The program is supposed to be easier to understand by stressing the importance of fruit, vegetable, grains, protein, and dairy groups and instead of emphasizing serving sizes one can use the sections of the plate to create well-balanced meals which translates to a well-balanced diet.

## Science and Technology

The USDA's and its bureaus had an additional focus beyond nutrition, they also produced a wealth of materials related to innovations in science and technology; documenting research and development advances from breeding improved food animals, hybridizing insect and climate tolerant crops, advancing agricultural machinery and buildings, to creating techniques for land conservation, preserving and shipping food and determining nutritional benefits for the American consumer.

For example, the USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service has national responsibility for helping America's farmers, ranchers, and other private landowners develop and carry out voluntary efforts to conserve and protect our natural resources.[14] Two of their documents *First Things First: A Call for Immediate Enlistment in Soil Conservation* (1943) and *Buffer Strips: Common Sense Conservation* (1997) promote using the techniques of contour plowing on sloping cropland and creating vegetative buffer-strips near waterways to limit soil erosion, while *Victory Garden Insect Guide* (1944) from the Extension Service and Bureau of Entomology and Plant Quarantine describes a selection of insects that feed on garden crops and methods to control them.[15] The dissemination of this information was part of a critical effort during WWII to maximize the number of productive and healthy victory gardens growing food in support of the nation and the war.

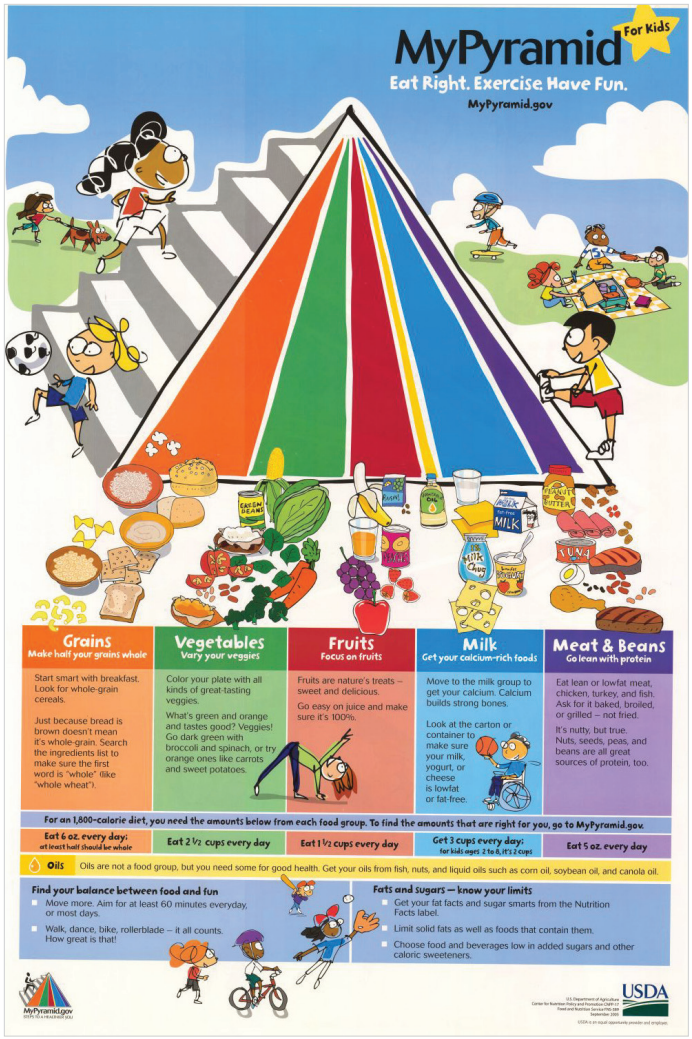


**Figure 3. My Pyramid for Kids (side 1)**


**Figure 4. My Pyramid for Kids (side 2)**

Of course, like most government documents, USDA materials are not solely limited to the print format. The 1993 four piece microfiche title, *Always Something New: A Cavalcade of Scientific Discovery* (by the Agriculture Research Service)

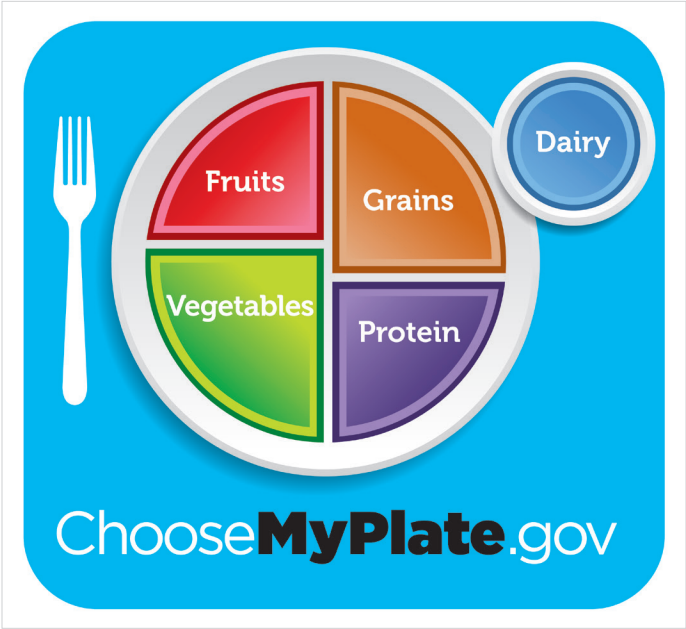


**Figure 5. MyPlate**

highlights fifty years of crop utilization research conducted at four regional laboratories of the United States Department of Agriculture, and includes the story of Clarence Birdseye inventing and patenting quick freezing techniques for food.[16] The new frozen food industry that emerged from this advance in food preservation was concerned with quality of their products, so they partnered with the USDA's Western laboratory scientists and together developed improvements to the processing of frozen foodstuffs. Another account from this publication details that USDA researchers worked with the Florida Citrus Commission to improve orange concentrate and from this collaboration, the frozen orange juice industry was established.[17]

Historic reports from the USDA not only provides written but also visual information. The plates of the 1866 issue of the *Report of the Commissioner of the Agriculture* illustrate the support of scientific research and technological developments for increasing the yields of U.S. farmers and husbandmen. The improvements to sheep include a sturdier constitution to survive in the environment of the northeastern states which brought more meat to the American table.[18] Progress made and shared about new technologies of the time in the 1867 *Report of the Commissioner of the Agriculture* include the steam plough replacing the power of human and work animals, which was another one of many essential developments in increasing the amount of tillable acreage on American farms which allowed for greater yields and more food produced.[19]

## Conclusion

The Department of Agriculture develops agricultural markets, fights hunger and malnutrition, conserves natural resources, and ensures standards of food quality through safeguards and inspections.[20] Nonetheless, it is also an example of just one of the many U.S. government agencies that in addition to its primary mission, is also charged with conducting research, gathering information and imparting that crucial information to the general public for the purposes of education and decision making that affects the daily lives of the American people.

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The author would like to acknowledge Ms. Susan Oldenburg, Program Assistant- Research & Learning Services Work Group and Mr. Drew Scott-Communications Specialist, Marketing & Communications Work Group, Northwestern University Libraries, for their assistance with the research and images that accompany this article.

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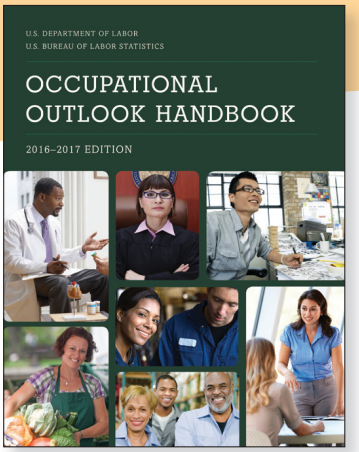


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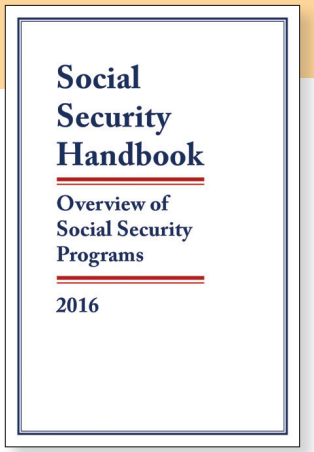


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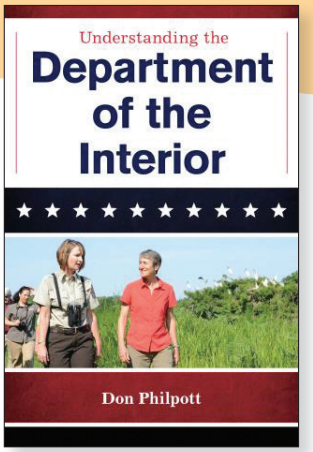


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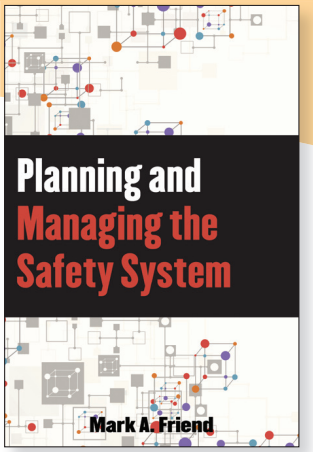


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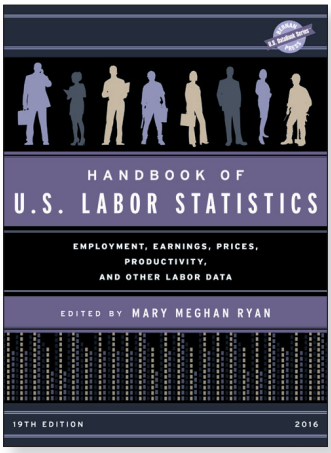


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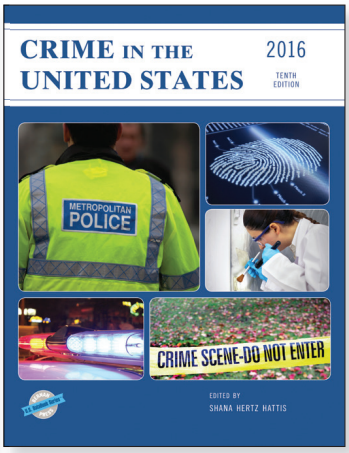


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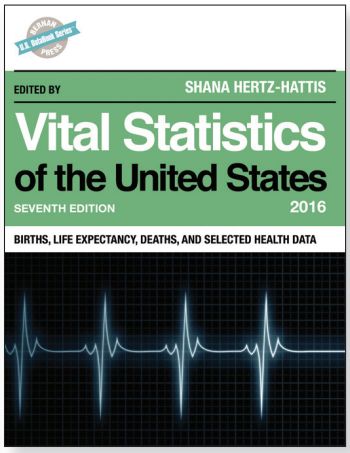


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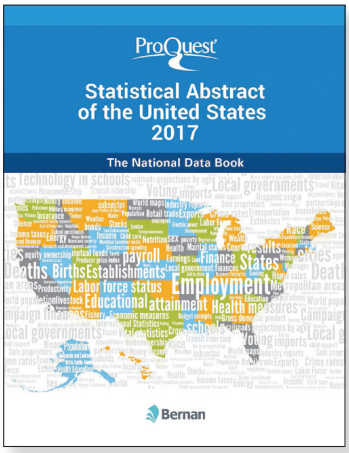


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