

**Presentation for ARL Directors on the ARL Spec Kit
Survey of ARL Depository Libraries
The Likert Scale**

This ARL Spec Kit was sent to all ARL Selective Depository Libraries and to all Regional Depository Libraries (the majority of which are also ARL Libraries). It was designed to enable ARL to study the current problems, successes, and future of the Federal Depository Library Program with a total concentration on research libraries. The Likert scale discussed here provides us with a current snapshot of both types of Depository Libraries. Twenty-six statements were included for the Depository Libraries to respond to. This first table is the 13 statements most **agreed** upon by Selectives with the Regionals' **agreed** response to these statements included for comparison. We have also included three more tables for study. Table II includes the five statements that Selectives most **agreed** upon that were not asked of Regionals. Table III shows two statements that were most **agreed** upon by Regionals but not asked of Selectives. The last table (Table IV) presents the three statements that Regionals most **disagreed** with; the first question is the only one was asked of both types of libraries; the last two were asked only of Regionals.

The following scale of 1 through 5 was utilized:

Scale 1	Strongly Disagree
Scale 2	Disagree
Scale 3	No Opinion
Scale 4	Agree
Scale 5	Strongly Agree

Scale 1 and 2 were combined as **Disagree**; Scale 4 and 5 were combined as **Agree**.

TABLE I—Thirteen statements that Selectives most **agreed** upon with the Regionals **agreed** responses included.

There was a high degree of **agreement** between both types of libraries that they:

- Conformed to GPO instructions and guidelines with respect to staffing and other support, although the **agreed** percentage for the Regionals was almost 20% below that of the Selectives. This would appear to reflect the problems that a 100% depository faces. This is confirmed by statements for:
 1. Space support staff, professional staff, support for supplementary resources and services, and temporary student and graduate assistants. In these areas Regionals were more consistently low with percentages of 55, 47.5, 42.5, and 47.5. Selectives were much more positive about their ability to perform these tasks with percentages that were 76.7, 70, and 68.3 respectively. It would appear that the bigger collections and the additional

services that Regionals must care for and provide for are much more burdensome for the staff and library administration.

2. This is also supported from statement #1 in Table IV in which both Regionals and Selectives were almost equal in their **disagreement** with the idea that operational costs for their libraries were increasing.

An interesting fact from the first portion of the ARL survey is that the median cost of being a depository library is estimated at \$257,304. The median expenses are included for the major areas of expense:

Staffing-----67.2%
 Students-----4.9%
 Services-----2.6%
 Purchases----21.8%
 Equipment----2.3%
 Software-----0.4%
 Travel-----0.7%

We can say with reasonable assurance that it is tougher to be a Regional, rather than a Selective. It would also appear that staffing accounts for the bulk of depository expenditure. It seems troublesome that both types perceive no increase in operational costs and that Regionals feel so strongly that staffing is very problematic.

Despite these differences and the burdens that Regionals carry, it is very clear that both types of libraries felt strongly that the staffing and support for the documents collections in their library were satisfactory in relationship to their libraries' support of other collections. This would appear to suggest that the staffing, space, operational cost support, and supplementary resources are a problem universally for all of the libraries, particularly in Regionals. This raises the question, unanswered here, of whether the Regional Libraries have bigger collections and thus more problems? As will be shown later, there is also a strong suggestion that the services Regionals offer require more efforts for their libraries in terms of costs and staff.

- Both Regionals and Selectives agree that a more electronic GPO has improved public service.
 - Both types of libraries agree that their collections and services are frequently used.
 - Both Regionals and Selectives also strongly agree that a public awareness campaign coordinated by the GPO and more promotion of their collections and services by the libraries themselves would increase use and be beneficial.
1. These three statements suggest that both types of libraries recognize the importance of their collections to both the library and the public.
 2. The statements also suggest that both the GPO and the libraries need to do more to foster use of their services and collections and increase the public's knowledge and appreciation of depository libraries.

3. It is also interesting to note that 80% of both libraries are in agreement that the electronic GPO has improved public use. This suggests recognition by the libraries of the role electronic government information is now playing. This indicates how far depository librarians have come from their earlier belief that only print and tangible electronic materials could provide the needs of the public. While it is true that many depository librarians are fearful of the consequences of going totally electronic, there seems to be growing acceptance of electronic information. There are still issues and concerns, which farseeing and well informed documents librarians worry about. Those issues are preservation of electronic material, verification of its authenticity, providing adequate distant service to the public, and keeping up to date with fast changing formats.

There is also strong evidence that Regional and Selective libraries are very committed to public service and access to government information, particularly for electronic government information. In the first part of the ARL survey it was found that:

- 98% of the responding libraries provide access to this information though OPACS;
 - 72% provide links to non-depository electronic government information in their OPACS;
 - 96% of the libraries have document web pages for government information.
1. This part of the survey also confirms that despite the financial and staffing problems, depository libraries believe strongly in the Federal Depository Library Program and are committed to access and public service to the program!! Only 5 Selectives (7%) and 7 Regionals (14%) reported that they had considered dropping their status. 98% also reported that they provided extended or extensive reference service for electronic resources.
- There is agreement among Regionals and Selectives that if GPO provides the standards and guidance they are very willing to partner with the government on an electronic or digital project.
 1. This has been talked about at depository library meetings (especially Regional libraries) for some time. It seems certain that these libraries are ready to proceed with this idea. Already a number of depositories are discussing possible projects.
 2. Another part of this survey found 31.7% of the libraries were involved in the digitization of government information. While there appears to be a strong base of experience for conducting collaborative projects, not many of them are externally funded so knowledge is not being shared nor is it known outside the institution. This appears to support the need for more cooperative project designs, funding, and collaboration among

depositories. This is definitely an area where **ARL** can provide leadership and support and make a difference.

3. In this same survey 52% of the respondents participate in a consortium related to government information so there appears to be lots of opportunities for cooperative projects.

Training issues including the ability to carry out training and the need for training for both kinds of libraries are big issues among depository libraries and are reflected in the Likert scale and in the general survey.

- Selective libraries (table II. #1) felt that training sessions by GPO in their state or region would be beneficial.
- Regionals agree that training sessions conducted for the regionals would benefit their selectives.
 1. These two statements are strongly supported in the first part of the survey. 71.4% of the depository librarians most frequently attended the Fall Depository Library Conference (sponsored by the GPO and providing extensive training sessions at many levels). 67.4% found this conference useful and 73.1% found it to be a critical meeting. The survey also found that both types of libraries reflected a strong national focus associated with being a Federal Depository Library in memberships in state and national organizations, issues, and training.
- Regionals also agree that marketing/promotion of regional services by GPO would also aid the selectives in their states..
- Regionals **disagree** with statements that they have adequate staffing support to conduct training sessions on electronic resources or training sessions on processing and collection issues for the selectives in their states.
 1. Both types of libraries want training from GPO. Regionals appear to feel strongly that training is a service they need to be offering in their states. However, the spirit is willing but the flesh is weak and Regionals definitely feel they do not have the resources, particularly staff, to carry out this most important and basic service.
 2. This is reinforced by the survey that only 27% of the selectives reported a visit from regional staff since January 2001. Even then only eight of these Regional visits were non-inspection related. Only half of the Regionals reported visiting selectives.
 3. 50% of the Regionals reported conducting 3 to 5 training sessions since January 2001, while only 30% of the selectives said they had attended these sessions. This is a significantly low figure for two and a half years.