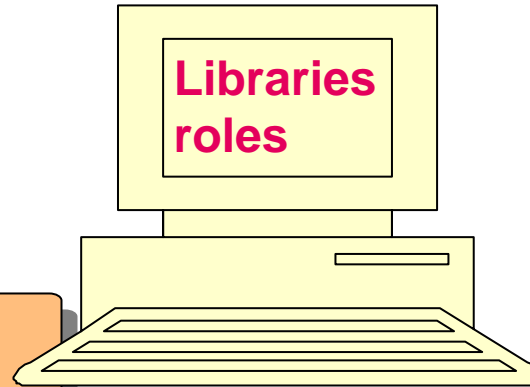


Trials, Tribulations, and Triumph of Transitioning Depository Collections: From Surviving to Thriving



**Balancing print
and digital
collections**

**Collaborative
efforts**

Atifa Rawan
University of Arizona Libraries
GPO Depository Conference
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Definition of a Virtual Depository

A virtual depository is a library officially designated by the Government Printing Office as a recipient and general public access point for federal government publications. While it meets all requirements for libraries in the Federal Depository Library Program, it places special emphasis on government publications accessible electronically.



Characteristics of Virtual Depository Libraries

- To develop, maintain, and provide access to electronic Government publications.
- The scope of the virtual collection includes different types of electronic documents such as the “FDLP Electronic Collection” or “EC”, “born digital” and even “fugitive” documents. We need to create access paths for them.
- Key services include:
 - Access
 - Reference Help/Expert Assistance
 - Support levels from Library Administration and Library staff
 - Balancing digital and print collections



A VISION STATEMENT FOR FEDERAL DEPOSITORY LIBRARIES IN THE 21ST CENTURY

These and other discussions identified the following opportunities and challenges posed by this rich information environment:

- Customer focus
- Managing collections and delivering content
- Deploying expertise
- Education
- Increasing flexibility
- Adding value
- Promotion (Marketing)
- Collaboration
- Innovation
- Advocacy
- Current law (Title 44)



University of Arizona as a Virtual Depository: An Overview

- The University of Arizona Library, in partnership with the University Of Arizona School Of Information Resources and Library Science (SIRLS) and the GPO, worked on a one-year pilot project (9/2002-9/2003) to transform the library's existing depository collection into an all-electronic depository.
- The UA Library is a selective depository library. The project sought to assess the depository users.
- The idea for the pilot arose out of discussions at the fall 2001 meeting of the Depository Library Council to the Public Printer
- The goal of the pilot project was to assess the implications of selecting government information resources within the depository profile only in electronic form, which had not been previously permitted by GPO.
- Our ultimate goal is to transform the University of Arizona's Library's existing depository collection into an all-electronic depository





Pilot Project Activities

Activities included:

**Create Project
Team**

**Selection &
Modification**

**Identify
Electronic (EL)
Docs**

**Needs
Assessment**

**Outcomes/
Learnings**

**Recommend/
Commend**



After completing the pilot, we fully supported the implementation of a virtual depository for our Library starting 9/1/03.

- Our decision was based on input from our customers, their pattern of use and level of satisfaction, our Library's collection development policy, and the GPO's visions and directions.
- In order to move ahead with this implementation, we revised our collection development and our depository profile to reflect our mission and vision.
- The pilot served an important purpose for the University of Arizona Library and provided the feasibility to transition to a virtual depository collection.



Why Virtual?

University of Arizona's Perspective



**The Pilot supported our Library's strategic goals
Access goals as a driver**



Government Information in e-format as a driver

- The proliferation of government resources on the internet has forced to become more integrated with the larger library community.
- We provide wider and convenient access to information from multiple perspectives and sources in formats that match customer needs.
- A guiding principle is that users should be able to access information self-sufficiently from any place at any time and fully support the goals of the depository libraries in the 21st century



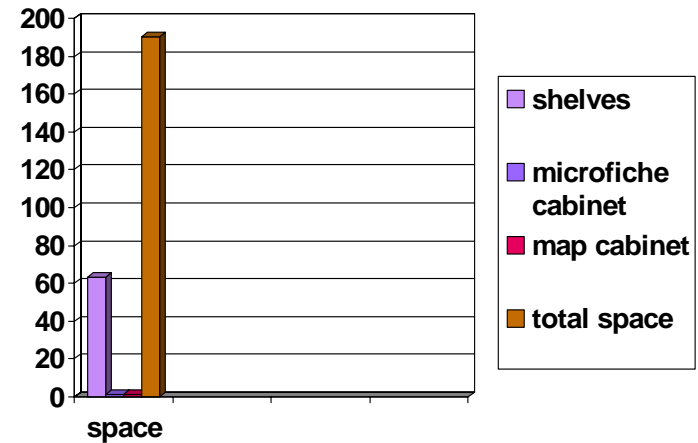
Space as driver

- Shelving space is a major concern at the University of Arizona Library. Reduced budgets will make interim collection space options through compact storage difficult to achieve.

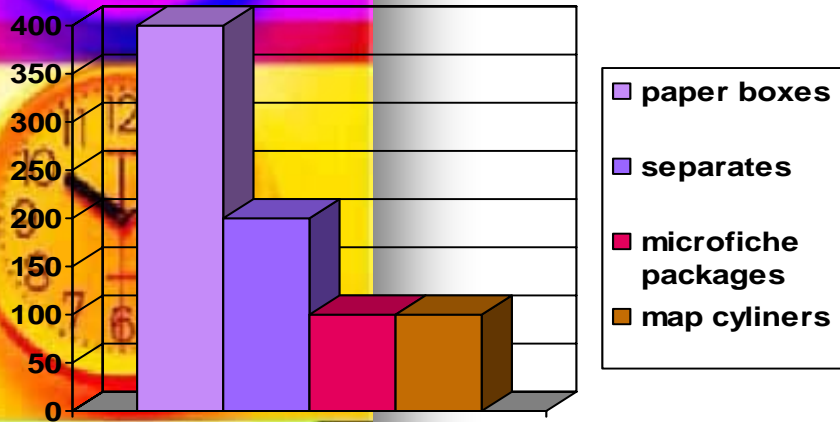
Savings during Pilot

The Library's space savings include:

- approx. 190 linear feet of shelving space or 63 shelves
- one microfiche cabinet drawer
- at least one map cabinet



Staff Time Saved during Pilot



We saved staff time by not processing and shelving 400 boxes of paper, 200 separates (individual paper titles), 100 packages of microfiche, and 100 cylinders of maps. This freed up staff and students to perform other tasks in the Library. The items processing time has been cut to 10% by technical processing staff.



Exceptions to the Electronic-only Profile

2002/03	-	25 exception titles
2003/04	-	23 exception titles

- Exception list currently includes only 3 titles
- We are processing about 10-15 tangible titles per month
- The Library elected to receive selected maps and datasets in their original tangible format



Planning and Surviving: Consideration for Transition

- The decision to become a virtual library is not one that should be made in a vacuum. It needs the support of the library and your administrators.
- Working with your Regional library will help to make sure that you are complying with all legal requirements and GPO guidelines, as well as a state plan (if one is in place).
- Becoming a virtual depository is not something that can happen overnight. Allow adequate time to consider all of the implications of your decisions.
- Clearly the transition to virtual depository status required continued monitoring, staff commitment and assessment to ensure that the library's staff and customers were benefited rather than disserved by the decision. But equally clear, in the case of the UA Library, was the feasibility of moving forward with the transition.





Planning and Surviving: Consideration for Transition

- Determine how online publications will be accessed by your users (in house and/or remotely).
- Determine which format is appropriate to your users. Perhaps your patrons frequently access electronic items from the library's virtual collection after business hours. Determine what support your reference librarians need if they are offering "Ask A.." services.
- Conduct a needs assessment- analyze formats, subjects, and trends in usage of the collection
- Check with libraries who have gone through the process.
- Selection responsibility could be a shared responsibility of all public service librarians, not just the documents librarian.


Planning and Surviving - Continued

- Cooperative collection development and interlibrary loan can also provide access within a local area to rarely used items. The Documents Data Miner, a State Plan, or consortia can assist with these activities.
- Be ready for change! Remember that unlike tangible documents that are received, shelved, and remain static and predictable, your collection now will be an “organic” one. Embrace change and use a positive attitude to help your users and stakeholders accept change.
- Start initially with a pilot or a small virtual collection





Issues/challenges to Consider

- The question for most government documents librarians and their directors, however, is not whether to stay in the program. The real question is how to ensure that the program is increasing more toward providing better access to greater online dissemination that serves libraries and their users' expectations well.
 - The continuation of the Federal Depository Library Program's historic information dissemination, access, and preservation roles are now dependent upon collaborative efforts between GPO and other libraries.
 - Because in some cases the EL and the Tangible materials have the same item number, the cataloging records often do not reflect the accurate item formats.
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Issues/challenges to Consider

- The role of GPO as an aggregator for federal information and our roles as facilitators in the federal information dissemination process rather than as repositories of printed government publications.
- The traditional library role of facilitator for no fee public access to federal information remains the key issue.
- The role of libraries in virtual environment is to focus on marketing and training the use of government information services. Libraries in a virtual environment have a great role in facilitating access and delivery of government information.

Thriving and Opportunities

- The UA Library building and services are open 24/7
- Access to government resources available remotely to global users
- More staff assisting customers
- More computers and services such as virtual and real-time reference services
- Documents are fully integrated and are integral part of the library's services
- Freeing library staff to pursue endeavors other than processing and shelving government documents, allow staff to do other creative and innovative activities
- Physical space is utilized more effectively



As a Virtual Depository we are committed

According to the University of Arizona Library mission, access to information is a guiding principle. We provide integrated and easy access to information from multiple perspectives and sources in formats that match customer needs. We are committed to:

- To continue our systematic and consistent procedures for identifying fugitive electronic publications and bringing them into the FDLP
- To continue to provide fuller access for those who rely on the Library's online catalog to find and to locate government information
- To continue our partnership and collaboration with GPO and the State Library
- To continue to promote instruction and information literacy for government publications and market our virtual depository collection
- To closely monitor customers' needs and responses.



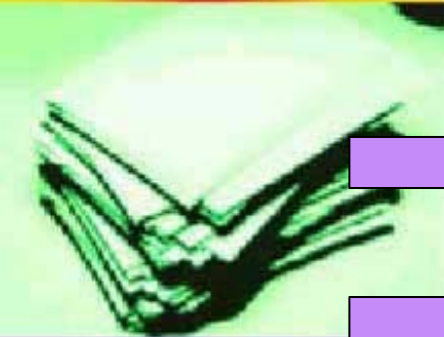
UA Library Collaborative Efforts



Collaborate with other units of the library and on campus



Close collaboration with regional and other institutions to ensure that access to both tangible and electronic resources is maintained in the region



Other depositories in the region

FDLP and GPO





Balancing Print and Digital Collections

We maintain a current collection development policy. Our percentage of selected documents may change annually due to decisions to add or deselect categories based on the following factors:

- Availability of online resources
- The changing nature of the library's mission and programs
- Historical research purposes
- Availability of information in other sources and formats
- Geographic area covered by the material
- User interest and expectations

Balancing Print and Digital Collections

- We will continue to purchase commercial equivalents of depository items to support our collection
- We anticipate adding fewer tangible materials on our shelves and will continue to replace tangible materials as they become available electronically
- We rely on GPO, NARA and other agencies and organizations to operate as archives and we do not currently plan to do a lot of preservation activity





- Our challenge is to continue to move forward and to seek new and innovative ways to provide services to users of government information. We will continue to work on these challenges:
 - The challenge of selecting
 - The challenge of system infrastructure
 - The challenge of access and metadata management



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