

THE COMMUNICATION HABITS OF REGIONAL DOCUMENTS LIBRARIANS:
AN EXPLORATORY STUDY

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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

In any field, the importance of communication in order to enhance professional knowledge cannot be denied. The need for information sharing is especially great in fields such as government documents librarianship, where members are spread out all over the United States. The introduction of email and listservs has made it much easier to share information, whether it be between two people or an entire listserv community.

Government documents librarians are responsible for material available to all of us as United States citizens. Communication, both with the Government Printing Office and other government documents librarians, is extremely important in ensuring the integrity of the collection. In some cases, a documents librarian is the only one for miles around. If the librarian has questions, about storage, missing or duplicate documents, depository procedures, etcetera, who does this person turn to? The most logical answer, especially for selective depository librarians, would be to turn to the closest regional depository. But where do regional librarians turn if they have a question?

There are two different designations of government document depositories: regional and selective. Depositories classified as regional are supposed to receive and store forever all of the documents designated as depository items by the Government Printing Office (GPO). Depositories classified as selective choose only a percentage of the documents designated for depository use and are allowed to discard certain materials

after five years. The two types of depositories have different issues to deal with, storage of documents being just one example. For the purpose of this research, documents librarians in the fifty-three regional depositories were surveyed.

Most of the communication between or among documents librarians is informal, in that it is one-on-one, and there is no sense of superiority of one person over another. Librarians subscribe to listservs (GOVDOC-L, open to everyone, and REGIONAL-L, limited to librarians in regional depositories, are two for government documents librarians), talk to each other on the telephone, visit each other in their places of work, and see and talk to each other at conferences. What is not known is who government documents librarians talk to, how often, what method of communication they use most frequently, and why are they in contact with their peers. Do government documents librarians in regional depositories talk only to other regional librarians, or do they also have frequent contact with those government documents librarians in selective depositories? Is there much interaction between regional and the selective government documents librarians? Does communication depend on location (i.e., are librarians more likely to contact one another if they are in the same region)? What method of communication do they rely on to learn about current issues in the field?

The advent of the Internet and, more specifically, email, has made professional communication much easier and faster in the past five years. The question is, how many professional librarians are using this tool to contact one another, and how many, if any, are still relying on such methods as the telephone and US Mail?

Chapter 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

Much of the recent literature on communication has dealt with the impact of email and listservs on professional development and maintenance. This survey is somewhat unique in that it was undertaken with the hypothesis that librarians are using the Internet much more than they were in previous years. Many similar studies were asking how often they used Internet-related communication and if the introduction of these new technologies had changed their habits. Most of the literature specifically on communication in the library field has focused on academic reference librarians, although there have been several articles that detail communication among documents librarians. There has also been much written on communication among librarians in the same organization. The introduction of electronic communication has led to more research being done on communication across boundaries and its effect on professional relationships.

In a study somewhat similar to this one, Whitehall, Durbidge and Meadows (1989) detail their survey of British library practitioners. They were curious as to the “type of communication activity in which librarians find themselves involved – with whom they communicate, by what channels and how frequently.”¹ Their sample of population came from national, academic, public and special libraries all over the UK, and was not limited to those with a library degree because many librarians who were

practicing at the time of the survey “were recruited before degrees became a customary

² They also make a distinction between communication in and out of the workplace. The authors found that when LIS practitioners seek advice, much of the communication is “face-to-face, through the telephone is often used in large or decentralized institutions. Discussions with external contacts most frequently employ the telephone, but an increasing interest is being shown in newer methods, such as electronic mail or fax.”³ Another important finding is that librarians usually communicate with librarians in their own group (i.e., academic with academic, public with public). This survey was distributed before the explosion of the Internet, and so the authors focus on communication through workshops, conferences, etcetera. More than likely the authors would receive very different results if the survey was conducted today.

Ann Roselle (1999) surveyed government documents librarians in academic libraries about their Internet-related work activities. She was looking to find out how, specifically, the Internet had affected “professional relationships...of academic reference

⁴ Roselle found that librarians overwhelmingly were developing closer ties with documents librarians at other institutions because of the Internet, and also that some new relationships were being formed. She also discovered that some respondents “believed that they were developing closer ties than they otherwise would with government representatives as a result of Internet-related technology,” which is interesting, considering that respondents were contacting GPO, government agencies, and other government organizations less frequently than they were contacting other government documents librarians and other library units.⁵ The background

characteristics of respondents and the institutional characteristics of their workplace were generally not found to be statistically significant.

Allen (1991) explains the various types, channels, and patterns of communication among physicists and other scientists, as well as the changes these patterns are undergoing as a result of new technologies. He discusses oral vs. written communication, informal vs. formal, and, most importantly, discusses ways of measuring the different forms, before commenting on how electronic communication overlaps and replaces other forms of communication. Email is discussed as being a very dynamic tool: information can be transferred “on a one to one basis, [resulting in an exchange which] can resemble informal oral, informal written and telephone communication,” or it can be used to transfer information from one to many, where “the dynamics become less personal, though exclusivity is maintained by using a select list of receivers of information.”⁶ According to Allen, it seems as though the types of communication, informal or formal, will not change, they will just be transferred to different mediums. Scientists will still need to enforce the traditional rules of scientific communication, and should choose the channels for communicating research results in adherence to these rules.

In an article written before the mainstreaming of email and the Internet, Bunge (1982) surveyed reference librarians as to how they kept up-to-date on reference materials and techniques. He discovered that professional reading was given as the number one answer for learning about new reference materials and techniques, but found that staff meetings and “staff sharing,” or asking questions of a fellow reference librarian also rated high. The survey reveals that, among reference librarians, attending conferences is given as one of the primary strategies for updating professional

knowledge. Two-thirds of the respondents reported that they “used conferences, workshops, and other meetings outside their libraries for updating their reference knowledge and skills.” He did distinguish between in-house and outside communication, noting that reference staff meetings are the most frequently used strategies for updating knowledge and skills, after professional reading.

Kovacs (1990) also addresses electronic communication. She discusses GOVDOC-L, the discussion list created primarily for government documents librarians and others interested in government information issues. Kovacs explains how, to documents librarians, “time is critical in having the opportunity to voice concerns about congressional legislation and federal agency decisions about government information issues.” This was the impetus for the establishment of the GOVDOC-L listserv by the author and Michael Kovacs. The authors describes the origins of the discussion list, the purpose of it, and breaks down the subscribers by geographic location. Kovacs then goes on to discuss the future of discussion lists and their impact on the profession of librarianship. This article was published in 1990 and no follow-up studies have been published since, so that we do not know how, specifically, the listserv is used today, and if it is still used as a viable communication channel for documents librarians.

Kovacs, Robinson, and Dixon (1995) studied the impact that e-conferences have begun to have on the information seeking and sharing behavior of library and information science professionals. (E-conference is the authors’ term for discussion lists, or listservs). They found that scholars in the field of Library and Information Science seem to be using e-conferences as a source of professional and research information, both for their personal use and to provide service to patrons. Some respondents found that e-

conferences replaced some of the established sources, while others felt that e-conferences enhanced the value of traditional information sources such as professional journals and physical conferences. At the time of their research, most e-conference participants were affiliated with academic institutions, but there were indications that public and special librarians were beginning to establish their own e-conferences.

Much of the research lately has focused on electronic communication, and how it has affected librarians' relationships with one another. Neufeld (1994) surveyed librarians and information professionals from academic, public, and special libraries as to their use of the Internet and the benefits of electronic communication among librarians. He found that almost all of his respondents, from various types of libraries, used email daily. This study did not have a high response rate, with only 20% of surveys being returned. The majority of those who did return the survey felt that email broadened awareness of professional issues. In fact, those who did respond were more likely to be involved in professional organizations and communicated more frequently with a greater number of people. Neufeld finally concludes that email brings the library community together.

Cromer and Johnson (1994) surveyed reference librarians about their communication habits, in a questionnaire which was distributed via LIBREF-L. The purpose of the survey was to determine how reference librarians felt about the importance of communicating with each other about professional issues, how they are doing this, and how much time is spent on all professional maintenance activities. The authors found that reference librarians turn to discussion lists "in order to reduce their isolation, find out how other libraries do things, keep on top of issues and developments, and review

announcements and job ads.”⁷ Their assertion that “The importance of communication among reference librarians—the sharing of techniques, ideas, and resources, old and new—cannot be denied”⁸ is an important one, and is equally applicable to government documents librarians. Among their findings is the discovery that 29% of librarians surveyed on LIBREF-L believe that the listserv is very important and 65% say that it is important for development as a reference librarian. One reason given is “Listserves are my primary professional development tool. I don’t have funds or time to run off to conferences...”⁹

Ladner and Tillman (1992) surveyed special librarians about their use of the Internet. Respondents were primarily from the United States, but some were from Canada, Argentina, and The Netherlands. The authors found that the principal use of the Internet is for electronic mail, and the most common reason respondents gave for using the Internet is “to communicate with colleagues and friends, and the value of this activity was stressed over and over again.”¹⁰ Indeed, the authors note that:

Many respondents reported that access to the Internet reduces geographical distance, feelings of isolation from colleagues, and instills a sense of collegiality and connectedness with other library professionals.¹¹

They found that Internet technologies such as discussion lists and email have created a “global community that is more democratic and less hierarchical than conventional

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Barlow and Graham (1999) report on the use of information and communication technologies in industrial and commercial libraries, in an update of Furness and Graham’s 1994 study. Barlow and Graham found that 96% of respondents used computers for some aspect of their library and information services. They also found that

91% of respondents used various Internet facilities such as email, the World Wide Web, Telnet, and FTP, with 86% using the Web and 71% of respondents using it daily, and 77% using email. It is impossible to compare the two studies in terms of use of Internet facilities, because the 1994 study did not ask questions about that. However, the 1999 study indicated that the use of information and communication technologies in the industrial and commercial sector is increasing and responding to changes in technology, as the researchers expected.

Chapter 3

METHODOLOGY

This research is attempting to determine *who* documents librarians are talking to and what methods they are using to keep in contact with one another. Questions were asked about preferences, about typical behavior and about behavior in the past week. Respondents were asked to refrain from writing their name or that of their workplace on the questionnaire, so that all issues of confidentiality would be addressed.

The population studied was restricted to the federal documents librarians at the fifty-three regional depositories in the United States Depository Library Program. The decision was made to survey only regional depository librarians for several reasons. One, regional librarians have separate issues and responsibilities than selective depository librarians. Two, this is a reasonable population to survey in its entirety and if significant results are found, similar research can be performed on a sample of selective librarians.

An anonymous questionnaire was selected by the researcher as the appropriate method to gather data about professional communication activities (See Appendix B). A list of names and addresses of all fifty-three libraries was obtained from the Government Printing Office, and the survey was mailed to those contacts in mid-November.¹³ Six weeks after the initial mailing analysis of results began. Included in the survey were questions about behavior as well as preferences. Librarians were asked how often they are in contact with other documents librarians in regional and selective depositories in

and out of their region, and what method(s) of communication is used. They were then asked about behavior in the past week – if they were in contact with documents librarians in other regionals, in selectives in their region, and in selectives outside of their region, what method(s) of communication were used, and the reason for the communication. Questions about conference attendance, listserv subscriptions, professional reading, and communication with the Government Printing Office were also asked.

Prior to the mass distribution of the survey, a draft was shown to several practicing government documents librarians in different areas of the country. Their suggestions were taken into consideration and in most cases the questionnaire was amended.

This research is attempting to find out how much communication there is among documents librarians in regional depositories, how much communication regional documents librarians have with documents librarians in selective depositories, and most importantly, what methods of communication are being used. Questions were not asked about typical or common reasons for communication with other regionals, selectives in the same region, and selectives in a different region.

The survey results were tabulated both manually and using SPSS for Windows, Release 9.0. Responses that listed *other* were coded manually, as were requests to list reasons for communication with other documents librarians, reasons for contact with the Government Printing Office, and reasons for the usefulness of particular professional journals, listservs, and conferences.

In certain questions librarians were asked to identify reasons why they found a particular journal, conference, or listserv most or least useful. In most cases, instead of

listing individual responses, the researcher chose to group these responses into broader subject areas.

Chapter 4

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Of the fifty-three surveys distributed, forty-three were returned, resulting in a return rate of 81%. In order to ensure the anonymity of the respondents, no distinguishing characters were marked on the questionnaires and respondents were asked to refrain from identifying themselves or their libraries; this made it impossible to send a second mailing to non-respondents.

Respondents were not asked about demographic information such as sex and age, although they were asked about the type of library in which they work, as well as how long they have been employed as a documents librarian in a regional depository. Respondents were not asked how long they had been employed as a government documents librarian specifically because of the difference between selective and regional depositories.

Survey questions have been grouped into several broad categories: *Background of Respondents*, which includes the type of library in which respondents are employed, the number of years respondents have spent as government documents librarians in regional depositories, whether or not the government documents department is separate from other departments, and the number of professional and paraprofessional government documents staff; *Professional Activities*, which includes conference attendance, journal reading, and discussion list subscriptions; *Regional Functions*, which includes whether or

not the respondent's department has a web page, whether or not a listserv exists for the state depositories, how often respondents make site visits to selectives, and how respondents help their selectives prepare for inspections; *Contact with Other Regionals; Contact with Selectives in the Same Region, Contact with Selectives in a Different Region; Contact with GPO; and Methods of Communication Utilized.*

Background of Respondents

Table 1 – Response Rates by Library Type

Type of Library	# of Questionnaires Mailed	# of Questionnaires Returned	Response Rate
Public Library	5	3	60%
Academic Library	33	28	84.8%
State Library	15	12	80%
Total	53	43	81%

Of the 53 regional depositories, 5 are public libraries, 33 are academic libraries, and 15 are state libraries. 43 surveys were returned, 3 (7%) from librarians in public libraries, 28 (65.1%) from academic librarians, and 12 (27.9%) from state librarians.

Number of Years as a Regional Documents Librarian

The respondents averaged 13.73 years of experience as regional documents librarians, with three giving no answer. The respondent with the least amount of experience as a regional librarian had been in the position for ten weeks, while the most experienced had been a regional librarian for thirty-two years. Those respondents employed in public libraries (n=3) averaged 5.5 years of experience, while those respondents employed in state libraries (n=12) averaged 13.6 years of experience, and those employed in academic libraries (n=28) averaged 14 years of experience.

Separate Department

When asked about the location of their department within the library, 23 of 43 respondents (53.5%) reported that the government documents department is separate. 19 of 43 (44.2%) reported that the government documents department is part of another department. 1 (2.3%) did not answer the question.

Of those 19 who are part of other departments, 5 (26.3 %) say that they are a part of the Reference Department and 5 (26.3 %) operations are completely decentralized and spread out over the entire library operation. Other departments include Information Services (2), Social Science Services, Law, Research Services, Business (2), General Services, and Reference/Cataloging.

Number of Government Documents Professionals and Paraprofessionals

Respondents were asked about the number of professional and paraprofessional government documents staff in their library, in an attempt to gauge the amount of in-house communication opportunities they could potentially have. The average number of government documents professionals per library was 1.71, with the modal response being 1 (16 respondents gave this answer). The highest number of professionals given was 9, with 1 being the lowest. The average number of paraprofessionals who work with government documents was 3.05, with the modal response being 2 (12 respondents gave this answer). The highest number of paraprofessionals given was 9, and the lowest number given was 0. Some departments are not separate from other library departments and so there are professionals and paraprofessionals who do not specialize.

Professional Activities

Professional Reading

37 of 43 (86%) read at least one professional journal regularly. Five respondents did not answer, and the one respondent who did give a reason for not reading any journals explained that they had “No time!” to read them.

The most commonly read journal is *Documents to the People (DttP)*, where 32 of 43 respondents (74.4%) say that they read it regularly. 22 of 43 (51.2%) say that they read *Government Information Quarterly (GIQ)* regularly, and 28 of 43 (65.1%) say that they read the *Journal of Government Information (JGI)* regularly. 18 of 43 respondents (41.9%) read all three regularly (9 checked all three, 9 checked all three plus other). In addition, 27 respondents listed other professional journals that they read regularly. Those journals are listed in Table 2.

Table 2 – “Other” Journals Listed by Respondents

Other Journals	N=
<i>American Libraries</i>	6
<i>State/Local Newsletters</i>	4
<i>Library Journal</i>	3
<i>Administrative Notes</i>	2
<i>Admin. Notes Tech. Supplement</i>	1
<i>Baseline</i>	1
<i>C&RL News</i>	1
<i>Chronicle of Higher Education</i>	1
<i>College and Research Libraries</i>	1
<i>CQ Weekly Reports</i>	1
<i>Government Tech.</i>	1
<i>Information Outlook</i>	1
<i>Library Hotline</i>	1
<i>Meridian</i>	1
<i>Public Libraries</i>	1
<i>Web Tech Notes</i>	1

When asked which journal they found most useful, ten said *DttP*, nine did not answer the question, and six responded that all of the publications they read are equally useful. Five responded that *GIQ* is the most useful, and several respondents said that two or three journals were the most useful. Two respondents found *Administrative Notes* to be the most useful publication that they read, and two other respondents found a combination of *GIQ* and *JGI* to be most useful.

Eight respondents gave no reason, in addition to the 9 who gave no answer and the 6 who deemed all journals equally useful. There were various reasons as to why certain journals were more useful than others. Seven respondents preferred relevant or practical journals, four preferred journals that contained articles on current issues, policies, and/or problems, and two preferred more scholarly journals. One respondent, from an academic library, gave this interesting answer to the question: “Actually, I get most information of use via listservs, but for research I like *GIQ*.”

When asked which journal they found *least* useful, nineteen respondents did not give an answer. Again, *DttP* topped the list, with eight people responding that the journal is the least useful of all that they read. This was followed by the combination of *GIQ* and *JGI*, which five respondents felt were less useful than other journals. Two respondents asserted that all of the journals were equally useful, and two others found *JGI* least useful. *GIQ* and “all but *DttP*” were each found to be least useful by one respondent.

Of the 10 respondents who found *DttP* to be the most useful journal that they regularly read, 1 is employed in a public library, 4 are employed in a state library, and 5 are employed in an academic library. They average 14.1 years of experience as regional librarians. Of the 8 respondents who found *DttP* to be the least useful journal that they

regularly read, two are state librarians and 6 are academic librarians. They average 12.94 years experience as regional librarians.

There was an even greater lack of reasons for this question than there was for the most useful journals category. Twenty-five respondents either gave no answer, no reason, or replied that all of the journals they read are useful. Five respondents listed journals that they found were not pertinent or not interesting, while three criticized *DttP*'s unreliable publication schedule. Three found least useful those journals that were too theoretical or academic.

It is interesting that, when looking at the reasons why respondents feel a journal is most or least useful, there are certain reasons that show up on both sides. Some respondents feel that *GIQ* and *JGI* are less useful than *DttP* because their articles are too scholarly, while others rate the two are more useful than *DttP* for the same reason. One interesting comment explained that *DttP* is more useful because it "provides the most current information," while some of the criticism towards *DttP* is that its publication schedule is always behind.

Conference Attendance

42 of 43 respondents had attended at least one conference in the past year. 35 of the 43 had attended the Federal Depository Library Conference, 30 had attended the Regional Meeting of the FDLC, and 16 had attended ALA.

Table 3 – “Other” Conferences Listed by Respondents

Other Conferences	N=
ACRL	4
PTDL Annual Training Conference	3
State Data Center Conference	3
Cartographic Users Advisory Council	1
Census	1
ESRI	1
European Union	1
FDLP National Conference	1
NGIN	1
Regional Economic Info. Sys.	1
SLA	1

16 of 42 respondents rated the Federal Depository Library Conference as the most useful, followed by 9 who rated the Regional Meeting of the FDLC most useful. ALA, PTDL, SLA, and their State Meeting were each found to be most useful by one person. 9 respondents answered that all of the conferences they have attended in the past year were equally useful.

18 respondents either gave no answer, no reason, or stated that they find all conferences to be equally useful. Other reasons why respondents chose particular conferences as the most useful are: good networking opportunities (9), opportunities to discuss problems with other documents librarians (6), and the fact that the conference rates directly to their work (5). Two respondents found that the programs made the conferences more useful, while another two respondents preferred conferences that were focused or specific, two others preferred conferences that covered a wide range of information, and still another two found that conferences that were innovative were the most useful.

One respondent found both the FDLC & the Regional Meeting to be the most useful, writing that “regional meetings deal with topics and problems faced by regionals

and help stimulate ideas dealing with solving problems. FDLC – learn valuable information from GPO and agencies, and council.”

Another respondent, from an academic library, stated that “All the national meetings are useful – I think it’s mainly because of very good programs and the networking.” One respondent found that “regional meetings can be the most useful because they tend to be smaller and you can really talk to folks more.”

When asked which conference they found to be the least useful, 24 respondents did not give an answer. An additional 4 stated that the conferences were equally useful. 7 stated that ALA was the least useful, followed by 4 who found their state meetings to be least useful. 3 respondents answered that FDLC meetings were the least useful of those that they attended.

30 respondents gave either no answer, no reason, or responded that all conferences were equally useful. Of those who answered the question, 7 mentioned that the conferences that were not specific to documents librarians, or too broad, were the least useful, and 3 respondents stated that the conference was too big. Other responses include: fewer “useful” networking opportunities (1), programs not as useful (1), “too much organizational activity and not enough information” (1), and “somewhat repetitive” (1). Two respondents, both from academic libraries, had this to say about the American Library Association Conference: “too much BS!” and “Too large; govdocs meetings often a forum for personal ax-grinding.”

Most respondents feel that conferences focusing specifically on the documents field are more worth their time than general conferences such as ALA or state level

meetings. Many cited ALA and the state meeting as the least useful of the conferences they attend, because they are “too big” or “not specific to documents librarians.”

Listserv subscriptions

97.7% of respondents (42 of 43) say that they are subscribed to at least one discussion list. Of these 42, 40 of them (95.2%) subscribe to GOVDOC-L, the discussion list created for government documents librarians, and 42 of them (100%) subscribe to REGIONAL-L, the discussion list created for discussion of issues in regional depositories. The one respondent who does not currently subscribe to any discussion lists did indicate that they used to subscribe to GOVDOC-L and REGIONAL-L, but did not give a reason why they no longer subscribe to these lists.

The respondents also subscribe to a variety of other professional discussion lists. Among the most popular are state and local discussion lists (12 of 43, or 27.9%), as well as state data center lists. Table 4 lists the other professional discussion lists that respondents subscribe to.

Table 4 – “Other” Discussion Lists Listed by Respondents

Other Discussion Lists	N=
STATE/LOCAL DISC. LISTS	12
STATE DATA CENTER	5
DOCTECH-L	3
INTL-DOC	3
BAYOU-DOC	2
LIBREF-L	2
MARCIVE-GPO	2
CIC-LIB-DOCS	1
CIC-LIB-PUBS	1
CORC-L	1
DLC-L	1
EU	1
GAYLIBN	1
GIS	1
INT-LAW	1
LAWLIBREF-L	1
MAPS-L	1
MICROFORMS-L	1
NMRT-L	1
PTDLA-L	1
SERIALS LIST	1
SLA	1
SUSDOC-L	1
VOYAGER-L	1

17 respondents found GOVDOC-L to be the most useful listserv that they subscribe to. This was followed by REGIONAL-L, which 14 respondents listed as most useful. 4 respondents did not answer the question, and 3 respondents found all of the discussion lists they subscribe to equally useful. Among other listservs found to be most useful were state/regional listservs (4), and EU, INTL-DOC, DOCTECH-L, and MARCIVE-L, each found useful by one person. Some respondents did select more than one answer for their most useful listserv, resulting in the total number of responses exceeding 43.

There were many different reasons given as to why particular discussion lists were found to be the most useful. Among them: 8 respondents stated that the listserv was relevant to daily operations, five liked the large membership and the large amount of messages that GOVDOC-L offered, four said that the particular list had good discussion and information. Twelve respondents either did not answer the question at all, gave no reason, or stated that all of the discussion lists they subscribe to are equally useful. Other reasons for preferring certain listservs are: common issues/concerns (3), information sharing (3), focused/more specific (2), occasional helpful messages (2), helps me keep up with current issues (2), general in focus (1), communications from GPO (1). One respondent answered that “REGIONAL-L fosters closeness and I know I can get good advice and discussion.”

GOVDOC-L was also found to be the least useful discussion list, with six respondents ranking it least useful. 19 respondents did not answer the question, and 6 respondents indicated that all of the listservs they subscribe to are equally useful. 3 respondents rated LIBREF-L as least useful, and 3 rated the State Data Center list as least useful.

Twenty-seven respondents either gave no answer or no reason for this question, or indicated that all the listservs they subscribe to are equally useful. 6 respondents stated that those listservs that were not as pertinent were the least useful, while 5 others stated as least useful those listservs that did not have much substance. Other reasons listed are: little traffic (2), too specific (1), too general (1), overlap w/other listservs (1).

The following quotes are all concerning GOVDOC-L:

“I hate when people copy the whole message when replying! I hate when they have an offer of 1 lousy document!”

“Too many silly, redundant or repetitive q’s too many ‘does anyone know’ queries which should be sent to GPO.”

“I gave up on GOVDOC-L years ago. Too many messages with no substance and too little time to read them.”

Of those who gave an answer as to the usefulness of listservs, GOVDOC-L ranks first in both the most and least useful categories. Keep in mind that 17 respondents ranked GOVDOC-L most useful, while 6 ranked it least useful, and the number of no answers for the most useful listserv was 4, as opposed to 19 for least useful.

Of the 17 respondents who found GOVDOC-L to be the most useful of the listservs they subscribe to, 64.7% are academic librarians, 29.4% are state librarians, and 5.9% are public librarians. They average 11.46 years experience as regional librarians. These percentages are on par with the percentage of total respondents that are academic, state, and public libraries. Of the 6 respondents who found GOVDOC-L to be the least useful of the listservs they subscribe to, 5 are employed in academic libraries and 1 is employed in a state library. They have been regional librarians for an average of 13.83 years. These results are not statistically significant, because of the low response rate (19 of 43 respondents did not answer the question).

Respondents were noticeably more hesitant to provide an answer when asked for a “least useful” conference, journal, or listserv. Several respondents, if they did answer that particular question, indicated that their “least useful” choice was still very useful, just less useful than their other selections.

Regional Functions

Web Page

When asked about their department's presence on the web, a majority of respondents (79.1%) say that their department has a web page, with 1 additional respondent indicating that a web page in the works. Of these 34, 26 (76.5%) are in academic libraries, 2 (5.9%) are in public libraries, and 6 (17.6%) are in state libraries. When these numbers are compared with the total number of each type of library that returned the questionnaire, it is obvious that academic libraries are ahead of their state and public counterparts. 92.9% of academic libraries have web pages, compared with 66.7% of public libraries, and 50% of state libraries.

Out of the 34, 25 (73.5%) responded that they post information for selectives. The different types of information posted on the web pages have been grouped into broad categories. Twelve of the 25 post directory information for the selectives in their region, while 8 post disposal guidelines and/or disposal lists. The web pages of 8 regionals contain links, to GPO, to documents librarianship sites, to sites useful to particular state and regions. Seven respondents post the state plan on their department web page, while five post guidelines, procedures, and/or policy information for their selectives. Three respondents said that they post regional news/hot topics, exchange lists, and various other information. Two regionals post needs and offers, and one respondent did not answer the question.

Does a Listserv Exist for the Documents Librarians in the Region?

27 of 43 (62.8%) say that they, as regionals, have established a listserv for the state. In addition, 33 of 43 (76.7%) say that a discussion list exists for the depositories in

their region to discuss documents issues, even if the regional is not responsible for it. The wording of the question may have led some respondents to reply “No” to the question, if they did not personally help create a listserv for the state. Some respondents noted that although they did not create one or the regional is not responsible for one, a listserv does exist for the state, run by someone else.

Of the 33 who say that a listserv does exist for the depositories in their region, 24 (72.7%) say that all of the depositories in their region are subscribed to the list. The average number of messages posted per week is 3.08, with a high of 15 and a low of less than 10 per year. The most popular types of messages posted are notices (27 of 33), workshop announcements (26 of 33), reference questions (19 of 33), and want lists (17 of 33). Table 5 breaks down the subject matter of messages.

Table 5 – Subject of Listserv Messages

Subject matter of messages	N=
Notices	27
Workshop Announcements	26
Reference	19
Want Lists	17
Disposition Lists	4
Official Regional Communications	2
Policy Inquiries/Ideas	2
Questions about Procedures	2
Membership Drive	1
Plans for upcoming meetings	1
Questions about Procedures	1
Technical services/Cataloging	1

Site Visits

Respondents were asked how often they made site visits to their selectives. 23 of 43 make site visits to their selectives as necessary, 6 checked as necessary and other, 3 checked all three selections (as necessary, prior to inspection, other), 1 checked as

necessary and prior to inspection, and 10 of 43 checked “Other.” The “Other” reasons included: yearly (5), with inspector (3), as requested (2), rarely/almost never (2), at least once every 3 years (2).

Other responses were:

“When I am in the area” (1)

“when there is a probation issue, a new depository, or a depository closure.” (1)

“talk with selectives at state convention” (1)

“plan to visit all selectives during the next 12-18 months” (1)

“plan to visit all selectives within the next 2 years” (1)

Inspections

40 of 43 respondents (93%) help their selectives prepare for inspection. 2 of 43 (4.7%) do not help their selectives prepare for inspection. 1 did not answer. However, one respondent who checked “no” on the questionnaire did elaborate:

“If asked, I will. I respect each depository’s sovereignty over its affairs. Hands off policy is my approach – but I am always available and ready to help when asked.”

How do you help your selectives prepare for inspection?

Some respondents gave more than one answer. 4 did not answer the question. Responses include answer questions (19), offer support/advice (10), visit the site (8), review the self-study with the selective (6), offer workshops (5), attend all inspections (2), as requested (2), and conduct mock inspection (1). Other responses included “review depository regulations” (1), “recommend improvements in management and staffing” (1). 4 respondents did not answer the question. One respondent wrote “[I help] in whatever ways they need: reviewing policies, going over self-study, etc., speaking with directors.”

respondents did not answer (7%). Other responses were as needed (4), 2-3 times per year (2), occasionally (1), not very often (1), rarely except for meetings (1), and every 3 months (3).

In the past week...

25 of the respondents had been in contact with another regional (58.1%) in the past week. Of these 25, 7 used only email (28%), 5 used only the telephone (20%), 3 responded to a listserv posting (12%), and 1 respondent conducted a personal visit (4%). 9 respondents used a combination of email and another method (36%). Of these 9, 3 used email/listserv posting, 2 used telephone/email/listserv, and one person used email/telephone, telephone/fax/email, fax/email/listserv, and email/visit.

Responses were equal in terms of who initiated the communication. 12 respondents (48%) indicated that they had initiated the contact, and 12 respondents indicated that the other regional had initiated the contact. 1 respondent checked both lines, and that answer was discounted.

Why were they in contact with another regional?

Responses were grouped into the following categories, with some respondents giving more than one reason: depository issues (procedures, state plan, etc.) (8), holdings/materials/ILL (8), planning a meeting/conference (4), question/answer (no topic specified) (3), discussion of a regional's website (2), and personal (1). One respondent did not answer the question.

Contact with Selectives in the Same Region

When asked how often they are in contact with selectives in their region, 9 of 43 are in contact with their selectives daily, 15 of 43 are in contact with their selectives weekly, 5 of 43 are in contact with their selectives bi-weekly, 9 of 43 are in contact with their selectives monthly, and 5 of 43 checked "Other," with 3 respondents specifying that they are in contact with their selectives "as needed" and two respondents specifying that they are in contact with their selectives 3-4 times per week.

Usually, communication is initiated by:

The regional: 37.2% (16 out of 43)

The selective: 55.8% (24 out of 43)

Equally: 7.0% (3 out of 43)

In the past week...

37 were in contact with a selective in their region. Of these, 15 used email exclusively, 12 used a combination of email and telephone, and 5 used telephone exclusively. The regional initiated contact 35.1% of the time (13 out of 37), while the

selective initiated contact 54.1% of the time (20 out of 37). 2 did not answer the question (5.4%). 2 (5.4%) checked both lines, and so those were not counted.

Why were they in contact with the selectives in their region?

Reasons were grouped into the following categories, with some respondents giving more than one answer: Biennial Survey (15), disposal/retention of documents (14), reference question (5), shipping list/shipment problems (2), and state plan (2). “Other” responses were given, including personnel change, advice on upping selector profile, and site visit.

Because this questionnaire was distributed at around the same time as the Biennial Survey, there may be an overrepresentation of the amount of communication going on. However, the phrasing of the question should make it clear that it is understood that the “past week” was not necessarily typical.

Contact with Selectives in a Different Region

When asked how often they are in contact with selectives in a different region, 2 of 43 respondents say they are in contact with selectives in a different region daily, 4 of 43 respondents say they are in contact with selectives in a different region weekly, 2 of 43 respondents say they are in contact with selectives in a different region bi-weekly, 10 of 43 respondents say they are in contact with selectives in a different region monthly, and 25 of 43 respondents checked “Other.”

“Other” reasons included rarely/seldom (11), occasionally (3), “occasionally on matters generated by a listserv discussion” (2), when needed (2), every 2 months (1),

yearly (1), couple times a year (1), every other year (1), “very seldom unless of a friendly nature” (1), not (1), and “so far I

It was not asked which method of communication is normally used when in contact with selectives in a different region. More than likely the daily, weekly contacts are via GOVDOC-L or another listserv.

In the past week...

16 respondents said that they were in contact with a selective in a different region. Of these, 8 used email exclusively, and 2 used a combination of email and a listserv. Other respondents used the telephone (1), listservs (1), personal visit (1), a combination of email and the U.S. Mail (1), a combination of fax and email (1), and a combination of telephone, email, and personal visit (1). The communication was initiated by the regional 18.75% (3 of 16) and by the selective 81.25% (13 of 16).

What were reasons for the contact?

The reasons for communication with librarians in selective depositories in other regions were grouped into the following categories: Materials (ILL, discard, exchange) (7), Personal (friendly visit, job search) (3), Depository Issues (State plan, disaster response plan) (2), Answer/Question (not specified) (2), and “Other” (GODORT business, etcetera) (2).

Contact with GPO

Frequency

1 of 43 responded that they are in contact with GPO daily, 3 of 43 responded that they are in contact with GPO bi-weekly, 13 of 43 responded that they are in contact with GPO weekly, 3 of 43 responded that they are in contact with GPO bi-monthly, 17 of 43 responded that they are in contact with GPO monthly, 3 of 43 responded that they are in contact with GPO “as needed,” and 1 of 43 responded that they are in contact with GPO 3-4 times/year. 2 of 43 did not answer the question.

Method of Communication

Table 6 – Methods of Communication Normally Used When in Contact with GPO

Method	N=
Email	7
Telephone/email	16
Telephone/fax/email	10
Fax/email	3
Telephone/fax/email/usmail	4
Usmail/other	1
Telephone/email/usmail	1
Telephone/fax/email/usmail/visit	1

Who usually initiates the contact?

35 of 43 (81.4%) say the communication is initiated by the regional. 6 of 43 (14%) say that both sides initiate the communication equally. 2 respondents (4.6%) did not answer the question.

Most common reasons for contact with GPO?

Reasons were grouped into the following categories, with some respondents giving more than one response: On behalf of a selective (12), Shipping list questions/problems (10), Classification/cataloging questions (7), Claims (5), Depository issues (4), SuDocs issues (4), AskLPS (3), Problems/Questions (topic not specified) (3), and “Other” (2). 2 respondents did not answer the question.

Methods of Communication Utilized

Most frequently used method of communication

Respondents were asked which method of communication they used most frequently. They were not specifically directed to choose only 1 answer, and some checked a combination of methods. Those responses were included in the analysis.

Overwhelmingly, documents librarians are using email when in contact with others. 25 of 43 (58.1%) of respondents most frequently use email. Another 5 responded that their most frequently used method of communication was a discussion list, another internet-based product. 5 responded that the telephone is their most frequently used method, while the remaining eight respondents chose a combination of methods. Interestingly, of those eight, email was checked, in addition to another method, in all cases. Table 7 details the most frequent methods of communication used by respondents.

Table 7 -- Most Frequently Used Methods of Communication

Email	25 of 43	58.1%
Telephone	5 of 43	11.6%
Discussion List	5 of 43	11.6%
Telephone/Email	4 of 43	9.3%
Telephone/Email/List	2 of 43	4.7%
Email/List	1 of 43	2.3%
All but “other” checked	1 of 43	2.3%

Preferred Method of Communication

When asked how they prefer to communicate with other government documents librarians, 23 of the 43 respondents (53.5%) chose email, 3 chose telephone (7%), 3 chose personal visit (7%), 1 selected both email & visit, 1 chose a combination of telephone, email & visit, and 9 chose a combination of telephone & email. 3 (7%) did not answer the question. One respondent wrote “I prefer telephone, but I resort to email.”

When this is examined further, and respondents are grouped by type of library they are employed in, the results are interesting. (For this analysis the researcher used only those responses where one method was selected, n=29). 23 respondents prefer to communicate with other documents librarians via email. Of those 23, 17 are employed in academic libraries and 6 are employed in state libraries. They average 14.24 years experience as a regional librarian. 3 respondents prefer to use the telephone. Of these, one is employed in an academic library, one is employed in a public library, and one is employed in a state library. They average 12 years experience as regional librarians. Of the 3 respondents who prefer personal visits, one is employed in an academic library, one is employed in a public library, and one is employed in a state library. They average 4.42 years experience as regional librarians.

In an average week,

15 of 43 say they spend 1-2 hours in communication with others in the documents field. 15 of 43 say they spend 3-6 hours in communication with others in the documents field. 3 of 43 say they spend 7-10 hours in communication with others in the documents field. 4 of 43 say they spend more than 10 hours in communication with others in the

documents field. 2 of 43 say they spend less than 1 hour in communication with others in the documents field. 1 of 43 says they spend 1-2 hours per month in communication with others in the documents field. 3 of 43 did not answer the question.

There was no designation between in-house and outside communication, therefore those respondents with more than 1 government documents professional in their organization are more likely to spend more time in contact with others in the documents field. Still, most respondents give email as their most frequently used method of communication, so this should not skew things too much in one way or the other.

23 of 43 respondents chose email as their preferred method of communication. In addition, eleven others chose a combination of email and another method of communication, which leaves 9 respondents who prefer to communicate with others in a different way (3 did not answer, 3 chose telephone, and 3 chose personal visit, which indicates that a few people still prefer more personal interaction). The survey did not ask why respondents preferred a particular method, which may have had some revealing responses.

Rankings

On a scale of 6 to 1, with 6 being most useful and 1 being least useful, respondents were asked to rank the following categories in terms of most useful for professional information: REGIONAL-L, GOVDOC-L, Professional Journals, Professional Conferences, Conversations with Other Documents Librarians, and Other. Respondents were asked to specify which journals, conferences, and other selections they found useful.

SIX (6)

10 respondents ranked REGIONAL-L as most useful. Two respondents ranked several items as most useful, and those responses were discounted. One respondent did not answer. 9 ranked GOVDOC-L as most useful, twelve gave conversations with other documents librarians a 6, two said professional journals (*GIQ*, *JGI*) were most useful, 6 said professional conferences (FDLP and ALA were the only conferences specified), and one respondent said that the FDLP Administration's web site was the most useful.

FIVE (5)

13 respondents ranked GOVDOC-L as second most useful, followed by eleven respondents who ranked conferences as second most useful. The Federal Depository Library Conferences were most frequently mentioned, with five respondents choosing that conference, and one respondent each mentioning ALA, EU, and Local SLA. Conversations with other documents librarians was ranked fifth by 8 respondents, and seven ranked REGIONAL-L second most useful. Two respondents chose "other," mentioning other listservs and local meetings, and one respondent selected journals, but did not specify which ones.

FOUR (4)

14 respondents ranked Conversations with other documents librarians as their third most useful method for gathering information about the profession, while 11 chose REGIONAL-L. 9 respondents selected conferences, with 2 specifying the FDLC conference, and 5 ranked GOVDOC-L third most useful. Two respondents ranked

TWO (2)

23 respondents ranked Journals as the fifth most useful method they use to gather information about the profession. 4 respondents specified *JGI*, while 2 specified *DttP* and 2 specified *GIQ*. Five respondents each chose REGIONAL-L and GOVDOC-L. Three respondents ranked Conferences as fifth most useful, and none of these five specified a conference. Two respondents selected “Other,” with one respondent specifying *Administrative Notes*. No respondents selected “Conversations with other documents librarians” as fifth most useful.

These results appear to be in line with Kovacs, Robinson, and Dixon (1995), who discovered that government documents librarians were using listservs, or e-conferences, as a source of professional and research information. Some of their respondents felt that e-conferences were replacing standard information sources such as professional journals and physical conferences.¹⁴

In the bottom three most useful categories (numbers 3, 2, and 1), Journals gathered the most votes, with 36 respondents placing it in their bottom 3 most useful

methods for gathering information about the profession. Specified journals included *JGI* (4), *GIQ* (3), and *DttP*(2). This was followed by conferences (14), including FDLC (6), ALA (1), State Meeting (1), and PTDL (1). GOVDOC-L (13) was next, with REGIONAL-L (12) close behind. 6 respondents placed “Conversations with other documents librarians” in their bottom 3, and while 10 selected “Other,” only three respondents specified *Administrative Notes* (1), DOCTECH-L (1), and Colleagues at the same library (1).

Chapter 5

CONCLUSION

It is obvious that the Internet has changed the way that government documents librarians communicate with each other and how they receive their information. While there were a few respondents who indicated that they prefer the more personal methods of communication such as the telephone and personal visits, respondents overwhelmingly prefer email. Email and listservs account for 69.8% of respondents' most frequently used method of communication and, even more telling, 53.5% of respondents' preferred method of communication. According to one respondent, when asked which professional journals were most useful, "I get most information of use via listservs." Even if they did not indicate that it was their preferred or most frequently used method of communication, 100% of respondents indicated some use of email and/or listservs, which is greater than the 77% of respondents that Barlow and Graham surveyed who used email, and greater than the 91% they found who used any Internet technologies at work.¹⁵

On average, respondents who preferred email had been regional librarians 14.24 years, compared with those who preferred telephone (12 years) and personal visit (4.42 years). This sample is much too small to be statistically significant, because only three respondents preferred personal visits, but perhaps this indicates that some of the more inexperienced librarians prefer more personal interaction. It seems like an interesting avenue to explore in future research. Because age was not asked on this questionnaire,

and because the question about experience was limited to experience as a regional librarian, it is impossible to find out if the amount of professional experience or age itself is a factor in preferred method of communication.

It may have provided a bit more understanding to the researcher if respondents had been asked why they preferred one method of communication over the others. Although one respondent did indicate that they preferred the telephone over other methods because they wanted to hear the other person's voice, no other respondents indicated why they preferred a certain method over any other. Several respondents did select a combination of methods, most popularly email and telephone, which indicates that they prefer the convenience that email brings while at the same time being able to hear a live voice on the other end of the phone line.

Interestingly enough, both *Documents to the People (DttP)* and GOVDOC-L were tops in their respective sections both for most and least useful. This, along with some of the reasons given, seems to indicate a definite division in expectations and attitudes of federal government documents librarians. The type of library in which a respondent is employed does not seem to be a distinguishing factor, nor does the amount of time spent working as a regional documents librarian. The type of library in which a respondent is employed does seem to have some connection with the government documents department's presence on the web, where librarians employed in academic libraries are much more likely to have departmental web pages than those librarians employed in state or public libraries.

Respondents appear to be utilizing electronic resources more frequently, both for communication with other documents librarians and for obtaining current information

about the profession. Journals were ranked below GOVDOC-L and REGIONAL-L in terms of gathering information about the profession, with many respondents not having time to keep up with professional reading and discussion list communications. Other respondents cited the delays in publication of journals, resulting in information that is dated. Respondents also are utilizing the Internet to distribute information to the selectives in their region, via discussion lists for depositories in the region, as well as departmental web pages.

Generally, it seems as though electronic communication methods have created a closer community of regional documents librarians. They communicate with each other via REGIONAL-L, they are often in contact with selectives via GOVDOC-L and, in some cases, a state discussion list. When regionals are in contact with selectives in their region, the regional usually initiates the communication 37.2% of the time, so it is not as if they are isolated from their counterparts in selective depositories. Some respondents echoed Roselle's findings that there is a greater sense of community among librarians as a result of these new technologies. One respondent said that REGIONAL-L "fosters closeness." This could be because of the nature of that particular listserv; it is a moderated list which is closed to everyone except librarians in regional depositories.

One of the main problems with the results is that respondents were very hesitant to name a least useful journal, conference, or discussion list, therefore the results must be taken with a grain of salt. The phrasing of the question does not intend to imply that the answer given is not useful, just that it is the least useful of those resources that the respondents utilize. By examining the reasons that were given, both for most and least useful conferences, journals, and listservs, it seems as though there is a definite difference

in the expectations of documents librarians. While some respondents did indicate that they would not read, attend, or subscribe if the journal, conference, or list was not useful, many respondents either did not answer the question at all or gave no reason for declaring something least useful.

Overall, government documents librarians in regional depositories are embracing Internet technologies and using them to create a closer community within the profession. The percentage of depositories that have web pages will surely increase in the coming years, as will the percentage of documents librarians who receive the majority of their information about the profession electronically.

Continuing Research

This research only skims the surface of communication among documents librarians. The questions asked focused mainly on professional contact – journals, conferences, listservs – and it is much more difficult to determine communication of a more personal nature unless the respondent volunteers it. In order to determine how often regionals and selectives are in contact with each other, it would be necessary to send a similar survey to selective depositories. Because there are over 1,000 selective depositories in the United States, more than likely a sample percentage of these librarians would be sent surveys.

NOTES

Chapter 2

¹ T. Whitehall, L.G. Durbidge, and A.J. Meadows. "Communication between Library Practitioners." *Library Review (Glasgow, Scotland)*, 38:1 (1989): 7.

² *ibid*, 10.

³ *ibid*, 28.

⁴ Ann Roselle. "Internet-Related Work Activities and Academic Government Documents Librarians' Professional Relationships." *Government Information Quarterly*, 16:2 (1999): 150.

⁵ *ibid*, 159.

⁶ Robert S. Allen. "Physics Information and Scientific Communication: Information Sources and Communication Patterns." *Information Seeking and Communicating Behavior of Scientists and Engineers*. New York: Haworth Press (1991): 33.

⁷ Donna Cromer and Mary Johnson. "The Impact of the Internet on Communication Among Reference Librarians." *The Reference Librarian*, no. 41-42 (1994): 154.

⁸ *ibid*, 140.

⁹ *ibid*, 144.

¹⁰ Sharyn J. Ladner and Hope N. Tillman. "How Special Librarians Really Use the Internet." *Canadian Library Journal*, 49 – (1992): 213.

¹¹ *ibid*, 213.

¹² *ibid*, 215.

Chapter 3

¹³ Just prior to the initial mailing, Ridley Kessler sent a message to REGIONAL-L asking his colleagues to return the survey. He sent a follow-up message two weeks later.

Chapter 4

- ¹⁴ Diane K. Kovacs, Kara L. Robinson, and Jeanne Dixon. "Scholarly E-Conferences on the Academic Networks: How Library and Information Science Professionals Use Them." *Journal of the American Society for Information Science*, 46:4 (1995): 250.

Chapter 5

- ¹⁵ Lisa J. Barlow and Margaret E. Graham. "The Use of Information and Communication Technologies in Commercial Libraries in the UK." *Program*, 33:2 (1999): 119.

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Library Review (Glasgow, Scotland), 38(1), 7-33.

APPENDIX A:
COVER LETTER

[Researcher's Address]
[Researcher's Telephone Number]

September 23, 1999

Dear Federal Documents Librarian,

I am conducting a study of the communication patterns of federal documents librarians in regional depository libraries. The purpose of this survey is to explore the ways in which documents librarians communicate with one another in regard to the profession. I am interested in determining to whom regional librarians "talk", what methods of communication they use, and who initiates the communication.

In this age of our increasing utilization of electronic resources, I seek to find out what tools documents librarians are using to communicate with one another. I have decided to concentrate on regional documents librarians because regional depositories anchor the depository library system. The results from this survey could lead to more research, perhaps on the communication patterns of federal documents librarians in selective depositories.

I hope you will take a few minutes to complete this survey and return it to me in the enclosed self-addressed stamped envelope. Returning this questionnaire implies your consent as a research subject. Please do not write your name on the questionnaire. All responses will be kept confidential. Your participation is voluntary, and there is no penalty if you choose not to participate. However, because there are only fifty-three regional depositories in the United States Federal Depository Library Program, it would add value to my research, as well as add to the literature in the field, if you would return the completed survey.

Thank you in advance for your participation.

Sincerely,

Valerie D. Glenn
Graduate Student
School of Information & Library Science
University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill

If you have questions about the content or conduct of the survey, please contact me directly or my advisor, Ridley Kessler, at Davis Library, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, CB #3912, Chapel Hill, NC 27514-8890, telephone (919) 962-1151.

You may contact the UNC-CH Academic Affairs Institutional Review Board at any time during the study if you have questions or concerns about your rights as a research subject.

Academic Affairs Institutional Review Board
David A. Eckerman, Chair
CB #4100, 300 Bynum Hall
UNC-Chapel Hill
Chapel Hill, NC 27599-4100
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aa-irb@unc.edu

APPENDIX B:
QUESTIONNAIRE

1. In what type of library do you work?

Public Academic State Other (please specify): _____

2. How many government documents professionals are in your library? _____**3. How many government documents para-professionals are in your library? _____****4. Is the documents department separate or is it a part of another department? What department?****5. How long have you been a documents librarian in a regional depository? _____****6. What method of communication do you *most frequently use* when you are in contact with other documents librarians?**

Telephone Fax Email US Mail Personal Visit
 Discussion List Other (please specify): _____

7. How often are you in contact with documents librarians in other regional depositories?

Daily Weekly Bi-Weekly Monthly
 Other (please specify): _____

8. In the past week, have you communicated with a documents librarian in another regional depository? Yes No**8a. If yes, what was the reason for the communication?****8b. What method(s) of communication did you use? (Check all that apply.)**

Telephone Fax Email US Mail Personal Visit
 Response to posting on listserv Other (please specify): _____

8c. Who initiated the communication? I did the other regional**9. How often are you in contact with documents librarians in selective depositories in your region?**

Daily Weekly Bi-Weekly Monthly
 Other (please specify): _____

10. Who most often initiates the contact, you or the selective? I do the selective**11. In the past week, have you communicated with a documents librarian in a selective depository within your region? Yes No****11a. If yes, what was the reason for the communication?**

11b. What method(s) of communication did you use? (Check all that apply.)

Telephone Fax Email US Mail Personal Visit
 Response to posting on listserv Other (please specify): _____

11c. Who initiated the communication? I did the selective

12. How often are you in contact with documents librarians in selective depositories in a *different* region?

Daily Weekly Bi-Weekly Monthly
 Other (please specify): _____

13. In the past week, have you communicated with a documents librarian in a selective depository in a different region? Yes No

13a. If yes, what was the reason for the communication?

13b. What method(s) of communication did you use? (Check all that apply.)

Telephone Fax Email US Mail Personal Visit
 Response to posting on listserv Other (please specify): _____

13c. Who initiated the communication? I did the selective

14. Does your government documents department have a Web page? Yes No

14a. If yes, do you post information for your selectives there? Yes No

14b. If yes, what kind of information?

15. Do you subscribe to any professional discussion lists? (Check all that apply.)

GOVDOC-L
 REGIONAL-L
 LIBREF
 Other (please specify): _____

15a. Which of the above discussion lists do you find most useful, and why?

15b. Which do you find least useful, and why?

16. As a regional depository, have you established an electronic discussion list for the selectives in your region?

Yes No

16a. Are all of the libraries subscribed to the listserv? Yes No

16b. In an average week, how many messages are posted? _____

16c. What types of messages are posted? (Check all that apply.)

Want lists

Notices

Workshop announcements

Reference

Other (please specify): _____

17. How often do you make site visits to your selectives?

As Necessary

Prior to inspection

Other (Please specify): _____

18. Do you help your selectives prepare for an inspection? Yes No

18a. If yes, how?

19. Have you attended any professional conference(s) in the past two years? Yes No
If so, which ones? (Check all that apply.)

American Library Association

Federal Depository Library Council

Regional Meeting of the FDLC

Special Libraries Association

Other (please specify): _____

19a. Which of the above conferences do you find most useful, and why?

19b. Which do you find least useful, and why?

20. How often does your department communicate with the Government Printing Office (GPO)?

Daily Bi-Weekly Weekly Bi-Monthly Monthly

20a. What method(s) of communication are used? (Check all that apply.)

Telephone

Fax

Email

US Mail

Personal Visit

Other (please specify): _____

20b. What are your most common reasons for contacting GPO?

20c. Who initiates the communication?

21. Which of the following professional journals do you regularly read? (Check all that apply.)

- Government Information Quarterly
 Documents to the People
 Journal of Government Information
 Other (please specify): _____

21a. Which journal do you find most useful, and why?

21b. Which journal do you find least useful, and why?

22. How much time would you estimate that you spend on communication with others in the documents field in an average *week*?

- 1-2 hours 3-6 7-10 more than 10

23. How do you prefer to communicate with other government documents librarians?

- Telephone Fax Email US Mail Personal Visit
 Other (please specify): _____

24. Please rank the following resources from 1-6 in terms of most useful for professional information, with 6 being the most useful and 1 being the least useful.

- REGIONAL-L
 GOVDOC-L
 Professional Journals (please specify): _____
 Professional Conferences (please specify): _____
 Conversations with other documents librarians
 Other (please specify): _____