

MINUTES

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Louisiana Advisory Council for the State Documents Depository Program

Thursday, 10 July 1997

The Louisiana Advisory Council for the State Documents Depository Program held a special meeting on Thursday, 10 July 1997 at the Bluebonnet Branch, East Baton Rouge Parish Library, Baton Rouge, Louisiana. Tom Jaques, State Librarian requested the meeting to discuss issues relating to agency publications in electronic formats. A quorum of the members being present, Lori Smith, Council Chair, called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m.

Members present were:

- Lori Smith, chair (Southeastern Louisiana University).
- Stephen Henson, secretary (Louisiana Tech University).
- Sandy Colby (State Department of Education).
- Danny Gillane (Recorder of Documents).
- Collin Hamer (New Orleans Public Library).
- Suzy Hughes (Legislative Research Library).
- Monica King (Ouachita Parish Library).
- Margaret Lane.
- Glenn McMullen (Louisiana State University).
- Eileen Menard (Office of the Louisiana Register).
- Carla Pritchett (Loyola Law Library).
- Virginia Smith (State Library of Louisiana).

Tom Jaques, State Librarian, and Don Lemieux, State Archivist, were special guests. Several observers also attended.

Attendees introduced themselves and gave their institutional affiliations.

After being introduced by the Chair, Mr. Jaques spoke about the changing nature of access to information published by state agencies. Many agencies have eliminated paper publications and have begun publishing the agency's documents only on a web-site. Jaques stated that the State Library has four objectives for the state depository program:

- To receive and distribute as many documents as possible.
- To provide fast, efficient access to agency information.
- To preserve agency information in some format for the future.

- To reduce costs while increasing efficiency of the state depository program.
- Jaques thanked the council members for their work in support of the depository program.

The Chair welcomed Donald Lemieux who spoke about preservation of agency publications. Mr. Lemieux stated that digitization is not an accepted tool for archival preservation. Act 373 of the 1997 Louisiana Legislature states that an agency can not dispose of a paper copy of a document until digitization is accepted. He recommends that the State Library require the agency to provide the document in either of two formats:

- Paper, to be distributed directed to depository libraries.
- Electronic format, to be converted to computer output microform.

At some future time, if digitization becomes an accepted medium for archival preservation, the State Library could review the policy to allow electronic formats.

L. Smith reviewed an earlier report by Janice Shull that concluded that current state law does not limit depository requirement to publications printed on paper. The law as written includes agency publications in electronic format.

In a discussion of format issues, Council members and guests made the following points:

- S. Colby distributed copies of an information sheet on the transition of Federal documents to electronic format (copy attached).
- What is the penalty for agencies that do not comply? Other than persuasion, none. The program depends on the cooperation of the agencies with the Recorder's office.
- Because electronic formats evolve over time, state-of-the-art technology changes every decade or less. If agencies distribute publications in an electronic format, the documents will have to be transferred on a regular basis to new formats. This responsibility will fall to either the State Library, the State Archives, or the depository libraries.
- Act 373 requires preservation of the original document in paper. What if the original document was created in an electronic format and there was no original in paper?
- How long did it take microfilm to become an accepted archival format? Lemieux responded that it took about ten years.
- Some agencies change their web sites in a predictable manner and on a regular schedule. These sites could be easily captured on computer output microform. Other agencies change their sites on an irregular basis with no plan. How can we capture these irregular sites?

The discussion then moved to the topic of the existing liaison structure between the Recorder's office and the agencies. During the discussion, those present raised the following points:

- The agency liaison structure does not work well for paper documents. How do we expect it to work for electronic formats?

- The Recorder of Documents stated that he mailed the semi-annual request for documents to about 700 agencies. He received 200 responses. He observed that some agencies cooperate with the depository program while others do not.
- The Recorder stated that the next semi-annual issue of Public Documents on the State Library web-site will include hot links to agency documents in electronic format.

After discussing the issue of agency liaisons, the group moved to a discussion of standard formats for electronic publications. During the discussion, the following points were raised:

- Lemieux stated that the Recorder's office is responsible for generating an archival copy in either paper or microform of agency publications on a web-site.
- Websites are tracked in Public Documents but are not archived by the State Library nor the State Archives. The State Library will catalog electronic files with a permanent universal resource locator (PURL), if appropriate.
- The State Archives retains paper and microform copies of agency publications only.
- Hughes raised issues of official format (the "look and feel" concept) and of file integrity. What if the web-site drops data or paragraphs?
- Lemieux stated that the State Library should consider revising the regulations requiring state agencies to submit publications to the Recorder. He also suggested that the State Library work with the Division of Administration to require depository copies in all printing contracts.

The group then discussed public access matters. During the discussion, the following points were made:

- Public access to agency publications in an electronic format involve three factors:
 - Appropriate equipment.
 - Library staff.
 - Appropriate training.
- What are other states doing along these lines?
- Is there money available to fund equipment for depository libraries and training of library personnel?

L. Smith appointed a committee to report on similar activities in other states. Committee members are Virginia Smith, Danny Gillane, and Sandy Colby. L. Smith will report with a review of Federal activities.

The following announcements were made:

- Henson reminded the group of the Bayou Area Government Documents Discussion Group (bayoudoc@latech.edu).
- L. Smith asked for volunteers for the position of council secretary.
- Hughes asked for feedback on the State Legislature's web-site.

There being no other business, the meeting adjourned at 2:55 p.m. The next regular meeting will be at 1 p.m. on Friday, 12 September 1997 at the Bluebonnet Branch, East Baton Rouge Parish Library, Baton Rouge, Louisiana.

Stephen Henson, recording
30 July 1997

Attachment: Colby handout