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Table of Contents

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rebudge@jcls.org

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Coos Bay Public Library, 541-269-7307

cventgen@mail.coos.or.us

State Librarian • Jim Schepcke

Oregon State Library, 503-378-4367

jim.b.schepcke@state.or.us

Academic Library Division • Janet Webster

Guin Library, Hatfield Marine Science Center

541-867-0249

websterj@ccmail.orst.edu

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West Linn Public Library

503-656-7857

steven@westlinn.lib.or.us

Public Library Division • Aletha Bonebrake

Baker County Public Library, 541-523-6419

alethab@oregontrail.net

Trustees and Friends Division • Anne Carter

541-686-2558

atecarter@aol.com

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503-845-3361

paulah@mtangel.edu

OLA QUARTERLY

Government Information: Past, Present and Future

The Documents Interest Group of Oregon (DIGOR) began in 1981 as an independent organization of individuals having a professional interest in government documents. At that time, the alternative format of most concern was microfiche, which the Government Printing Office had begun to use for distributing an increasing portion of federal depository documents. Few libraries even had online catalogs, and the most technologically advanced device on most librarians' desks was an electronic typewriter.

Much has changed since then in the world at large and in libraries particularly. The technological revolution created by waves of innovation in computer and telecommunications technologies has forever changed our society, especially in the ways we create, access, and use information. Today, the new formats of most concern are the various electronic file formats accessed via the Internet. Most of us spend a good portion of our workday using a personal computer, and we communicate with our colleagues more via electronic mail than by postal mail or telephone. Yet many of the issues that were of concern in that earlier era of government information librarianship (even the terminology has changed somewhat) are important still: attempts to privatize government information, budget cuts, fugitive documents, resource sharing among libraries and librarians . . . the list goes on. Against the backdrop of ever-increasing technological change, the fundamental tenet of our specialty has remained: Citizen access to information by and about the government is of vital importance to a representative democracy.

As chair and vice-chair of DIGOR in this first year of its official affiliation with OLA, we are pleased to serve as editors of this special issue: *Government Information: Past, Present and Future*. We are especially honored to have our lead article contributed by the superintendent of documents, Francis J. Buckley, Jr. We hope that these articles will give you new and valuable perspectives on our rapidly changing field.

Ted D. Smith, University of Oregon
Arlene Weible, Willamette University
Guest Editors

2

Into the Next Century:
GPO Continues to Facilitate Public
Access to Federal Government
Information

Francis J. Buckley, Jr.

5

The Growth and Development
of the Federal Depository Library
Program in Oregon

Gwen Newborg

7

Government Documents Cataloging
in Oregon: the State of the State

Dena Holiman Hutto

11

Oregon Document Programs at the
State Library

*A History of the Oregon Documents
Depository Program*

Deanna Iltis and Jey Wann

15

OSU's Government Information
Sharing Project: Future Directions

Carolyn Ottow

17

From "Govdocs" to Cyberspace:
the Transformation of
Government Information

Ted D. Smith

20

Government Information on the
Internet: the Tip of the Iceberg

Arlene Weible

The *OLA Quarterly* is an official publication of the Oregon Library Association. Please refer questions and input regarding the quarterly to:

Anne Billeter
OLA Publications Chair
Jackson County Library
413 W Main Street
Medford, OR 97501
phone 541-776-7285
fax 541-776-7295
billeter@jcls.org

Graphic Production:
Sanda Communications
800 NW Staker Ave., Suite 15
Corvallis, OR 97330
phone 541-752-7080
fax 541-752-2415
olaq@sanclacom.com

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