

15 August 2002

**University Librarians' Message  
on  
Government Information Task Force**

Enclosed is a document establishing and charging the SOPAG Taskforce on Government Information. It is being created at the request of the University Librarians, and with our strong endorsement. The document provides a rationale and background for this task force, but several points are worth emphasizing.

Government publications are essential to the quality of the collections of the libraries of the University of California. The work of the task force is intended to empower and enable government information specialists to use their knowledge, skills, and abilities to continue to develop the collections comprehensively, as is appropriate for the academic mission of a leading research university.

The task force will build upon and further develop earlier, pioneering work of the government information librarians, who have provided leadership in recognizing the changing environment, and consequently the opportunities, for government information. The task force will bring together issues of electronic and print publications, archiving, and physical space in a comprehensive plan.

While there has been no predetermination of outcomes, it is clear that we must take the initiative to move forward quickly to address these issues. In addition to the collections issues, of particular concern to the Office of the President as well as the ULs is space for the campus libraries and the RLFs, and the duplication of collections across the university. The Systemwide Library and Scholarly Information Advisory Committee (SLASIAC) established the Standing Committee on Universitywide Library Collection Management Planning (the Collection Management Planning Group or CMPG) to focus on the issues of space for collections, the management of collections, and the nature of the University's archival responsibilities. Owing to the pressures of enrollment growth and other factors, the University has a compelling interest in managing existing library facilities so as to accommodate continually-growing collections of library material in all formats while relieving the pressure, wherever possible, on its overtaxed capital program. The CMPG is examining a wide range of issues, but was able to identify government information as a timely priority, due to the importance of the collections and the existing strength of collaboration among the campuses. The work done with government publications will also be a model for subsequent initiatives concerning print and electronic collections, and archiving issues.

Gerald J. Munoff, Chair, The University Librarians' Group  
University Librarian, University of California, Irvine

## **SOPAG Task Force on Government Information**

### **Introduction:**

Over the years there have been broad discussions in the library community regarding the future of Government Publication collections and services in the context of the migration to digital generation and distribution of government information. There has been a long tradition of collaboration and cooperation between the UC Government Information Librarians. In 1998, the UC/Stanford Electronic Government Information Initiatives Group (EGIIG) anticipated the need for an electronic repository for government information in its report “Creating a California Digital Government Information Library.” On the basis of that report and subsequent proposals by the UC/Stanford Government Information Librarians (UC-GILS), digital government information was chosen as one of the first priorities of UC's shared content building initiatives, resulting in the creation of the CDL-hosted Counting California service. The positive results of collaborative efforts to date suggest further collaboration and planning is desirable in order to continue to provide superior access to government information.

The Collection Management Planning Group (CMPG) of the Systemwide Library and Scholarly Information Advisory Committee (SLASIAC) has engaged in discussions of shared collections, both print and electronic, and the potential for improved services through enhanced access and cost savings in terms of storage space, processing, and eliminating unnecessary duplication [<http://www.slp.ucop.edu/consultation/slasiac/CMPG.html>]. One outcome of these deliberations was the generation of a discussion document with the title “Building of a Unified Government Publications Repository” (copy attached). The University Librarians discussed this report and endorsed (with one abstention) its concepts at their May 9th meeting in Los Angeles. They have asked SOPAG to appoint a Task Force to explore this concept and consider how a unified government publications repository might be developed for the University of California Libraries.

In its discussion at its June 21<sup>st</sup> meeting, SOPAG concluded that a two-step process is required to explore this concept and develop recommendations for its implementation. The first step, will be to develop a framework for a unified government publications repository. The second step will be the development of an implementation plan based upon this framework. Because a “Unified Government Publications Repository” will require universitywide collaboration and a technical and organizational infrastructure of shared values, tools, services, standards, and best practices to support it, the task force's efforts will assist the UC libraries in creating a deeper understanding of the collective development of shared digital collections.

### **Charge:**

The SOPAG Task Force on Government Information (TFGI) is charged to develop a framework and an implementation plan for creating a unified government publications repository for the University of California Libraries, based on the general concepts described in the attached CMPG report. The framework and plan should include the following elements:

1. An overall conceptual model for a unified government publications repository for the University of California Libraries which would provide the infrastructure for government publications librarians to work collaboratively in building a unified repository.
2. A systemwide collection development policy for government publications that would focus on the transition to electronic distribution, access, and use of government information but also consider the implications of this transition for the future of UC's print and microform collections of government publications.
3. Service goals and objectives for the unified government repository, based on known patterns of use of government information.
4. The preservation of the contents of the unified government publications repository.
5. A plan for implementing the repository.

**Consultation:**

In carrying out its charge, the Task Force is expected to consult widely with campus Government Publications Librarians, the UC/Stanford Government Information Librarians [<http://www.library.ucsb.edu/gils/>], the CDL Government Information Initiatives Advisory Group [<http://www.cdlib.org/libstaff/sharedcoll/gii/grpcharge.rtf>], the State Library, and other appropriate groups within the University, such as the Map Librarians.

**Membership:**

Patricia Cruse (CDL: Manager, Content Development, Academic Initiatives)  
Sherry DeDecker (UCSB: Communication & U.S. Document Librarian)  
Judy Horn (UCI: Head, Government Information Department)  
Patty Innuzzi (UCB: AUL and Director of Doe/Moffitt)  
Linda Kennedy, Chair (UCD: Head, Government Information and Maps)  
Phyllis Mirsky (UCSD: Deputy University Librarian, SOPAG Liaison, and CDC Member)  
Sarah Pritchard (UCSB: University Librarian, UL Liaison)

**Timeframe:** Final report: 6 – 9 months (February - May 2003)

**Attachment:** “Building a Unified Government Publications Repository”

8/22/02

## **Building A Unified Government Publications Repository**

Government documents are a critical component of the University of California's Library collections. The UC Libraries (apart from UCSF and UCM) are active participants in both the Federal Depository Library Program and the California State Depository Library Program. Many campuses also acquire publications from local governments, foreign governments, international government organizations and non-government organizations.

Each campus has developed substantial collections of government publications tailored to meet their individual needs; however, there is considerable duplication systemwide. This duplication, combined with growing pressures on the University's budgetary resources, requires a new model for collections and services for government publications— a model that promotes resource sharing.

The creation of a centralized repository for UC government collections offers such a solution. A centralized repository would reduce duplication and provide much-needed infrastructure to share government collections systemwide. Additionally, it would improve access while utilizing the many talents and collaborative working structure of the UC government information librarians. The specific elements of a centralized repository include:

1. Preserve and archive digital, paper, and fiche collections and reduce duplicate collections across campuses.
2. Provide online access to materials in the government repository.
3. Develop a structure to effectively expedite the delivery to users of government publications held in the repository.
4. Develop an infrastructure that will allow government information librarians to work collaboratively to build digital and paper collections.

### **Background Information on UC Government Publication Collections**

There are many challenges and opportunities associated with building a centralized government repository. In order to properly identify these challenges, it will be necessary to seek input from UC government information librarians across the entire UC system. The UC government information librarians are familiar with the existing collections and who will be using and developing collections in the future. The brief overview below outlines the status of the UC Libraries' government publication collections and identifies some of the challenges likely to be encountered in building a centralized government repository.

## Duplicate Federal and California State Collections

### Federal Depository Library Collections

There is substantial duplication between campus federal government collections. Eight of the ten University of California libraries are “*selective*” federal depository libraries and acquire federal publications issued by a variety of agencies. While the overall selection rates are relatively consistent campus-to-campus (fig. 1), actual materials received vary from collection to collection. For example UC Davis and Riverside may select many publications issued by the U.S. Department of Agriculture while other campuses concentrate on different agencies.

Selection Rates of UC Federal Depository Libraries: Spring 2002

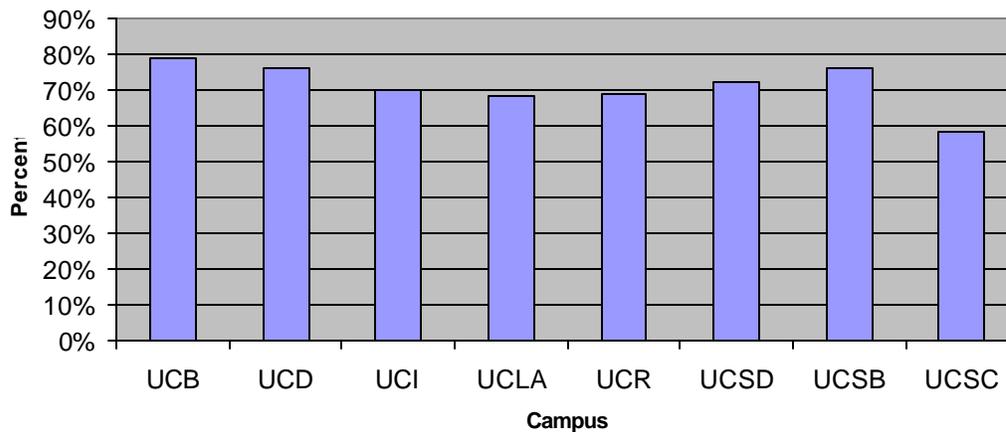


Figure 1 (based on data from the Documents Data Minor)

### California State Depository System

Due to the nature of the California State Depository Library program there is also substantial duplication of California State publications between campuses. Under the California depository library program, libraries designated as “*completes*” receive everything published by both the California Office of State Printing (OSP) and by the various California departments, boards, commissions, and agencies. The UC “completes” are: UCB, UCD, UCLA, UCSB and UCSD. “*Selective*” libraries in the California Depository Library system receive only materials published by the California OSP. The UC “selective” libraries are: UCR, UCI, and UCSC.

## Impact of Digital Government Publications

Digital government publications have had a major impact on campus collections. More and more government agencies are relying on the web to distribute and provide access to their published materials; however, there is no program for the long-term preservation

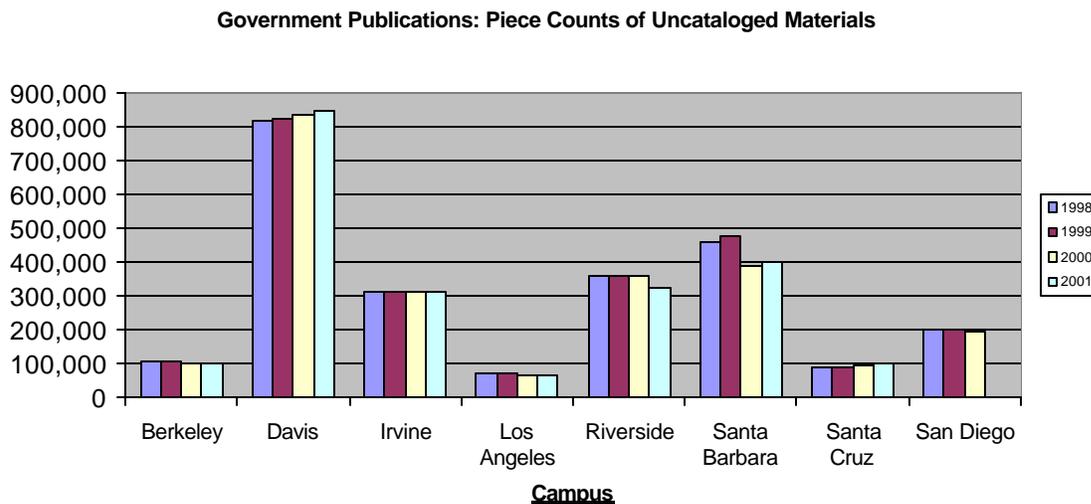
or archiving of digital government materials. Furthermore digital materials are disappearing daily due to a variety of social and political issues. Since preservation and access to digital government information is not reliable libraries cannot base collection decisions on digital copy. Many UC Libraries are developing different strategies to manage the unreliability -- some libraries are saving materials to local machines, others are printing the digital publications, and still others are taking a "wait and see" approach. A unified systemwide approach to this problem would provide much greater benefits.

## Collection Size, Management, Access and Public Service

The management of paper government publications also varies from campus-to-campus. Some government collections are discrete collections and are housed separately from other library collections. Some campuses have integrated their government collections with the larger library collections. Finally, many collections are a combination – discrete collections with some publications integrated into the larger collection.

Collection size varies from campus-to-campus for a variety of reasons -- the age of the collections, campus acquisition procedures, and local "de-selection" and weeding practices. UCB and UCLA are the oldest federal depository libraries in the UC system and have the largest collections.

Cataloging practices also vary by campus with some collections fully cataloged and available via campus online catalogs while other collections are partially cataloged (fig 2).



**Figure 2 (based on data from UC statistical reports related to holdings of "Government Documents Not Counted as Bound Volumes")**

Due to the nature of government publications traditional catalog records are often not enough to properly identify and gain access to government materials. For example, a government publication can simply be titled, "The Report" with the author simply being "The Commission". Users are frequently required to physically examine the materials or

use additional indexes in order to effectively identify materials. Further supplementing the OPAC records (e.g. images of the table of contents) would provide needed information to properly identify materials.

Public service for the government collections also varies campus-to-campus. Most campuses provide service for government publications from a “shared” reference desk. Only two campuses maintain a separate reference desk for government publications: UC Davis and UC Riverside. A systemwide approach to providing service and access to government collections would provide a substantial benefit to users.