
Volume 12
Number 1
Going Digital with Government Information
(Spring 2006)

July 2014

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Recommended Citation

Hulshof-Schmidt, R. (2014). State Library Launches Virtual Documents Repository . *OLA Quarterly*, 12(1), 7+. <http://dx.doi.org/10.7710/1093-7374.1103>

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OLA Quarterly is an official publication of the Oregon Library Association | ISSN 1093-7374

State Library Launches Virtual Documents Repository

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This year will see the introduction of a major step forward in the distribution of state documents from the Oregon State Library. The Library, working with state agencies and libraries around the state, is establishing a virtual repository of state publications. All state agencies will submit electronic copies of their publications (much as they submit paper copies for distribution through the depository system). These electronic copies will be permanently mounted on a server and made accessible through the State Library's online catalog. While many states have established some framework for dealing with electronic documents, the Oregon model is unique in its scope.

Two factors help facilitate this model: the use of a centralized content management system, and the recent passage of HB2118, which updated the depository program. Oregon government has been using TeamSite software to create and manage its Web presence for the past two years. Most agencies have moved their online content into this system, which provides a common look and feel for Oregon.gov, the state government Web portal. The use of a common, centralized system also allows agencies to easily identify the type of content they place in the system. By using a simple metatag, agencies can clearly mark each publication they place on the Web. The Library can then harvest those documents on a regular basis for cataloging and inclusion on the repository server.

The legislation which established this program, HB2118, was passed in April and signed by the governor in May. This bill modifies the print depository program, reducing the number of copies required of each publication. It also mandates that all publications be sent to the State Library in electronic form for inclusion in the repository. This legislation was the result of stakeholder meetings with depository libraries and state agency staff. These meetings helped the State Library understand the best ways to approach electronic

archiving and to work with the legislature in crafting effective legislation.

After the passage of HB2118, State Library staff met again with depository librarians to discuss the most effective ways to implement the changes to the depository program. We also met with interested state agency personnel to discuss the new electronic archiving requirement and its impact on agencies and the Library. The results of these meetings were modifications of the Oregon Administrative Rules relating to the depository program (OAR 543.070). These modifications include a reduced list of depository libraries, updated requirements for depository libraries, and a clear definition of what constitutes a publication that must be archived in the virtual repository.

Working with EDS, the contractor that maintains TeamSite for the state, State Library staff have developed a working model to manage these publications. As new materials are published on the Web, they will move into a special area for library staff to process. Catalogers will analyze each document to verify that it needs to be included, then catalog it. After they are cataloged, the documents will be moved to their permanent home on the library server.

The State Library will make records for these documents (including a link to the permanent location) available to all libraries in the state, allowing every library to serve as a "virtual depository" if they choose. This local accessibility, combined with access through the State Library catalog and a plan to include the repository in the Oregon.gov search engine, greatly increases citizen access to the work and information of their government. Another significant benefit of the repository is the capture of electronic-only publications. Without such a system, these documents might not have been collected, leaving gaps in the State Library's thorough collection of state publication.


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Park and recreation plans. Nearly every jurisdiction has a parks master plan, and often adds specific plans for individual parks or activities.

This is not a complete list, but represents the categories of high interest to UO programs and, we believe, to many Oregonians. We are interested in working together with partners in the State to identify valuable documents, and to coordinate our efforts with other activities, in order to create a lasting archive of public information for both current and historical research. Contact the author at tstave@uoregon.edu to discuss ideas for collaboration.

The collection owes its historical depth to the legacy of the reports of the UO's now-defunct Bureau of Governmental Research and Service (BGRS); and to the largesse of libraries throughout Oregon who, when pondering their old local documents, thought of us as they did little Mikey in the old Life cereal commercial: "Give it to Mikey—he'll eat anything!" 

References

Jenkins, B., Breakstone, E. and Hixson, C., no date. Content In, Content Out: The Dual Roles of the Reference Librarian in Institutional Repositories. (In press) <https://scholarsbank.uoregon.edu/dspace/handle/1794/704>

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The beta test model of the repository will go into effect in February 2006. State Library staff will continue to work with libraries and agencies to ensure that the system works effectively and provides the services that each partner needs. This ongoing conversation has been critical to the success of the project so far and will continue to be. The repository will go live in July 2006. 