

Building A Unified Government Publications Repository

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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.

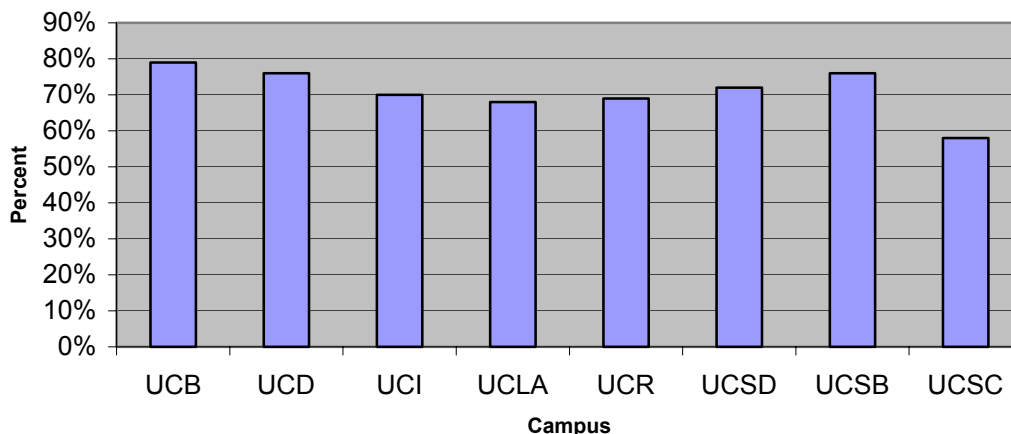
Duplicate Federal and California State Collections

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



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).

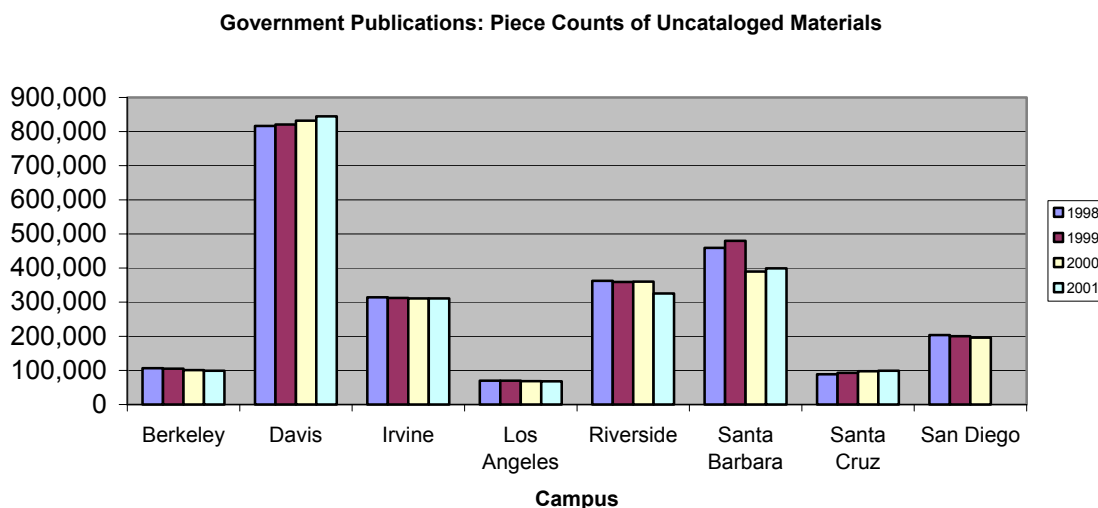


Figure 2 (based on data from UC statistical reports related to holdings of "Government Documents Not Counted as Bound Volumes")

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. Three campuses maintain a separate reference desk for government publications: UC Davis, UC Riverside, and UC Santa Barbara. A systemwide approach to providing service and access to government collections would provide a substantial benefit to users.

¹ This paper was written in consultation with Cecily Johns (Senior Associate for Collection Management California Digital Library and Project Director, Collection Management Initiative), Beverlee French (Assoc. University Librarian and Director for Shared Content, California Digital Library), Gary Lawrence (Director of Library Planning and Policy Development), and Joanne Miller (Senior Library Planning Analyst).