

U.S. GOVERNMENT DOCUMENTS IN LEYBURN LIBRARY
Collection Development Policy
revised April 2010

The Washington and Lee University Library collects, organizes, maintains, and provides public access to selected publications of the United States Government. Most of these publications are received through the Depository Library System and are maintained in a separate collection, arranged by the Superintendent of Documents (Sudocs) classification system. Other Federal publications may be acquired through other means.

Depository Collection

The University Library has been a selective depository for Federal publications distributed by the Superintendent of Documents since 1910. Our primary collection development mission is to select publications which support the teaching and research needs of both students and faculty, while at the same time attempting to be responsive to the information needs of the constituents of our Congressional District, in accordance with the *Federal Depository Library Handbook* (Introduction; revised May 2009: <http://www.fdlp.gov/administration/handbook>).

Selection of Federal materials through the Depository system is based upon item numbers, each representing one or more series published by the Government Printing Office (GPO). A list of available item numbers is issued annually (normally in the spring), and changes in the library's choice of item numbers may be made at this time. In addition, GPO occasionally issues "surveys" of both reclassified (i.e., a change in issuing agency) and new documents series, offering the opportunity for selection of these items.

Note: Items may be "de-selected," that is, removed from the library's Depository profile at any time. This is now done by electronically, using the form *Amendment of Item Selections* from the FDLP Web site: http://www.gpo.gov/su_docs/fdlp/tools/amendment.html). However, items may be selected, that is, added to the Depository profile, only on the occasions of the annual updates and the periodic surveys.

The subject matter of a Federal Government publication and its relation to the information needs of the library's clientele, as mentioned above, is the primary factor taken into consideration when assessing the suitability of that publication for the collection. However, other factors also are taken into account:

Format Much of the information provided by the Federal Government is now made available in electronic form on the Internet, usually without charge. We continue to collect and provide in paper form those materials which may be in significant demand by our users and/or which would require extensive sustained use for practical access. However, at the same time, we actively seek out and make available in the W&L Web site and/or in the library catalog any Federal sites, publications, or collections likely to be of value to our user population. Every attempt is made to avoid collecting materials in CD-ROM or microfiche or microfilm formats.

Multiple titles in item GPO's item number system groups publications by both issuing agency and type of publication. An item number may include one specific title or a number of individual, usually related, titles. When an item includes several titles, one must exercise some discretion in weighing the desirability of one or more titles against others within that item that are of marginal use or are particularly troublesome to maintain. In some cases, when the desire for one title necessarily requires the receipt of one or more decidedly "undesirable" titles in the Item grouping, electronic (Web) access to the needed title may well suffice.

Local availability Both the Washington and Lee Law Library and the Virginia Military Institute Preston Library are selective Federal Depository libraries. Each of these institutions has a clientele with particular interests and each of the libraries tends to serve those interests. However, the three local selective Depository libraries (W & L, Law, and VMI) do attempt to coordinate collection development to try to reduce unnecessary duplication and to expand coverage as much as is reasonably possible.

Weeding the Depository Collection

From time to time, the library may find it necessary or advisable to remove from the Depository collection materials which are of little use to the clientele. Such weeding is affected by several external factors.

A significant constraint on the library's ability to deselect or discard from the collection is the requirement, stated in 42 U.S.C. sec.1911, that Depository materials must be retained by the library for a period of five years from the date of receipt.

Materials to be removed from the collection must first be offered to the Regional Depository at the University of Virginia, in accordance with *Virginia Federal Depository Library Offers Procedures* (available on the UVa Web site: <http://guides.lib.virginia.edu/VaOffers>).

Weeding also should be coordinated with the other local Depository libraries (Law and VMI), since their selection profiles are, in part, based upon the availability of titles in Leyburn Library.

Non-Depository Acquisitions

Federal publications which either are (1) not Depository items or which are (2) Depository items, but not part of our profile, may be added to the library's collection. Requests for the acquisition of Federal publications may originate with the documents librarian, with members of the library staff, or with any patron of the library. The documents librarian is responsible for monitoring review sources and other sources for information about new Federal publications. Requests from patrons may come directly to the documents librarian or may be referred from the acquisitions librarian.

An increasingly-important method of maintaining awareness of new U.S. Government publications includes the announcements in the GOVDOC-L listserv and other electronic mailing lists.

Subjects of Particular Interest

Due to the nature of the W & L curriculum and the demands of our patrons, the publications of the following agencies appear to be of greatest interest:

Bureau of the Census, Congress, Federal Communications Commission, Department of Defense, Geological Survey, Executive Office of the President, Department of State, Smithsonian Institution, Congress, Environmental Protection Agency

This list is only the roughest generalization. Materials which are of wide-ranging value, as reference tools or sources of political, social, and economic statistics, are consistently of interest. As needs change and as relevant titles are published by various agencies, it is incumbent upon the documents librarian to maintain an awareness of both demand and potential supply. The easy accessibility of information in agency Web sites has made it much easier to check on the "possibilities," while simultaneously raising expectations.