Breakout Session by Library Type—2005 Spring DLC

APRIL 18, 2005   1:30 PM   ALVARDO B

TOPIC	**Future Tangible Distribution to Depositories**
LIBRARY TYPE	**Small Academic Libraries**
MODERATOR: **T.C. EVANS** **NOTE TAKERS:** **LARRY BLEVINS &** **SALLY LAWLER** **DISCUSSION**	Users of depository libraries have differing needs for tangible documents. - What is unique about your library's users and how do those characteristics create a requirement for the use of tangible distribution? - What information needs do tangible documents meet for your users that are not met through electronic information? Answers: The following library users of small academic libraries create unique needs for tangible materials: - Florida retirees attending courses don't find e-documents comfortable to use; they prefer tangible products. - Some small rural academic libraries don't have the technology to handle electronic formats. - Engineering schools need soil surveys and USGS products that are only produced in tangible formats. - Some courses do not lend themselves to online documents. - Students are pressed for time and many will not take time to learn how to use a specific online tool if it isn't readily apparent or intuitive and help manuals can be overwhelming. - Browse ability difficulties with online documents hinder users. - Given a choice, a patron in small academic libraries will ask for the tangible product. Statistical Abstract of the United States is a prime example. - Sometimes electronic products are not as well constructed as one might think. For instance, using a Table of Contents and you jump to the page and it isn't what you think it is. - The lack of color printers in small academic libraries causes students to miss the meaning of colored graphs and charts in electronic products. GPO is transferring printing costs to libraries in expecting libraries to be the printers of electronic products. - Some faculties are not comfortable with electronic sources and ask students to use tangible ones because

electronic sources don't stay put for tracking source documentation.
- Maps are not preferred electronically despite the National Digital Map updated instantly because geologists want tangible maps and multiple versions of the map which cannot be found electronically.
- The length of the document often determines if users want it in tangible format.
- Students of popular culture want to research posters and brochures, etc. These usually aren't digitized and they want to use them in tangible format.

Under ID 71, GPO policy is to continue tangible distribution of essential titles as long as the publishing agency publishes in tangible form. GPO will also continue tangible distribution for those titles for which there are no useable/useful electronic equivalents. GPO will apply the criteria of ID 71 to determine how to best provide other information products by assessing:

(a) How the product will be used.

(b) The specific characteristics of the online and/or tangible product.

(c) Issues relating to permanent public access.

(d) The cost of providing the material.

- Do you concur with these criteria?

- Are there additional criteria that GPO should consider?

Answer: The groups concurred that how a product is used should determine if it is produced in tangible or electronic format. There was an exception to allow for the continued printing of maps
Mr. Evans asked if there were any other criteria to consider.

- Tracking cost and user counts was easy with tangible products; electronic products are problematic for small academic libraries. You can track hits but what does this tell you?
- Mr. Evans said GPO intends to have a performance measurement specialists and hopes to help libraries with this problem.
- The length of the document is important.
- Humanities documents, yearbooks and monographs in general seem to be important criteria.
- In discussing the cost of the material, the cost to GPO

versus the cost to the depository library community should be broken out. For instance, PDFs require large memory and time to print out and that cost should be considered.
- Consider what specialized expertise might be required to provide service to these electronic documents, since that is a factor in producing a tangible or electronic document.
- Social costs of doing government documents business is rising and that should be considered.
- Older materials and ephemeral materials are at risk for permanent public access. Historical materials are creating space and preservation problems.

3. Approximately 60% of depository libraries participated in the most recent Essential Titles Survey. While many sample surveys would consider this an excellent response rate, the purpose of this survey was to determine if a clear set of additional titles could be identified as essential for the various types of depository libraries.

- How can we most effectively use the survey results to make meaningful decisions?

- Do you concur with the recommendations put forth this morning by the Depository Library Council?

- Are there other steps that GPO and the community should take?

Answer: The group could not agree on how to use the survey. The survey proved that depository libraries could not be put in a box because a "Unique Construct" underlies each type of library. They felt if a national standard was placed on everybody, that local decision-making would be better. Mr. Evans explained that Print On Demand was useful to fulfilling local needs. Other points included:
- The small academic librarians thought the survey was difficult to complete.
- GPO needs more specific institutional information on large, small, doctoral, undergraduate programs in different academic libraries before making conclusions.
- The group indicated that the tabulation of survey results was unclear to them.

Question: Do you concur with the recommendations put forth this morning by the Depository Library Council? Are there other steps that GPO and the community should take?

Answer:

- They recommended that more work needs to be done.
- They thought limiting the survey to an arbitrary number of titles was a mistake because there wasn't enough choice.
- Most said they made their decisions in the best interests of their institutions, not by their library type.
- Many said that they made their decisions based upon the belief that the Regional depository would receive the main titles and they felt free to select esoteric titles.
- Assess what libraries need from one area of the country to another. Blend national needs with local requirements.
- Focus more on public libraries and their contribution to the FDLP.