ARL Survey of Regional and ARL Selective Depository Libraries in the FDLP
Initial Analysis – 10/08/2003

1) Question 1 asked the type and format of government information collected. The choices included federal (depository and non-depository), United Nations, European Union, foreign, state, and local documents.
Libraries have comprehensive collections of federal information; electronic and microforms are equal in format selection after print; microform is the more prominent than electronic than state & local documents.

2) Question #2 asked whether the library participated in any consortia with respect to government documents.
> • 52% of the respondents participate in a consortium related to government information.

There appears to be lots of opportunities for cooperative projects related to government information

3a) Question #3a asked where in the library are government publications housed.
> • Documents are mostly segregated (96%) with some items in the general collection (62.6% of libraries) or branch libraries (52.8%).

Documents do augment the general and more specialized (branch) collection of most libraries.

3b) Question #3b asked if any government publications are housed in storage facilities and if so, how much of the collection (either percentage of the total collection, linear feet, or items) and how far was the storage facility was from the main collection.
> •Documents are housed in some form of storage facilities in 70.7% of the libraries. How much is in storage –
> •38.2% of the libraries report that 10-19% of their documents collections are in storage;
> • 19.5% of the libraries provided volume estimates of 30,000 (median) to 97,000 (average) and an overall range of 3-500,000 items;
> • 23.6% of the survey participants reported linear foot measures ranging from 3-9300 linear feet, an average of 793.8 linear feet and a median of 2214 linear feet; and
> • Just over a third of the libraries report the distance to the storage facility to be in a range of 0-40 miles; the average being 5.6 miles and a median of 2 miles.

A growing number of depositories are sending an increasing amount their materials to storage facilities that average 2-5 miles from the libraries. This is an area where additional issues will be emerging as more libraries hit capacity for their collections.

4a) Question #4a asked how much space is currently available to house print, microform, and electronic equipment. Response was based on how many years growth is currently available. Is there really a space problem at ARL Federal Depository Libraries?

• Only 2.5% of the libraries report no room for collection growth and 20.7% have less than 2 years growth in their collections. 79.3% of the libraries report enough space for three or more years growth.
There needs to be more analysis comparing storage facilities with the growth response and also to see if regionals report problems with collection growth. However, it appears that the space issue may be a little over emphasized.

4c) Question #4c asked about storage space available to access tangible electronic items (CD-ROM/DVD).
• Only 5.7% of the libraries reported any storage problems related to electronic resources.

4d) Question #4d asked how many libraries made copies of tangible electronic resources and why the copies where made.
• 19.5% of all the libraries report copying for preservation purposes; 11.4% copy for multiplicity; and 36.4% of libraries make copies for customers

4e) Question #4e asked if the library downloaded and stored non-tangible electronic government information and where the data was being stored.
• 29% of the libraries report they download data – 21.1% are storing permanently; and
• 20.3% for temporary storage; also 12.2% of the libraries are downloading data from CD/DVD's.

4f) Question #4f asked if the library had a strategic plan for handling outdated technology of tangible government information, e.g. are accommodations being made for CD-ROMs or DVD running on legacy software such as Windows 3.1 or Windows 95. –
• Only 17% of libraries report that they have a strategic plan for electronic information resources.
Question 4 presents an interesting picture of how depository libraries are handling electronic resources. Many libraries are making electronic resources accessible; providing service to customers; downloading information for preservation and multiplicity without benefit of an electronic resources plan. This appears to be an area that needs to be addressed that would be a benefit to libraries, depositories, and the future of access to electronic government information resources.

5) Question #5 asked about the staffing of the government information services. The question focused on the number of positions, length of time in the position, and the number of years of experience working with government information.
• 73.8 % of the responding libraries have at least four staff. Staff average 5-10 years in the current position and 7-16 years experience in government information resources.
• The frequency of depositories with more than four staff declined at two levels. Depositories reporting five staff (54.1%) are significantly more numerous than those reporting six or more staff (39.3%). Also depositories with more than five

staff the experience in current position and in government information tended to increase after bottoming-out in position #5.

As expected Position #1 (assumed to be the department head) averages 6.5-9 years and 16 years of experience in government information. Interesting enough position #2 actually averaged slightly more experience in the department than position #1 Unfortunately data does not reveal whether these positions are professional or paraprofessional but they are still of interest because of the increasing amount of paraprofessional staff providing reference service.

6) Question #6 asked what meeting/conferences or training had been attended by documents staff during the 2002/2003 fiscal year. Staff where also asked which meetings where the most useful and which are given a priority during lean budget years.

• Libraries reported that the Fall Depository Library Conference was most frequently attended (71.4%) and useful (67.4%) followed closely by the state-level documents meeting (67.2% attendance and 61.3% reported as useful). These two conferences were followed in attendance by ALA Annual Conference, state-level training session, and the Spring Depository Library Council meeting. As for usefulness the state-level training session moved up to third and ALA Annual Conference moved to fifth.

• When asked to select a priority the two most critical meetings were the Fall Depository Library Conference (73.1%) and state documents meeting (55.5%).

It is clear from the responses that the depository community values the Fall Depository Library Conference. The result is clearly supported by attendance each year. Depository librarians showed clear and strong message for state-level depository meetings. Meeting preference and usefulness fell into two distinctive groups below the top-two. Group #1 (identified by about 50% of the libraries) included ALA Annual and Midwinter meetings as well as the Spring Depository Library Council meeting and state-level training. This group reflects a strong national focus associated with being a Federal Depository Library. Also, this group of FDLs associate strongly with ALA. Group #2 includes more training sessions and state association meetings. Again, the focus in the group of libraries tends to be national in outlook in membership, issues, and training.

7) Question #7 asked what special projects or initiatives are currently being done in the documents department (part a) and how the projects where being funded (part b).

• Part A. A wide variety of special projects are being conducted at this group of Federal Depository Libraries. Top on the list is retrospective cataloging (66.6% of responses), followed by conducting workshops (45%), non-digital preservation projects (33.3%), digitization of government information (31.7%), and community outreach (25%).

• Part B. Unfortunately only 25.5% of the many projects have any external funding and large number 97.3% of all reported projects are internally funded.

The responses to this question are very curious. A large number of libraries are involved in non-digital projects including retrospective cataloging, preservation, workshops, and community outreach. However, 31 percent are conducting digital projects (40 libraries). There appears to be a strong base of experience for conducting collaborative projects. However, many of the projects are not externally funded so knowledge is not being

shared or known outside the institution. There needs to be more cooperative project design, funding, and collaboration among the FDL's. This maybe an area where organizations like ARL or ALA-GODORT could take a lead.

8) Question #8 asked the library to estimate the costs of government documents activities. Costs included staffing, student employees, purchase of supplementary materials to support services, equipment, application software and travel.

       • The mean cost of being a Federal Depository Library is estimated at $344,469;

       • The median cost of being a Federal Depository Library is estimated at $257,304; and

       • Responses were received from 118 depository libraries. Further analysis of the differences between Regional and selective depository libraries will be very important in this grouping. However, the following is a quick analysis of how the money is spent. Two percentages are reported for each category, the first percentage is based on the mean and the second percentage is based on the median cost to operate a depository library.

Staffing	mean - 59.5%	median - 67.2%
Student employees	mean – 5.1%	median – 4.9%
Services	mean – 3.2%	median – 2.6%
Purchases	mean – 25.2%	median – 21.8%
Equipment	mean – 3.9%	median – 2.3%
Software	mean – 2.2%	median – 0.4%
Travel	mean – 0.7%	median – 0.7%

Depository libraries make substantial commitments to staff and the purchase of resources to support the collections. The cost figures represent the institutions commitment to the program. What is significant is the amount spent to purchase materials and services to support depository services, this maybe a source of funding for collaborative projects between depository libraries.

9) Question #9 asked how many hours a week reference assistance was available for government information services, what level staffing provided the service and whether there had been an increase or decrease in the service level since January 2001.

       • Reference service for government documents is provided an average of 71.3 hours per week and a median of 72.5 hours per week. Professional librarians provide service at every responding library. Support staff members provide reference service at 77% of the libraries and 41.5% of the libraries also staff with student assistants. In the average depository librarians are at the reference desk 69-82% of the hours; library support staff the desk 46-53% of the hours and student assistants are at the desk 27-43% of the time.

       • 13.4% of the libraries reported increased service hours (29-43% more hours).

       • 19.6% of the libraries reported decreased service hours (10-13% less hours).

Further analysis will need to focus on the causes of the changes and also whether there are any differences between regional and selective depository libraries.

10) Question #10 asked whether reference statistics are kept for government information services, whether there had been an increase since January 2001, and what might be the possible causes for the increase or decrease.

- Only 53% of the libraries keep reference statistics for government information:
- 21.7% of the libraries reported an increase in questions;

55.1% reported a decrease in questions; and

23.2% reported no change;

- Factors cited in causing increase/decrease in reference questions:

more resources online (78.9%);

average increase in questions (15-37%);

average decrease in questions (16-19%);

patrons finding their own information online (77.2%);

changes in class assignments (43.9%); and

more multi-access points like chat and e-mail reference (40.3%).

Again, further analysis will need to look at the differences reported between libraries that increased questions versus those that had a decrease in questions. The data in 9 and 10 also raise some questions that the increase in hours and question categories maybe more antidotal than documented. However, there may also be some good lessons found in looking more closely at the increased and decreased libraries' situations to what the real causes-effect relationships were.

11) Question #11 asked about the level of reference assistance given to customers of electronic government information resources.

- 98% of responding libraries provide extended or extensive reference service for electronic resources.

Another reason to develop electronic resource service plans.

12a) Question #12a asked the library to identify changes in the government information services since January 1999.

- 75.4% report increased reliance on free electronic resources;
- 64.8% report increased reliance on paid electronic resources;
- 27.9% now include GIS services;
- 25.4% have added records to OPAC;
- 17.2% report increased demand for government information; and
- 17.2% report no changes.

12b) Question 12b asked the library to identify anticipated changes in government information public services through December 2004.

- 58.6% increase in use of electronic resources;
- 53.2% staff training;
- 52.3% workflow changes;
- 48.6% funding changes;
- 34.2% collection development changes;
- 22.5% remodeled space;
- 18.9% department reorganization; and
- 16.2% library-wide reorganization.

Federal Depository Libraries have experienced extensive changes in both services and environments since 1999. Resources and services are evolving rapidly during a period great organizational change and budget issues. A key part of this analysis will be looking at responses to question 12c – the impact of these changes on services.

13) Question #13 asked about access to electronic government information though OPACs and department web pages.
> • 98% of the responding libraries provide links to electronic government information in their OPACS;
> •72% provide links to non-depository electronic government information in their OPACS; and
> • 96% of the libraries have document web pages for government information.

14) Question #14 asked about the availability and use of tangible electronic resources.
> • 78.7% of the responding libraries report having >500 CD/DVDs
> available to the public; however 82.6% of the libraries report light (1-20 uses per week) use of these resources.

15) Question #15 asked about the availability of public access workstations to access government information.
> • 73% of the libraries report having dedicated work stations in their libraries for their customers to access government information; the median number of workstations per library is three and the average is just above five per library;
> • 20% of the libraries report that the workstations exceed GPO recommendations; and
> 53% of the libraries report that the workstations meet or exceed GPO recommendations.

As a group the libraries in this survey provide high quality service and resources dedicated to accessing electronic government information. The concern is that a large portion of these libraries do not have an electronic services plan.

Some random comparative data points

16) Question #16 asked selective depository libraries whether staff from the regional depository had visited the collection and had the visit occurred extent to the GPO inspection process. The responses to #16 are contrasted with responses to Question #25 where regional depositories were asked to report the number of visits to selectives since January 2001.
> • 27% of the selectives reported a visit from regional staff; however, only eight visits were non-inspection related; and
> • 54% of the regionals reported they visited selectives.

17) Question #17 asked selective depository libraries whether their regional library had provided any training sessions since January 2001. The responses to #17 can be compared to the regional depository library responses to Question #26 or how many training sessions they had provided since January 2001.

• 30% of the selectives attended sessions conducted by the regional library; and
• 50% of regionals reported conducting an average 3-5 sessions during the period

19) Question #19 asked selective depository libraries if they had considered leaving the Federal Depository Library Program the last few years. Question #28 asked regional libraries whether they had considered dropping regional status the last few years.
• 5 selectives (7%) reported that they had considered dropping depository status;
• 7 regionals (14%) reported that they had considered dropped their regional designation; and
• 13 selectives (19%) said they would consider becoming a regional depository if the regional relinquished their status.

Several observations can be taken from these questions. First, selectives in this category do report a low level of service from their regional; while regionals report a moderate level of service delivered. More likely regionals spend most of their time working with at-risk, smaller selectives and assume the larger selectives have the staff and resources to solve their problems.
The responses also show that twice as many regionals considered changing their status as did selective in dropping their designation. The question arises whether regionals are the more at-risk depository in this group?
Finally, a large number of selectives 13 or 19% indicated that they would consider becoming a regional if there were no regional for the state.

Survey Participation
•123 Libraries Responded to the Survey
• Federal Depository Libraries Responding to Survey
        122 of possible 136 (89.7%)
• Regionals responding to survey
        51 of 53 (96.2%)
• Non-ARL regionals responding to survey
        29 of 31 (93.5%)
• ARL regionals responding to survey
        22 of 22 (100%)
• ARL selective depository libraries responding to survey
        93 of 105 (88.6%)

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