

OLA Quarterly



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From the Guest Editor



JENNIFER PATTERSON

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This issue of the *OLA Quarterly* features articles written by State Library staff highlighting the programs, services, and history of the State Library. The State Library of Oregon was established as the Oregon Library Commission in 1905 and renamed as the Oregon State Library in 1913. Today, the State Library of Oregon has three distinct roles:

- The Talking Book and Braille Library serves Oregonians with print disabilities by providing Braille, audiobooks, descriptive videos, and magazines through the mail and digital download. This is a free service to eligible Oregonians, with over 5,000 active users and an average of approximately 30,000 items circulated every month. The Talking Book and Braille Library is the regional library in Oregon for the Library of Congress' National Library Service for the Blind and Print Disabled (NLS) network.
- The Library Support and Development Services Division provides consultation services, professional development, statewide library services, and state and federal grant administration to libraries across the state. The division administers state-funded Ready to Read grants to public libraries in Oregon to support summer reading and early literacy programs, and administers federal LSTA grant funding as competitive grants and for statewide library services including the Answerland online reference service, the Oregon School Library Information System (OSLIS), and the Statewide Database Licensing Program.



- The Government Information and Library Services Division provides library services to state employees including research assistance, professional development, and instruction. Through the embedded librarian program, each state agency is assigned a librarian to provide specialized assistance and resources to support state agency staff in their work. The division preserves state agency publications and makes them accessible to state employees and the public through the Oregon Digital Collections website, and reference assistance is provided to the public in utilizing State Library collections and resources.

Articles featuring the work of each of these divisions are included in this issue.

Joel Henderson, User Accounts Coordinator for the Talking Book and Braille Library, writes about the recent transition to customized cartridges in the Talking Book and Braille Library. This new service model increases title availability, eliminates wait time for popular titles, and allows up to eight audiobook titles per cartridge. This change greatly enhanced customer service and streamlined operations.

Greta Bergquist, Youth Services Consultant, and Jennifer Maurer, School Library Consultant, highlight two ways the State Library supports service to youth. Greta's article focuses on the evolution of the Ready to Read grant program and Jennifer's article provides an overview of State Library services for school libraries and the current state of school libraries in Oregon.

State Library collections are highlighted in three of the articles in this issue. Arlene Weible, Electronic Services Consultant, provides an overview of the Federal Depository Library Program Regional Collection in Oregon libraries and how the collection and management of the collection have evolved over time. Jey Wann, Oregon Documents Coordinator, writes about the Oregon Documents Depository Program and the processes involved in collecting born-digital publications and building the Oregon Government Publications digital collection. Finally, a project to digitize the Oregon Index, a citation index mainly covering articles published in major daily newspapers of Portland and Salem from 1900 to 1987, is described in the article written by Sarah Cunningham, Cataloging Assistant, Angela Jannelli, Oregon Documents Specialist, and Heather Pitts, Cataloging Services Librarian.

The Government Information and Library Services embedded librarian program, a program connecting librarians to state agencies in order to enhance and tailor services to meet the needs of state employees, is covered in Natalie Brant's article. Natalie, Reference Librarian, describes the origin of the program and how it has changed over time, including recent successes during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Amy Coughenour, Electronic Resources Librarian, highlights successful efforts to promote databases to state employees. The strategies outlined can be adapted by libraries looking to increase awareness and usage of electronic resources, which may be of particular interest as students, job seekers, workers, and families are increasingly turning to online options.

The first state librarian, Cornelia Marvin Pierce, is featured in an article written by Courtney "Cam" Amabile, Volunteer and Operations Coordinator. Although Cornelia Marvin Pierce made significant contributions to the development of library services in Oregon, she was a strong supporter of eugenics and later married former Oregon Governor and known KKK associate Walter Pierce. Cam's article discusses these issues and the State Library's actions to address this troubling aspect of our agency's history.

My hope is that the articles in this issue not only provide a glimpse into some of the interesting resources and services available through the State Library but also provide ideas and strategies that can be adapted and applied to other library environments. One of the State Library's primary roles is to support the Oregon library community, and we welcome you to [contact us](#) to discuss any of the topics in this issue or any other library-related topics.

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A Matriarch With Many Sides: Contextualizing Oregon's First State Librarian

by Courtney "Cam" Amabile
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Another pivotal point in societal consciousness is brewing. Statues, plaques, and other representations of the controversial values of times foregone have tumbled and awareness of the transgressions of historical figures is at an all-time high. Increased awareness has awakened a reexamination period, an acknowledgment of the necessity for a holistic narrative about the people and events we choose to honor. With this modern lens of cultural value being used to highlight the actions of past leaders, the State Library of Oregon has begun its own introspection on who we venerate and how.

When visiting the second floor of the State Library on the Capitol Mall, one can find a small brass plaque dedicated to the first State Librarian and cofounder of the public library system as an institution in Oregon as we know it. This plaque displays the likeness of Cornelia Marvin Pierce rendered in relief, captioned very simply with her title as State Librarian and her years of service (1905–1929). The dates on the plaque reflect both her early role as the Secretary of the Oregon Library Commission (the predecessor to the State Library) and her later role as the State Librarian. As simple as it is, a caption like this has the power to hide a great many secrets.

At the turn of the twentieth century, the institution of the public library in Oregon was in its infancy with only three public libraries in existence in the state (Gunselman, 2004). It was the actions of a pair of women, Cornelia Marvin (later Cornelia Marvin Pierce) and Mary Frances Isom, who shaped the future of accessible books. Women's Clubs around the state had already begun building the foundation necessary for public libraries. It was on top of this foundation that Cornelia Marvin and Mary worked toward making the free public library a legislatively funded institution in the state with widespread public support (Scheppke, 2006).

Having come to Oregon from Wisconsin (by way of Iowa and Illinois), Cornelia Marvin was an esteemed and well-trained librarian who pioneered and championed the ideas of traveling libraries and material delivery by mail in Oregon (Gunselman, 2004). Before the existence of a brick-and-mortar State Library, she headed the Oregon Library Commission and, with a meager budget, made materials accessible to all, from the urban elite to the most rural of communities.



Despite these impactful contributions toward accessible library services, Cornelia Marvin was also a fierce proponent of ideals that were markedly anti-humanitarian by modern standards. Of these ideals, her support for eugenics was the most vocalized.

Frances Galton, one of the fathers of eugenics, defined this concept with ancient roots as, “the science which deals with all influences that improve the inborn qualities of a race; also with those that develop them to the utmost advantage” (Galton, 1909). This period-specific definition is expanded through the twentieth century as the “science” developed narrow focus points on concepts of selective breeding and sterilization, among others.

Thomas Leonard, a historian of American economics notes that, as a recognized field in the United States, eugenics truly exploded in the late nineteenth and first half of the twentieth century, taking a foothold in politics and formal legislation

as early as 1907 (Leonard, 2016). According to his perspective, these eugenics policies had a profound impact on the development of the turn of the century economy. Contextualizing this historical moment of the movement quite plainly, he states that, “... eugenic ideas were politically influential, culturally fashionable, and scientifically mainstream” (p. 110). In Oregon, these “fashionable” ideologies would become law by 1920, and an eventual total of 2,648 Oregonians would be forcibly sterilized as a result of the legislation (Currey, 1977).

At the same time that these ideals reached their peak, Cornelia Marvin reached her pinnacle in librarianship as the head of the State Library of Oregon. Pierce saw the eugenics movement as highly relevant to her duties as the State Librarian, due to her responsibility to assess the allocation of public funds and resources (Gunselman, 2004). Gunselman illustrates the depths of Cornelia Marvin’s support for the movement by referencing this 1955 comment, “I believe my most important work outside of the Library was the backing I was able to give Dr. Owens-Adair in her long fight for legislation in making possible sterilization of the unfit.” This statement is exceptionally significant considering that Owens-Adair, Oregon’s first recognized female physician, was the number one pundit for promoting Oregon’s eugenics bills. Owens-Adair authored and promoted this legislation herself between 1907 and 1920, when a comprehensive version of her involuntary sterilization bill was passed as state law (Currey, 1977). Cornelia Marvin, wishing to ensure that state resources were not misallocated for the “unfit,” used her state platform to further this commonly held eugenics prerogative.

In addition to her strong associations with the eugenics movement, another trend is present in Cornelia Marvin’s actions, or rather inactions, following her tenure at the State



Cornelia Marvin Pierce (1905).



Library. Cornelia Marvin became Cornelia Marvin Pierce after marrying former Oregon governor Walter Pierce in 1928. She is believed to have catapulted his career as a congressman after their marriage but is also known to have been politically active herself, sometimes actively and openly countering the opinions of her husband (Gunselman, 2009; McCoy, 2009). While the depths of Cornelia's complicity with, and knowledge of Walter Pierce's opinions and prerogatives aren't fully known, it can be conjectured by her silence and lack of public challenge to his ideals, that they shared many of the same principal beliefs in Progressive Era social standards. Regardless of whether there were shared beliefs between the pair, Walter's actions tangentially link Cornelia to the racially motivated motions spearheaded by his office.

Historian Robert McCoy, in a critique of Walter Pierce, chronicles Walter's dealings with the Ku Klux Klan, where he was a known attendee at meetings and was given honorary membership. This article also illustrates Walter Pierce's strong anti-Asian sentiments, displayed plainly through his penning and supporting of many exclusionary laws against Japanese, Chinese, and "Mongolians" ownership of land in Oregon. In conjunction with these laws, he called upon counties to take roll of "oriental" persons within their bounds. McCoy goes so far as to call Walter Pierce an "ardent racist," with animosity not strictly limited to those of Asian descent but against immigrants as a whole (McCoy, 2009). At the time, these xenophobic and often anti-Semitic stances in personal and political arenas were commonplace. They were also inextricable from the eugenicist ideology seeking purity of the human race. In fact, many of these attitudes were the basis of racial supremacy movements globally. Notably, draft eugenics laws authored by Harry H. Laughlin, an American professor and eugenics movement kingpin, were later used as a basis for Nazi policies in fascist Germany in the 1930s to further racial purification efforts (Harry Laughlin & Eugenics, 2020).

It is safe to say that Cornelia Marvin Pierce, regardless of her personal opinions on these matters, was at least aware of her husband's participation in these xenophobic and racist efforts. No known protestation to these political attitudes exists from her perspective either. While we cannot attribute these opinions to Cornelia Marvin Pierce directly, her supporting role in her husband's political career built on these foundational stances is something to which, at least, attention should be drawn.

If we singularly apply a modern lens to examine Cornelia Marvin Pierce's personal and political actions, it would appear that her contributions to the state's foundation of the library as an institution are far outweighed by her associations with eugenics and other exclusionary movements. Despite this, however, she also contributed enormously to holistic community education through access to library materials and promoted the library as an institution for all. This contradictory juxtaposition of temporally popular politics and ideals is the starting line at which the State Library of Oregon hopes to engage readers and visitors.

Today, the State Library of Oregon's mission and vision stands in stark contrast to these eugenics principles. Our modern services would have upset and upended staunch eugenicists' support for the library institution. As a main charge, the State Library of Oregon operates Oregon's Talking Book & Braille Library, providing free access to audio and braille books to those who are print-disabled in the state. This directive is clearly laid out in Oregon Statute stating that, "The State Library shall provide library services to persons who are print-disabled by ... acting in cooperation with the Library of Congress in the provision of library materials and services for persons who are print-disabled. (ORS 357.008 (2))" As it might be imagined, this service would have likely been much to the chagrin of Cornelia



Marvin Pierce, who would have followed Harry Laughlin's 1914 doctrine, calling the "deaf" and the "blind" among those listed as "socially inadequate classes" (Laughlin, 1914). While this is chief among the obvious separations of the State Library from this terrible history, it is certainly not the only change in values.

In order to tell the whole story of Cornelia Marvin Pierce, the State Library is taking action to recognize both inaccuracies and absences in the portrayals and narratives of this important cultural figure. In this effort, Cornelia Marvin Pierce's plaque is now accompanied by contextual interpretive signage to meet the need for transparency regarding this figurehead. Additionally, all tours will be updated with new contextual information, our website's [history section](#) has been modified, and a future exhibit featuring Cornelia Marvin Pierce will include her darker side.

Contextualizing Cornelia Marvin Pierce's actions is the first step toward recognizing that the State Library has, through indirect association, contributed to the furthering of these movements against equity that occurred in the past, regardless of whether those attitudes reflect our values today. Our newest planning efforts include a vision to provide "equitable access to library and information services for all Oregonians" (State Library of Oregon Strategic Plan, 2020). A key step in realizing this vision is recognizing and addressing the inequities fostered by our past leaders as we commit to equity, diversity, inclusion, and anti-racist practices going forward. 

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Database Promotion at the Intersection of Electronic Resource Management and Outreach

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During the electronic resource management cycle, library staff review, acquire, evaluate, and deactivate databases based on a number of factors that include usage statistics, collection development decisions, and budgetary factors. One aspect of electronic resource management that has increased in the Government Information and Library Services division is our promotion of new, updated, or existing databases to our state employee users.

This article discusses a pilot project designed to promote the use of the Safari database (now known as O'Reilly). It shares the steps we took to plan and implement outreach activities focused on the database, along with how we created goals and measures to evaluate and assess the success of the promotion.

After the pilot database promotion, we gained experience and information to design additional database promotions, which has helped us improve our communications and outreach to state employees.

Electronic Resource Management Cycle

Database promotion often occurs, as part of marketing and branding, during the implementation phase of electronic resource management. Activities may include training, developing handouts, communications, and more. These promotional activities continue beyond the first phase of introducing databases to our users. Database marketing and outreach plans also help libraries remind our users about existing and updated databases (Emery & Stone, 2013; Emery, Stone, & McCracken, 2020).

Safari September Background

The Government Information and Library Services (Government Services) division held a database promotion called Safari September in September 2018. The idea for the promotion grew out of a recommendation from a comparative evaluation of eBook databases, which determined that one of the databases would need to be canceled. Our users mostly accessed the canceled eBook database, Books24x7, for technology and business topics and the evalu-



ation report verified that the Safari database would not only meet those same disciplinary needs, but it covered more topics, particularly with a growth in professional development and soft skills training. The Safari database also provided materials in more formats: eBooks, live online training, learning modules for asynchronous training, video-based case studies, videos, and audiobooks.

Process

We developed a planning process to help us maintain a clear focus for the Safari September promotion. These were the five components:

1. gather a team,
2. select an audience,
3. establish goals,
4. create communication and marketing plans, and
5. determine success.

Gather a Team

Gathering a team for the database promotion allowed for the sharing of responsibilities, which decreased the workload for each member of the team. Also, more people involved in the process meant more ideas and fresh perspectives. This was especially true for colleagues who didn't normally work with outreach or databases.

For Safari September, we created an ad hoc team, which included six staff members who worked with electronic resources, web services, reference and instruction, outreach, cataloging, stacks coordination, training support, collection development, and project management. Many members of the team worked in multiple areas of the library. In addition to the ad hoc team, other staff members from the division volunteered to assist with specific activities throughout the promotion.

Select an Audience

Once we developed our team, we decided who we wanted our promotion to reach. We reviewed our users, stakeholders, collaborators, and partners, and considered if we wanted to focus on particular groups of users. Then, we determined who our potential users would be.

We arrived at four main categories of users, at both broad and narrow levels:

1. current library users (state agency employees),
2. Books24x7 users (to share information about Safari as an alternative to Books24x7),
3. state employees who would likely find topics in Safari useful for their work (technology, business, management, professional development, and soft skills), and
4. potential library users.

We also knew we would need to consider these user groups according to how they accessed the library—both online and in-person.



Establish Goals

As part of the planning process, we set the following six goals for Safari September:

1. promote the Safari database,
2. provide information about Safari as an alternative for Books24x7,
3. include information about Safari in communications with state agencies,
4. send all giveaways to participants,
5. increase the number of new registered Safari users (at least 150 new Safari users, which was three times the typical monthly new registrant statistic when providing training), and
6. see increased and steady growth in usage statistics.

While some of our goals were transactional, such as completing a specific task, others were measurable, such as reaching a specific target. We designed the goals to focus on what we wanted to achieve, which was an increased awareness and use of the Safari database, while also serving as a foundation for our communication and marketing plans.

Create Communication and Marketing Plans

Database promotion is a combination of communication and marketing. As part of the brainstorming process of this phase, we asked ourselves the following questions about our outreach and communication systems:

- What systems did we already have in place?
- What communications or systems could we leverage?
- Were there opportunities to pilot new outreach or communication ideas?
- What were some surprising ways to reach out?
- How would we communicate with our users—in-person, online, or both?

We wanted to provide options for in-person and online communication to reach as many state employees as possible, regardless of geographic location. This is especially important for state employees because their work locations are spread throughout Oregon in urban and rural areas.

EXISTING COMMUNICATION SYSTEMS. For our existing communications systems, we used our division newsletter, eClips blog, and LibGuides. Our division newsletter is a bimonthly email sent to all library account holders. It includes information about upcoming trainings, updates to library services, database news, Oregon Government Publications information, and more. For Safari September, we provided information about promotional activities and the Safari database. eClips is an online news clipping blog focused on Oregon state government, such as state agencies or the state legislature, that is available for anyone to subscribe. An accompanying email goes out Monday through Friday mornings with the top 30 news clippings. For Safari September, we posted trivia questions twice a week, which required users to explore Safari in order to find the answers. LibGuides is a library-focused content management system. The Government Services division had existing LibGuides to support online trainings or provide subject-specific curated information. For Safari September, we adapted the Safari database LibGuide, adding a section for information about the Safari September promotion, including the eClips trivia questions and answers, virtual bingo cards, and more.



Safari: Review and Introduction

Learn about all the resources available from Safari through the State Library.

- About Safari
- >> Safari September <<**
- Training Opportunities
- Learner Quiz
- Bingo
- Stumpers
- Account Registration
- Settings & Features
- Playlists
- Ebooks, Training, Videos, etc.
- Questions or Comments?

Safari September

Safari September is our promotional event to share information about the [Safari database](#). During the month of September, the State Library of Oregon will hold a variety of activities to encourage exploration and use of Safari.



Activities

In Person:

- [Diversity Conference](#) = information at the State Library of Oregon exhibit tables
- Come to the [Watering Hole](#) = visit with us at capitol mall area cafeterias
- Training Opportunities = come to an [Introduction to Safari class](#) at the State Library

Online:

- Communications = look for online updates and communications in our newsletter, along with emails from the embedded librarians
- [Bingo](#) = explore Safari by completing squares in our bingo challenge
- [Safari September Stumpers](#) = keep an eye out for trivia questions in our [eClips](#) service
- Training Opportunities = join us online for an [Introduction to Safari class](#)

Schedule

Safari September Schedule

MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
3 [Labor Day Holiday]	4	5 Introduction to Safari (online) @ 10:00am	6	7
<i>Safari September Bingo & Safari September Stumpers</i>				
10	11	12 Diversity Conference (exhibit table)	13 Diversity Conference (exhibit table)	14
<i>Safari September Bingo & Safari September Stumpers</i>				
17 Come to the Watering Hole 11:30am-1:30pm Labor & Industries Barbara Roberts (DHS)	18 Introduction to Safari (State Library, Rm 103) @ 11:00am	19 Come to the Watering Hole 11:30am-1:30pm Public Service Bldg	20 Introduction to Safari (State Library, Rm 103) @ 2:00pm	21
<i>Safari September Bingo & Safari September Stumpers</i>				
24	25	26	27 Introduction to Safari (online) @ 2:00pm	28
<i>Safari September Bingo & Safari September Stumpers</i>				

The Safari September section of the Safari: Review and Introduction LibGuide.

EXISTING ACTIVITIES. We also adjusted a couple of our existing activities—library trainings and a conference for state employees. The Government Services division typically offers four trainings per month, which includes two introductory trainings and two special topics trainings. For Safari September, we added two online and two in-person trainings focused on the Safari database. The State of Oregon usually holds a Statewide Diversity and Inclusion Conference for all state employees every year in September. The State Library of Oregon has a table at the conference to share information about services from our divisions, and in 2018, we used a corner of our table to display information about Safari September. We provided handouts with information about upcoming trainings and how to create an account, an account registration sign-up sheet, and a prize drawing for giveaways.

PILOT NEW OUTREACH OR COMMUNICATION IDEAS. A new idea that we explored and implemented was to visit the cafeterias in three state agency buildings at the Capitol Mall in Salem. We called these visits “Come to the Watering Hole” as an extension of our safari imagery. Two library staff members set up tables for two hours during the average lunch period, and each team had a box with all of the materials needed—handouts and brochures, a container for prize drawing slips, account registration forms, pens, signs, and more. Afterward, the team brought back registration sheets with new user information, business cards, and completed drawing slips.

DEVELOP PLAN AND SCHEDULE. We used our promotion goals and communication systems to develop a plan and schedule. In August 2018, the team came together. Different team members took the lead for the activities or communication methods, and we completed our promotional handouts and brochures. We also provided a digital packet for librarians to share with professional development contacts at state agencies. At the end of the month, we held an internal promotion for Government Services staff, which we called our Safari Bootcamp. The Safari Bootcamp was a modified training session to share information about both the Safari database and the Safari September promotion.

In September 2018, we had online activities throughout the month, including eClips trivia questions (twice a week) and virtual bingo. We offered four Safari database trainings at different times and in different formats, both online and in-person, during three of the four weeks. Our newsletter went out to all library users at the beginning of the second week, and we shared information about Safari September at the Statewide Diversity and Inclusion Conference at the end of the second week. The Come to the Watering Hole cafeteria promotions occurred at state agency buildings during the third week.

Determine Success

After we completed the Safari September promotion, we determined its success by evaluating and assessing the measures and data associated with our goals. We gathered data related to the different activities—the number of new users, the number of people participating in trivia questions, the number of training attendees, comments received from participants, usage statistics, tracking where giveaways were sent, and other quantitative and qualitative measures.

Most of our goals were evaluative (answering *what*, *how*, and *how much* questions), but some of the data gave us the ability to start answering the *why* questions of assessment. This information came from both qualitative data, such as feedback from participants, and from combining elements of the usage statistics and registration data.



Evaluation and Assessment

Sometimes the terms *evaluation* and *assessment* are used interchangeably when describing the process of measuring goals. These are the meanings we used for the terms.

Evaluation determines the quality of what is being evaluated (for example, a test score). It's designed for documentation and provides a level of achievement. Evaluation answers *what*, *how*, and *how much* questions. It tells us where we are. A visual image is the "You are here" logo from location maps. This type of measure is used more often for electronic resource management when we consider usage statistics and similar data.

Assessment leverages measurements (for example, goals or objectives). It's designed for improvement and feedback and provides guidance for the future. Assessment answers *why* questions. It gives directions to where we want to be. A visual image is the comic strip *The Family Circus*, with the dotted line showing where Billy has traveled that day and pointing to where he has yet to go. This type of measure is used more often for outreach when we consider how to reach our users or which types of users would benefit the most from particular outreach activities.

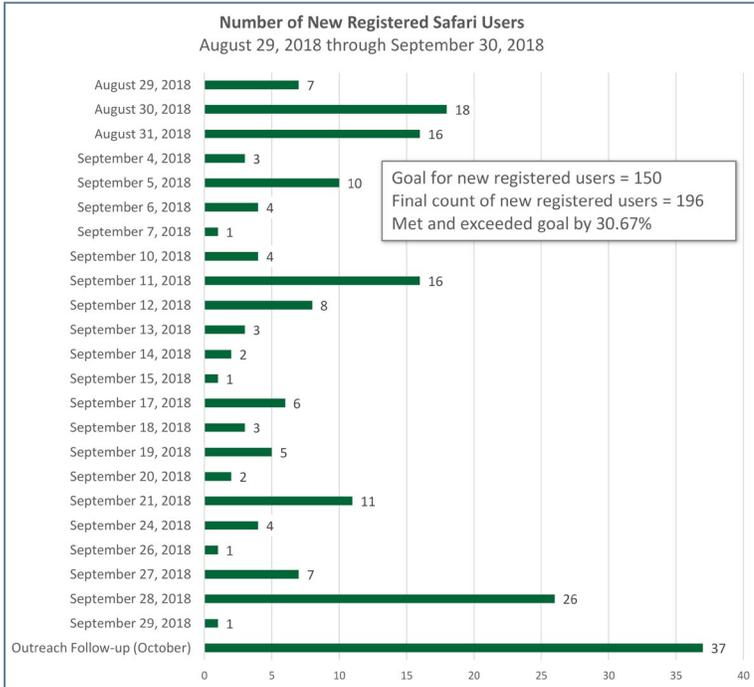
PROMOTE THE SAFARI DATABASE. We successfully promoted the Safari database in multiple formats and activities throughout the entire month of September. Our registration drives gave us more data for this goal. At the Statewide Diversity and Inclusion Conference, 69 percent of state employees who completed the registration sheet became new library users and 90 percent became new Safari users. At the Come to the Watering Hole activities, 40 percent of state employees who completed the registration sheet became new library users and 75 percent became new Safari users.

PROVIDE INFORMATION ABOUT SAFARI AS AN ALTERNATIVE FOR BOOKS24X7. We sent out multiple communications about Safari as an alternative database through emails, the division newsletter, and the eClips blog, with an average open rate of 22.77 percent for the emails. After we removed the link to Books24x7 from our database list, very few users contacted us regarding its absence.

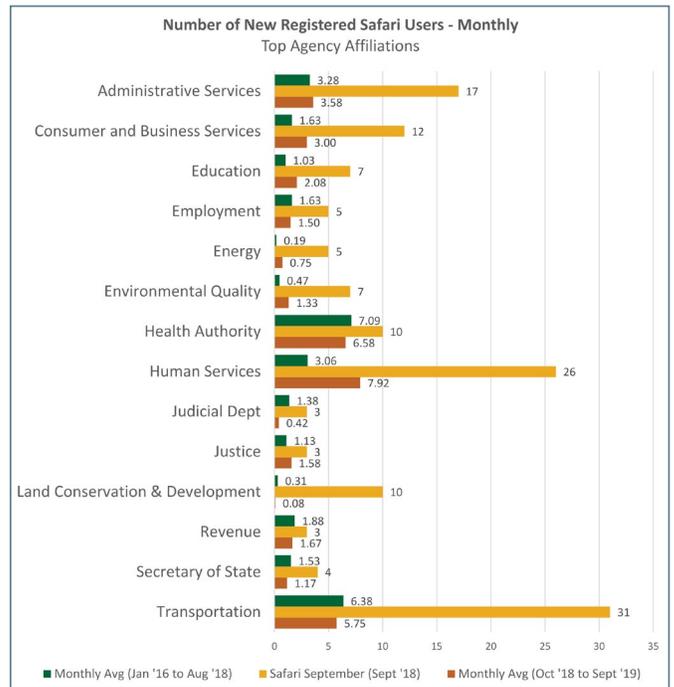
INCLUDE INFORMATION ABOUT SAFARI IN COMMUNICATIONS WITH STATE AGENCIES. All librarians emailed their professional development contacts at state agencies with information about the Safari September promotion and the Safari database. Librarians sent emails to a total of 437 recipients from 77 state agencies, many of whom responded to the librarians. The word cloud displays the top 50 words from the compiled responses.

SEND ALL GIVEAWAYS TO PARTICIPANTS. We sent over 90 percent of the Safari database giveaways as prizes to participants of the various events, which we considered to be a success for this goal.





Number of new registered Safari users from the Safari September promotion.



Comparison of average monthly new registered Safari users by top agency affiliations, from before, during, and one year after Safari September.

Impact on Database Promotions

Safari September successfully promoted the Safari database to our users. And our experiences from Safari September impacted our database promotions for both targeted promotions and improvised outreach efforts.

Targeted Promotions

The Government Services division developed two targeted database promotions in 2019. The first promotion focused on databases that support on-demand learning for Microsoft Office programs. The team that led this promotion called it Microsoft May and focused activities on communication, registration drives, and training opportunities. Later that year, the Newspaper November promotion focused on databases that have newspaper content, along with additional library resources, such as microfilm, the eClips blog, and more. This promotion was then adapted to become an online training in our regular training schedule.

COVID-19 Outreach Responses

In late-March 2020, many state employees changed to telework environments in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Government Services staff increased our reference and outreach efforts to ensure state employees continued to receive library resources and services no matter where they were located. As part of this effort, we increased promotions of the O'Reilly (formerly known as Safari) database and its growing collection of resources.



We highlighted information about O'Reilly in our newsletter, created content playlists in O'Reilly based on frequent questions and statewide training and communications, offered more scheduled online trainings for O'Reilly, and coordinated agency-specific O'Reilly trainings with one of the state agencies—teaching five online trainings with a total of 144 participants in May and June to support their training initiatives.

Conclusion

Government Services staff will continue to develop database promotions as part of electronic resource management and outreach programs. Outreach efforts are often an exchange of ideas between library staff and our users as we determine how best to meet our users' needs, and our database promotions will adapt as part of this iterative process. 

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State of School Libraries in Oregon: Challenges and Successes

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The State Library supports Oregon school libraries in a variety of ways. Data about school library staffing and funding is collected and is often requested by library advocates. The State Library's Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) allotment contributes to or funds Oregon Battle of the Books (OBOB), the statewide databases, and the Oregon School Library Information System, otherwise known as OSLIS. In addition, the Oregon Association of School Libraries (OASL) has benefited from LSTA competitive grants, such as grants they received to develop the Oregon School Library Standards and the related Grade-Level Learning Goals. I work closely with the Oregon Department of Education (ODE), and as I learn about relevant updates and projects at ODE, I keep the library community informed about potential opportunities and connect OASL leadership with appropriate ODE contacts. Much of the support I provide comes in the form of consulting as needs arise. As one example, I helped a paraprofessional running a library on her own navigate a situation in which her principal proposed a new policy charging a committee with approving all library book orders. Another example is when controversy arose around an OBOB title, *George*. A few administrators pulled the book about a transgender student from their library collections and forbade their OBOB groups from reading it (Brown, 2019). In response, I organized meetings with ODE staff, the Oregon Intellectual Freedom Committee and ALA office, and others which culminated in coordinating a webinar about intellectual freedom best practices for school administrators.

Additional local support comes from organizations like the Oregon Library Association (OLA) and Oregon Association of School Libraries. For example, as a result of how COVID-19 has affected K-12 education, OASL leadership developed talking points about the value that licensed and paraprofessional staff bring during distance learning. Those organizations can also advocate for school libraries in ways that the State Library, as a state agency, cannot. In the last couple of years, OASL ramped up their advocacy efforts by forming an advocacy committee. They created an advocacy toolkit and worked with the OLA Library Development & Legislation Committee during the last full session of the

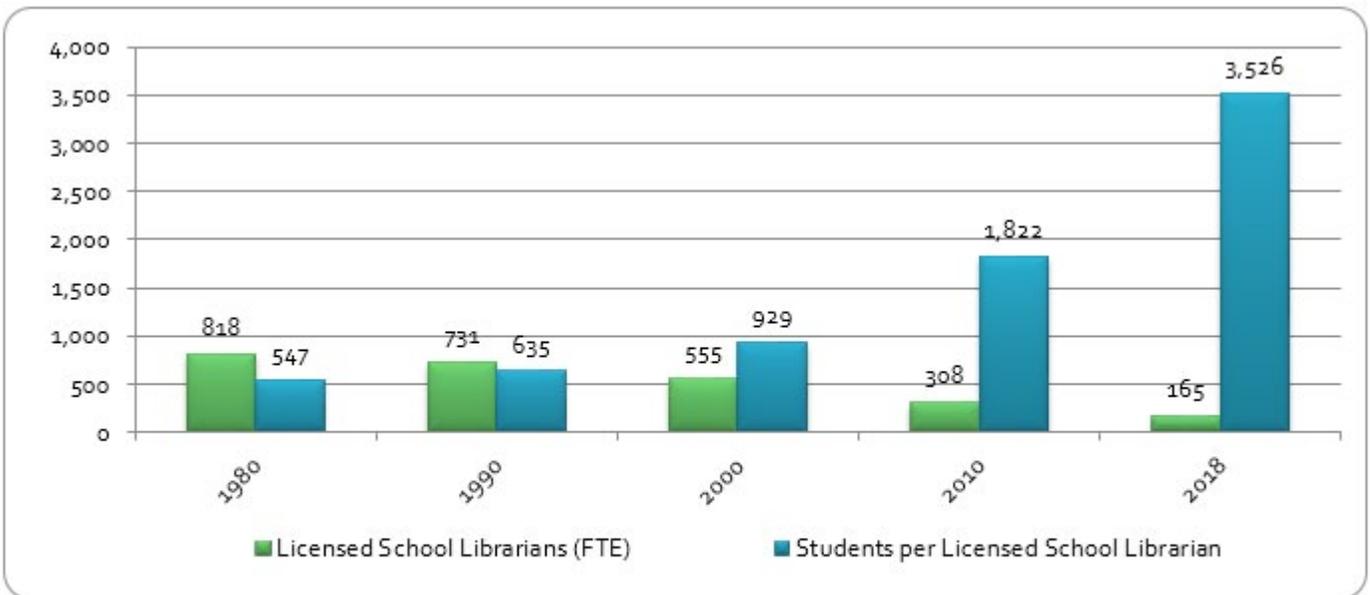


Oregon Legislature, trying to pass legislation that would require licensed school librarians in elementary schools, among other things, based on momentum from the then-pending Student Success Act. The school library legislation did not advance, and the advocacy committee plans to pursue new legislation again when the time is right. That situation is a reflection of the current state of school libraries in Oregon. Much good work is being done, but efforts to staff, fund, and better utilize school library programs often do not move forward.

In preparation to write this article, I asked OASL members to respond to a survey about successes and challenges. Top challenges surfaced, both through the survey responses and from trends I have noticed in my dozen years at the State Library. To save space, I identified the library staff whom I quoted as licensed/certified (L) or classified/paraprofessional (C). The quotes are a sampling, and you are encouraged to read the full list of responses (Maurer, 2020b).

Lack of Licensed School Librarians on Staff

As of the 2018–19 school year, there were 165 FTE licensed school librarians in Oregon’s 1,256 public schools (Maurer, 2020a). There were also 697 FTE school library classified staff that year. The State Library has tracked this information since the 1980–81 school year, when there were 818 FTE licensed librarians. Unfortunately, we have no equivalent data about Oregon’s private schools. One negative consequence of few or no licensed librarians being on staff is that students lose out on the instructional component of a strong school library program. For example, often there is no intentional instruction around information literacy and all it entails.



Licensed School Librarians in Oregon Public Schools, 1980-81 through 2018-19, by Decade

Table: State Library of Oregon | Data: Oregon Department of Education

CHALLENGE: “Even with Oregon’s Student Success Act, no new positions were added to the libraries. I am unable to change administrators’ attitudes about the need for training and for appropriate staffing, even with discussion and evidence. My biggest challenge was ... no time allowed in part-time contracts to train paraprofessionals that are new to the job. Because many of the library paraprofessionals have ‘other’ jobs, the libraries are closed or not available to student or staff use.” (Solo L for district)

SUCCESS: Eugene School District hired a district librarian during the second half of the 2019–20 school year. Around the same time, Lane Education Service District hired a librarian to serve rural districts. Both positions had gone unfilled for several years.

Administrators Do Not Understand Role of Libraries and Library Staff

The staffing issue speaks to another concern that rises to the top of the list. Many school and district administrators do not understand or value the role of the school library program or the work that is involved. Contributing factors may be that libraries are seldom addressed in educational leadership programs, and in some cases, newer administrators may have no experience working with a licensed librarian, even from their teaching days. Often administrators are not swayed when presented with the collective body of evidence known as school library impact studies.

CHALLENGE: “Our only licensed librarian moved and was not replaced by the district. As the library assistant, I was given her responsibilities, on top of my own, and expected to do them in the same amount of time I had as an assistant, only 6.25 hours a day. I don’t think administrators understand that running the library is more than checking in and checking out books.” (C)

CHALLENGE: “The biggest challenges I deal with are the ethical dilemmas I face as a result of inadequate resources. Increasingly, I am being asked to participate in requiring our classified [library] staff to function as teachers, which is unfair to both students and our classified staff.” (L)

Paraprofessional Staff Overextended

It is not surprising then that survey results revealed that school library paraprofessional staff can feel underappreciated or overextended. That is especially true when they run a library by themselves. Lack of training can be an issue, and as part of the State Library’s new strategic plan, we will look into providing professional development resources or opportunities for school library paraprofessional staff.

CHALLENGE: “I am grateful for my benefits, and I know I am lucky that the position even still exists in schools, but with the pay and title of ‘assistant’ I feel greatly undervalued. It suggests an entry-level job meant for a teenager just out of high school, but I can say that the job requires the same behavioral management skills that teachers have and a good deal of knowledge.” (Solo C)

CHALLENGE: “Because of the unreasonable demands and low pay that our classified staff contend with, we have had high turnover in recent years. This school year, 40 percent of the staff I support were new to the job.” (L)



Licensed Staff Overextended

Of course, some of the concerns about being overextended apply to licensed librarians as well. Being split between two schools, serving as the sole licensed library staff in the district, or having additional teaching responsibilities in other subject areas limits a librarian's ability to form relationships with students, serve in the role of readers' advisor, collaborate with teachers, and work towards standards-based instructional outcomes.

CHALLENGE: "While we are fortunate to still have licensed teacher-librarians in our district, we have no full-time positions in any of our buildings ... I have taught 900–1,100 students weekly between two school sites for the last decade. This does not allow us to have the relational or academic impact that students deserve, nor can we effectively collaborate with classroom teachers to maximize learning through coordinated activities." (L)

SUCCESS: "We genrefied our HS collection and circulation increased *significantly*. Our district leadership has changed in recent years, and until COVID we were making progress with plans to increase licensed librarian FTE in the district—not sure what will happen now." (L)

Minimal Library Budget

Another struggle is trying to build a relevant collection that meets the instructional and general interest reading needs of students with a minimal or sometimes nonexistent library budget.

Through the Quality Education Model (Maurer, 2019), the Oregon Quality Education Commission establishes recommended guidelines, not requirements, for how much money to allocate to different programs for a prototype elementary, middle, and high school. The purpose is to help legislators make school funding decisions. The recommendation from the 2018 model suggests budgeting a minimum of \$16 per student on library books and periodicals, and for the 2017–18 school year, less than 5 percent of Oregon public schools met that target. As a result, many school library staff rely on book fairs and donations to fund or supplement their materials budget.

CHALLENGE: "Library funding is one of our biggest challenges. My MS and ES libraries are not provided a budget. We rely solely on fundraising (book fairs) to provide resources for those buildings. I try to supplement their collections using my limited district budget, but it's not enough. We are the **ONLY** academic program that is required to fund-raise to operate. Shameful." (L)

SUCCESS: "I do feel like schools in my district are supported very well by our Library Media Support Services. They use a generous portion of their budget to get us award-winning and diversity-related books every year." (C)

Encroaching on Facilities

In 2018, Ridgeview High School in Redmond announced that they would repurpose their entire library (Colosky, 2018). During construction in the summer of 2020, La Grande Middle School planned to turn 40 percent of the library into two classrooms (Mason, 2020). And, I was contacted by two concerned library paraprofessionals asking if their schools were allowed to significantly reduce their library spaces in order to utilize the facilities for physical education (PE). What do those scenarios have in common? A combination of schools running out of room, tight budgets, more stringent PE requirements, and/or not valuing the library program has led some schools to repurpose their library facilities. It



also speaks to a self-perpetuating cycle: some administrators do not adequately fund or staff libraries, library usage decreases, and then those administrators point to low library usage as evidence to support not funding or not staffing the library—and sometimes not even having a library space.

SUCCESS & CHALLENGE: “Last February, the district committed to hiring a second district librarian—me! Now we have two certified librarians in a 10-school district ... one of our high school libraries was converted into a full-time study hall and academic support space ... a lot of the library is inaccessible to the whole school during the school day.” (L)

School Library OARs Interpreted Inconsistently

Two Oregon Administrative Rules (OARs) relate to school library programs—Media Programs: OAR 581-022-2340 (Oregon, 2340) and District-level Continuous Improvement Plans: OAR 581-022-2250 (Oregon, 2250). For the Media Programs OAR, several factors play into “determining whether the assignment of certificated media and other staff is appropriate.” While it may be a burden on Oregon’s smallest districts to require having a certain level of licensed librarian FTE on staff, the open interpretation of the OAR means that larger districts with more means are also allowed to assign responsibility for the library programs to non-licensed library staff.

The State Library and OASL considered it a success when House Bill 2586 passed in 2009, which added the requirement for districts to account for strong school library programs in their continuous improvement plans (CIPs). However, ODE does not have the authority or capacity to approve submitted plans, and school library programs have gained little ground as a result of their required inclusion in district-level CIPs.

Annually, districts must submit, and then post about, a Division 22 assurance form to the Oregon Department of Education indicating whether or not they are in compliance with the OARs under ODE’s purview. If an individual believes that a district is not in compliance with the Media Programs OAR despite the “yes” box being checked on the form, they must use the district’s complaint process, and if not satisfactorily resolved, the complaint can move up to ODE. This means that interested parties must pay attention to and understand what is happening in their district.

SUCCESS: A few years ago, someone in the Tigard-Tualatin School District (TTSD) did just that. A parent with an MLS became aware that no licensed school librarians were on staff in any of the district’s schools, and while the district indicated that they were in compliance with the Media Programs OAR, she disagreed. She reached out to the State Library to learn about her options, contacted ODE, met with the district superintendent, and did more. Her efforts led to TTSD hiring a district librarian. In this case, it took a parent who understood the value of a strong school library program to identify missing pieces and commit time and energy in order to make change happen.

CHALLENGE: “Because of my efforts to alert administration and the school board to our lack of compliance with OARs pertaining to libraries, I was told to stop talking about it and that library advocacy is not part of my job.” (L)

The physical education situation and others have revealed varying interpretations of the school library OARs over the years. Recently, the State Library and OASL were invited to the table by Oregon Department of Education staff for their upcoming review of Division 22 OARs, and we look forward to this opportunity to contribute.



No In-State Options to Obtain Library Media Endorsement

One of the newest challenges is the inability of teachers to obtain a library media endorsement in Oregon. Over the years, low numbers of licensed librarian positions combined with job insecurity from frequent reductions in force led to low enrollment in Oregon's library media endorsement programs. In the last decade, the three remaining programs were all shuttered, with the last closing a couple of years ago. Now teachers who want to add the library media endorsement to their license must use out-of-state online programs, and that process can be difficult to navigate. This past spring, the State Librarian and I met with staff from the Teacher Standards and Practices Commission to seek clarity regarding options, and I shared our findings with OASL membership.

Success Stories

A few success stories are sprinkled throughout this article, but this additional trio can serve as a reminder that good things are happening.

“Successes include author visits (Trudy Ludwig, David Greenburg, Sisbro), Oregon Battle of the Books, summer library hours (eight years), grants received for growth mindset books, and COVID grant for eBooks and Playaways.” (L)

“At the high school, as our school cracked down on cell phones, I created a cell phone online class (really only about 15 minutes) which taught some of the basics of digital literacy and distributed licenses to those who took the class and passed a brief quiz so they could use their phones in the library. It's one more way to teach these skills to kids who might not be getting them otherwise.” (L)

“I have been at my school for three years. In that time, I have established a 21st-century library which incorporates technology, implemented a makerspace, and developed a curriculum with collaborative lessons. We have an open-access library for all students. Our middle school students take a quarter of media tech in which they learn research skills and create video morning announcements.” (L)

While challenges persist, successes dot the landscape, and the small but mighty force of current school library staff is engaged in positive work for and with staff and students. This statement from one of the mighty seems a fitting closing: “Libraries celebrate learning, and in particular, student-driven learning. A strong school library is indicative of a school where learning is valued. That is one reason they are so darn important.” 

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The Federal Depository Library Program Regional Collection in Oregon: Shifting Roles in Access and Preservation of U.S. Government Publications

by **Arlene Weible**

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Summary

This article explores the history of the FDLP Regional Collection in Oregon libraries. It covers the origin and evolution of the collection which is currently managed by the State Library of Oregon by way of shared housing agreements. The transition away from print-based to digital access points to a shift in role for the collection, with more emphasis on long-term preservation. This shift prompts an examination of options for improving the management of the collection.

History

Since Oregon's territorial days, predecessors of the current State Library collected and maintained U.S. government publications to help Oregonians stay connected and informed about the U.S. federal government. Since 1861, the primary source for these publications has been the U.S. Government Publishing Office (GPO, formerly Government Printing Office). While the deposit of publications in libraries was not consistent in its early years, GPO reformed its program and established the Federal Depository Library Program (FDLP) in 1895. Its mission is to distribute publications to designated libraries, so they might provide free, ready, and permanent public access to federal government publications throughout the country.

When the State Library was organized into its current configuration in 1905, many of the federal publications in earlier government libraries were consolidated into the library's collection. While this history makes it difficult to establish a precise date for the beginning of the State Library's participation in the FDLP, it is clear from an examination of the historical material in the collection that it reflects those early efforts to distribute U.S. government publications to Oregon. Other Oregon libraries with historical collections and long participation in the program include: University of Oregon (1883), Multnomah County Library (1884), Pacific University (1897), Oregon State University (1907), and Reed College (1912).



While free access to government information is the FDLP's founding principle, the housing of federal government publications in the geographically-dispersed program also helps to assure these publications are preserved for future generations. Preservation goals were particularly realized through program revisions in 1962 that established Regional depository libraries. This structure mandated that each state designate a Regional depository library to receive all publications distributed through the program and retain them permanently, allowing other libraries to selectively receive only those that best meet the needs of the local community. This change assured access at the state level, since libraries could turn to the Regional depository library to request materials as they were needed. It also built permanent and comprehensive Regional collections across the country that have become a treasure trove of primary documents that serve as an archive of the history of the U.S. government.

Recognizing the challenge of maintaining growing permanent collections, depository libraries with large federal collections in Oregon (including the State Library) did not initially step up to receive a Regional designation. It wasn't until 1972 that the relatively new depository library at Portland State University (PSU) took on that role. Since consolidation of historical collections did not take place, a true comprehensive Regional federal depository collection did not emerge in Oregon at a single library as it did in other states. While PSU did develop its Regional collection with current publications received from GPO, Oregon librarians turned to other libraries with particular historical collection strengths to research and access information, such as the University of Oregon (Congressional materials) and Oregon State University (agriculture and forestry publications).

The growth of online publishing by federal agencies in the mid-1990s began a new era of increased access to federal information, placing less emphasis on physical collections as the source for current government information. This shift combined with staffing changes at PSU necessitated a review of the Regional collection configuration in Oregon in the mid-2000s. With the blessing of GPO and Oregon's U.S. Senators (who designate Regional depository libraries), the State Library took over the Regional designation in 2007.

Oregon Federal Regional Collection

University of Oregon

Smithsonian
State Department
Presidential reports
Congressional publications
and hearings

Portland State University

Defense
Justice
Labor
Transportation
Congressional Record

State Library of Oregon

National Archives
Health and Human Services
Library of Congress

Oregon State University

Agriculture
Forest Service
U.S. Geological Survey
National Park Service
NOAA / NASA



Since that time, the State Library has coordinated the housing of Oregon's Regional collection among formally-recognized Regional partner libraries, Portland State University, University of Oregon, and Oregon State University. Each partnering library maintains portions of the Regional collection divided by publishing agency. (See Oregon Federal Regional Collection graphic). This distributed model recognized the historical collection strengths at each institution while preventing a single library from bearing the full burden of housing and managing the large collection.

Challenges

The publications physically distributed to libraries through the FDLDP have continued to decrease as GPO and other federal agencies have embraced digital publishing. Agencies and libraries are also working to convert historical publications to digital formats. A freely-accessible comprehensive collection of digital federal publications is not yet available, although several national initiatives are progressing in that direction. Many Oregon depository libraries have downsized or eliminated their printed federal collections in favor of easier to manage and access digital publications.

Regional depository libraries are still required to maintain tangible collections, although the emphasis and value of the collection now center on serving as a backup to digital versions or as an archival record of government publishing. GPO has introduced more flexibility around the requirement for permanent holdings as they are able to assure perpetual digital access to certain publications. Even with this flexibility, it remains challenging to manage Oregon's Regional collection.

For a variety of reasons, Oregon's Regional partner libraries did not locally catalog their federal collections until GPO records became more easily accessible in the mid-1990s. Portions of the Regional collection, particularly pre-1990 publications, are "hidden" from other Oregon libraries. Without complete holdings represented in databases such as OCLC's WorldCat, it is difficult for Oregon libraries to accurately identify whether specific titles are available. Inefficiencies and delayed delivery times result when libraries borrow from out-of-state libraries when material is actually available in Oregon.

Uncataloged titles also inhibit the ability of the Regional Partner libraries to effectively manage and assure a complete inventory of the Regional Collection. Since federal collections are now less used, it makes sense to consider off-site storage as a way to free up library space and preserve collections. Off-site management of library collections only succeeds when holdings records are available to easily identify titles for retrieval. Without accurate catalog and holding records, it can also become difficult to assess collection gaps, as staff are forced to manually assess collections for completeness.

Solutions

The State Library recently took steps to address the lack of cataloging for Oregon's Regional collection. With State Library Board approval, LSTA funds from FY 2020 are being used for a temporary cataloger to work with PSU staff to tackle uncataloged publications from the U.S. Census Bureau and Department of Defense. Despite the difficulty of working with collections during an extended library closure due to the pandemic, the project has resulted in 9,000 volumes being added to the PSU library catalog. Assuming LSTA funding remains stable, the State Library hopes to continue funding this position and work on collections at the other Regional partner libraries into the future.



GPO continues to support Regional depository libraries and their partners as they explore distributed models for housing collections. As delivery systems and digitization have evolved, the need for Regional collections to be replicated in each state diminishes. Several states have completed “shared regional” agreements where Regional depository libraries in contiguous states collaborate on collection management and divide housing responsibilities. These interstate agreements can leverage existing relationships to build actual regional, rather than state-based collections. The Pacific Northwest is a region where this model has potential, given the existence of collaborative services such as the courier and shared catalog managed by the Orbis Cascade Alliance. With model agreements and improved holdings information, the State Library expects to explore opportunities to build an interstate model to help sustain the Regional collection into the future.

Federal government publications remain a rich source of documentation for the history of Oregon and the U.S. Digital access has improved libraries’ ability to find and make use of these resources, but the physical collections remain an important part of assuring these resources are permanently preserved and available. New models for housing and improved records for management of the Regional collection will assist the State Library and its partners to meet the ongoing mission of the FDLP, the perpetuation of democratic values through permanent public access to government information. 

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Operation Alexandria Gutenberg:

How the Talking Book and Braille Library Transitioned to Customized Cartridges

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lives in Salem, Oregon, with his wife, three children, and six chickens. Each morning he commutes to work on a moped, in his free time he plays Pokémon Go a lot, and lately he has gotten into lathing.

We have all been there: you have something new and exciting you want to try, you have received approval, and now you have a plan. And it is such a nice plan. A logical, achievable, well-informed and well-crafted plan, like the kind you would see framed in a plan museum somewhere.

It's just too bad that plan will never see the light of day.

For a variety of reasons, no plan survives contact. It could be some small oversight that unravels the plan, or it could be, as in our case, a pandemic. But good planning is all about being flexible enough to reinvent your plan to work around obstacles instead of crashing straight into them.

Since the beginning of the Talking Book and Braille program in 1932, books circulated to print-impaired users as single titles. Users had to return all the items that made up a single book in order to receive the items for another single book. Though the audio format changed several times over the years from records to discs to cassette tapes to flash-memory cartridges (reducing the number of items needed per book), the 1-for-1 circulation method remained essentially the same. But that was about to change.

A new circulation method had been in development by our ILS vendor for years, one that would allow us to load cartridges with customized lists of books based on a user's requests and preferences. Each cartridge could hold up to eight audiobooks loaded from a digital storage unit that would be constantly updated in real-time. All users could have whatever titles they want whenever they want them. No more unavailable titles, no more waiting for copies, no more overdue items. This new method would reduce the number of cartridges mailed out per day from 1,200 to 150. The daily circulation process would be reduced from four hours to one hour. It would shrink our 90,000+ audiobook collection's physical footprint from thousands of shelves to one computer. This revolutionary circulation method makes everyone's life better.





From this ...



... to this!

So how do you plan for such change? It is easy to circle a date on the calendar and write “launch new circulation method,” but that level of change does not happen without intentional preparation. There is a lot of routine and repetition involved in the process of managing and circulating a collection, and most of it needed to be undone. For example, we used to inspect every book before it was checked in to make sure the cartridge and container matched. That task would no longer be necessary because cartridges and containers would now have generic labels. Trying to get overdue items returned used to be a multi-step process involving letters, phone calls, and notes in our ILS. That process would become obsolete because no customized cartridge is ever overdue.

Eliminating much of the normal daily work most of us took for granted required flexibility. While the customized cartridges method would be easier and faster, once implemented it meant some staff would lose a significant percentage of their responsibilities (up to 60 percent for one staff person). However, staff were willing to be flexible because we strategically planned how to fill the extra time with tasks focused on making the user experience better. We had been wanting to find ways to improve user retention, increase circulation, clean up the catalog, and narrate local-interest books, but other tasks always got in the way. Here was our chance to free up time to do these things, and we were excited about the opportunity.

Therefore, as soon as we had a firm target date for receiving the circulation equipment and the necessary software update for our ILS to implement the new method, our Librarian Elke Bruton and Program Manager Susan Westin began the process of revising staff position descriptions and redistributing responsibilities. We had from January to March to cross-train each other and settle into a new routine. For some staff it meant small changes like expanding or contracting their current responsibilities. For others it meant handing over responsibilities they’d had for many years to someone else while simultaneously training for entirely new responsibilities.



In those three months, we also needed to prepare the workstation for the new circulation equipment, figure out a standardized way of talking to users about the circulation changes, and determine a switch-over schedule for current users. Since we were still providing service to all users, we could choose who we wanted to switch over first. The plan was to roll out customized cartridges to heavy and difficult-to-serve users ahead of light users, thereby reducing the strain on our circulation technician while she temporarily juggled two service methods.

What tied all this prep work together was engaged leadership. Elke and Susan were heavily involved in helping staff wrap their heads around the transition, clearly laying out expectations, and persistently showing how small details helped support the larger vision. This proactive plan was working, and all of us were excited and on board!



Then COVID-19 happened. Elke was promoted to Program Manager in mid-March, and two days into her tenure she had to make the tough call to temporarily discontinue mail delivery of books—just one week away from implementation of customized cartridges.

Discontinuing circulation at the Talking Book and Braille Library is more than just shutting doors. 65 percent of our circulation is done through the mail to users all over Oregon, and because the mail didn't stop most of the users didn't understand why their books had stopped. But without knowing how long the virus could live on our plastic mailing containers, and with most staff telecommuting, trying to circulate materials was not feasible.

As the weeks rolled on and we still could not circulate materials safely, it became clear our original transition plan was no longer valid. For starters, the switch over plan we had come up with would need to be changed completely; we weren't going to be switching users over to the new system bit by bit anymore. We had stopped circulation for everyone, and restarting from a full stop is more complicated than a gradual transition.

Also, restarting from a full stop required us by law to give preference to all veteran users first when we resumed operations. After that it didn't seem appropriate to favor heavy users over light users since everyone was desperate for books following a two-month hiatus. To make things easy we decided to go with straight alphabetical order.

We also had to come up with some way to keep book cartridges sanitary as they traveled through the mail. The cartridges are normally mailed in a plastic container, and even if we could sanitize the container before mailing, they are touched by multiple hands throughout the mail delivery process. Whatever we came up with had to be relatively cheap, it couldn't interrupt the flow of circulation too much, and it needed to be constantly in stock at Office Depot. We decided on mailing the containers inside 6" by 9" manila envelopes. You can buy thousands at very low cost, they ended up only adding a few seconds to the circulation process time of each cartridge, and users could just recycle the envelopes after receiving the container inside sanitary and safe.

The most difficult detail to estimate was how many of our 5,300+ users we could restart each day without overwhelming our circulation technician, our readers' advisors, and our phone system. We intentionally started slow at just forty users per day but quickly ramped



up to at least 120 per day. Part of the reason we started so low was we called each user to let them know what to expect. But after a couple of weeks it became clear the calls were not necessary, so we quickly shifted to letting the few users who had questions reach out to us.

Each day felt like a new day, with new directions, new numbers, and new variables to consider. Here again is where engaged leadership made a huge difference. Elke was frequently checking-in with staff to gauge whether the system had reached its max or if we could keep pushing ourselves. She listened to our conversations with users and coached staff through how to respond to frequently asked questions. She sent out division-wide emails with clear, direct information and instructions so we were all on the same page. The end result was we were able to resume circulation to all users within *eight weeks* instead of an originally estimated *six months*!

An important part of our plan was a communication strategy for how to talk about the changes we were implementing. Thankfully, that strategy was maybe the one thing COVID-19 didn't change.

One of the main challenges we had to overcome was the tendency of staff to over-explain things to users. Most of us working in library land are information junkies. We like to think everything can be made better with information. Problems can be solved with information. Anxiety can be assuaged with information. And the more information applied to a situation, the better the result.

Unfortunately, a high volume of information often overshadows the core message and people miss the point. They get hung up on unimportant details or they stop paying attention too soon. So we intentionally identified the three basic things we wanted all users to remember (easier return method, eight books per cartridge, two cartridges per user), and staff were directed to offer additional information only when a user asked a question.

All staff were prompted with scripts containing specific words and phrases designed to be quickly delivered and easily understood from a user's perspective. By communicating clearly and concisely we mitigated the flow of incoming questions so we could focus on catching up from the COVID-19 backlog and fully resume circulation to all users as soon as possible.

It has been inspiring to experience first-hand how a well-crafted plan can be met with significant challenges but still survive. One silver lining of our COVID-19 temporary discontinuation of mail delivery was that it gave our users just enough of a break from the old method that they were immediately receptive and appreciative of the new one.

Staff are enjoying the ability to say "Yes" a lot more frequently to users: yes, we have that title; yes, we can send it tomorrow; yes, it is that easy. If you know anyone with a print impairment who might benefit from our special library, we'd love to say yes to them too. You can find more information about the Oregon Talking Book and Braille Library, including who is eligible and how to register, on our website: <https://tinyurl.com/y58yml8f> 



Inside Look: Digitizing a Historic Card Index

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Introduction

Oregon Index Online (https://digital.osl.state.or.us/islandora/object/osl:or_index) is a resource for discovering information about the news, events, and people who shaped Oregon. It builds on the decades of work that went into creating the physical Oregon Index. This article reviews the methods library staff took to digitize and process nearly 800,000 cards to make the Oregon Index available online.





The physical Oregon Index at the State Library of Oregon.

Brief History of the Oregon Index

The Oregon Index is made up of nearly 800,000 hand-typed index cards housed in 657 wooden drawers in the second-floor catalog alcove in the State Library Building. It is the joint effort of several institutions and groups including the State Library of Oregon, volunteers, and local organizations such as the Daughters of the American Colonists—Mahonia Chapter.

The Oregon Index was physically divided into two parts: Biography (indexing of Oregon people—196 drawers) and Subjects (indexing of Oregon topics other than people—461 drawers).

The cards were created between 1913 and 1987. Newspaper indexing covers articles from roughly 1900 to 1987. Book indexing covers people and topics from the beginning of Oregon history, such as early travelers on the Oregon Trail.

This is a citation index. For example, index cards for newspaper articles include basic citation information (article title, newspaper source, date, and pages). The full-text of articles, books and other sources of information is not included.

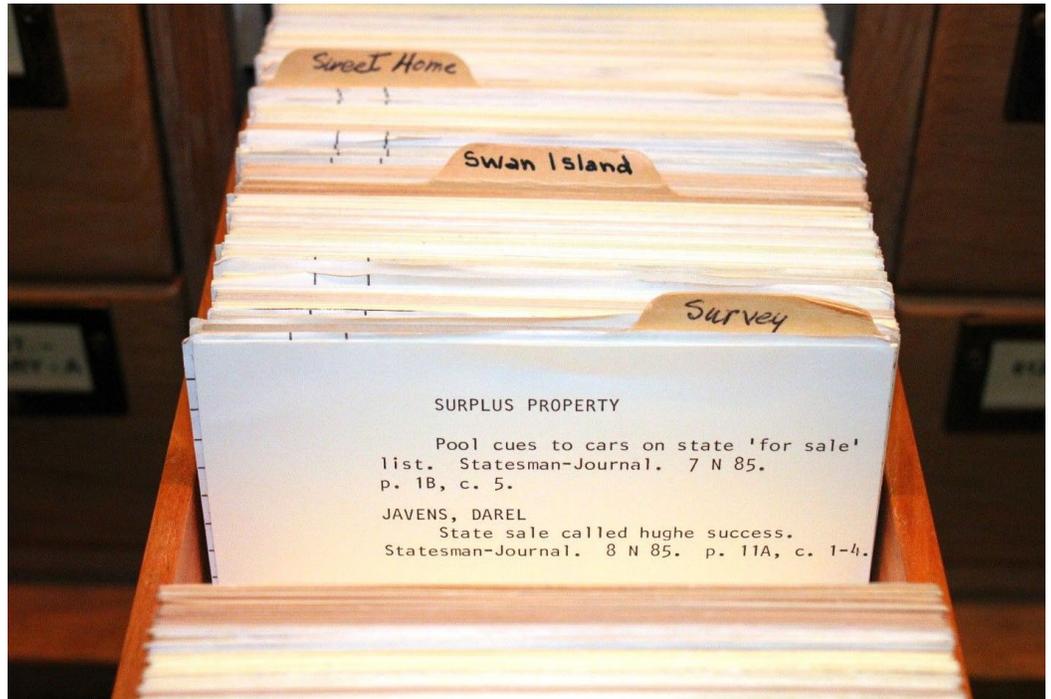
The majority of the cards cover selective indexing of articles published in the major daily newspapers of Portland (*Oregon Journal*, *Oregonian*) and Salem (*Oregon Statesman*, *Capital Journal*, and *Statesman Journal*).

The Oregon Index also covers specialty newspapers such as the *Oregon Farmer* and *Willamette Week*; statewide and local magazines, journals and newsletters such as the *Oregon Voter*; and selected books, microfilmed historic documents and visual materials included in State Library collections when the index was created (Hegeman, 2019).

Scanning Collaborations

For decades, the way to access the Oregon Index was in person at the State Library building. Since at least 2002, library staff wanted to provide online access to the Oregon Index, but figuring out the method and tools needed—as well as actually doing the work—took considerable time. The scanning was accomplished through two partnerships over several years. The processing and preparation of the cards once scanning was complete took even more time than the scanning itself.





One of the physical Oregon Index drawers with the cards and dividers.

The first step to being able to put the Oregon Index online was scanning the Biography section, which was completed through a project in partnership with the company Ancestry. An agreement was signed in February 2010. The materials for this project came from several State Library collections, including the cards from the Biography section of the Oregon Index, which was the top priority for the project. Ancestry provided a digital SLR camera mounted on an overhead copy stand and hired a contractor to perform the scanning of the cards on-site. The scanning began in April 2010 and was completed in 2011. The output from the Biography section was 244,044 color TIFF images.

The next step was scanning the larger Subjects section. Alice LaViolette, a State Library reference librarian, read about a project at the Natural History Museum of London to digitize the Global Lepidoptera Names Index (<https://tinyurl.com/y3lvnpub>), containing 300,000 cards. The museum partnered with the University of Essex Department of Computer Science to create the VIADOCS project. The cards were scanned using a desktop check scanner in 61 days (Beccaloni et al., 2003). After reading about this project, Alice posted a question to a mailing list for finance personnel at Oregon state agencies asking if any had a high-speed check scanner and if they thought such a project would be feasible. We received a favorable response from the Oregon Department of Revenue (DOR) that they would be able to fit this project in. DOR staff would have the opportunity to learn more about the features of their scanner, improve their scanning skills, and tighten workflow processes. Scanning began in June 2014. Library staff prepped the cards, loaded drawers of index cards into boxes and onto book trucks, wrapped the book trucks in plastic, and rolled the book trucks two blocks over to the DOR building in batches. Using their high-speed check scanner, the Department of Revenue provided both TIFF and JPEG images of



the front and back of each card. They also printed the date scanned, the drawer number, and the sequential card number on the back of each card. The scanning was completed in September 2014. The output was 1,290,295 grayscale TIFF images, including card backs and divider cards.

Processing and Uploading the Files

Once the scanning at the Department of Revenue was complete, the first step in image processing began. We first organized the files for the Subject cards into 461 folders, corresponding to their drawer numbers in the physical index. DOR had scanned the backs of the cards and divider cards, but since these were blank, we decided they should be deleted. We needed a way to identify and delete these files as efficiently as possible. We ended up using Adobe Bridge (a companion to Photoshop) where we could arrange by file size, delete the bulk of the blank pages because of their smaller file size, and then scroll through the rest to find the stragglers.

The scans of the Biography cards from Ancestry required some additional processing. They were extremely large-sized files in color with irregular black borders. Using Adobe Bridge and Photoshop, we converted them to grayscale, reduced their file size, and cropped the images. The edited TIFF files were then organized into 196 numbered folders as in the physical index.

In order to allow full-text access, the TIFF files needed to be converted into searchable PDFs. The Digital Collections Workgroup at the State Library had been using ABBYY FineReader for OCR (optical character recognition) of documents, which has a tool called ABBYY Hot Folder that allows for batch processing of files. Four to five folders of files were batch converted to OCR'd PDFs each evening. Evenings were chosen to make sure that the processing wouldn't interfere with daily work on staff computers. Each batch would create a log, which included the percentage of low confidence characters. While this wasn't exact since it is the software's best guess at its own errors, it gave us an estimate of how well the OCR performed and most fell within 12–20 percent low-confidence characters. We decided that access to the cards as-is was a greater benefit than waiting to edit the OCR of 785,667 cards, so the OCR correction would be the final step in the project.

At this point, the project hit a two-year pause, since the State Library was transitioning from a home-grown repository to a hosted option of Islandora, an open source Digital Asset Management System (DAMS). The migration to Islandora (and post-migration clean-up) needed to happen before we could figure out how to upload the Oregon Index.

While this work was happening, we made several design decisions. We wanted to keep the experience of the physical index, with the capability of browsing drawers as well as specific searches. We selected the Internet Archive book content model since it gave the user the experience of flipping through cards. Combining all of the cards from one drawer into one “book” seemed like an unruly size because each drawer contained anywhere from 750 to 1,400 cards. To solve that problem, we came up with 250 cards per book as a guiding number. This gave each online drawer three to six books of cards. To further support the design mimicking the physical index, we took photos of each drawer to be the image of each collection folder.

During the book creation, staff watched for errors from the batch OCRing process, like images being flipped upside down, split into two, or file corruption. We replaced these cards with newly created PDFs from the original TIFFs. The card files were combined using





Digital Collections

[Home](#) > [Oregon Index Online](#) >

[Advanced Search](#)

Oregon Index Online - Subjects

The Oregon Index was compiled by State Library staff and volunteers starting in the early 20th century and continuing to the mid-1980s. It contains over 700,000 cards with citations to articles published in Oregon newspapers, journals, book chapters, and more. Topics cover events and issues important to Oregon history and state government.

In some cases, the cards use archaic language that may have been considered appropriate in the context of the time when the citations were created, but may be jarring to library users today. The cards have been digitized and posted without altering the content.

See the [Oregon Index Online Guide](#) for more searching and background information. The resources that are indexed may be, but are not necessarily, found in the State Library collections. Try searching the [State Library Catalog](#) or [WorldCat](#) for book, magazine, or newspaper titles, or contact us for assistance.

The organization of the digitized cards reflects the physical drawers in the State Library building. Drawers 200 through 660 contain subject cards. You can browse by drawer or search by using the "Search this Collection" box.

Search this Collection

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 ... next

[Grid view](#) [List view](#)
last »



[200 AA AMBULANCE](#)



[201 ACTIONS](#)



[202 AERIAL](#)



[203 AGRICULTURE, DEPT.](#)



[204 AIR WEST](#)



[205 ALBANY - HISTORY](#)



[206 ALCOHOLISM](#)



[207 ALUMINA](#)

Oregon Index Online made to mimic the physical index.

Adobe Acrobat Pro, then renamed manually with the title of the first and last card to give the range within each book. With 657 drawers and 785,667 cards, this was no small feat.

Uploading of the books was done overnight so as not to interrupt the daily work activities of staff using Islandora. The number of books uploaded per night was dictated by how many the system could handle without crashing or making all the books error out. Through trial and error, this ended up being 10 books for the subject cards and five books for the biography cards. Sometimes batches wouldn't upload for various reasons and books would have to be uploaded again.

Two Technical Services staff members, Sarah Cunningham and Angela Jannelli, worked on this process for three and a half years, creating books and uploading them into Islandora. In the end, we created 3,304 books.



OCR Correction

The OCR from the automatic processes described in the previous section is a great start, and fairly adequate for many of the cards, but we know that overall the OCR is imperfect and needs to be manually reviewed and corrected. There are lined cards that are particularly problematic, but any of the cards could have errors in the OCR.

We got a start on this clean-up project with library staff. First, starting in March 2019, one staff member piloted correcting the OCR file contained within Islandora. Then when the COVID-19 pandemic hit in March 2020 and many State Library staff started working from home, a few additional individuals began to work on the project in sections. To date, one drawer out of 657 has been completely reviewed and six other drawers are in-progress.

Our next step is to involve volunteers in the OCR correction. At the time of this writing, we are setting up a training in July 2020 for one volunteer who had been working on an in-person project in the State Library building that had to be placed on hold when the building closed in March 2020. In the future, we would like to structure the project to be able to recruit multiple volunteers.

Conclusion

Oregon Index Online is the culmination of years of work to make the indexing widely available. Through partnerships, and with the right tools, staff labor, and persistence, we were able to successfully bring this valuable information online for researchers and history enthusiasts. 

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History and Evolution of the Embedding Program at the State Library of Oregon

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Introduction

This article will describe what the embedding program does, its history at the State Library, and how it has evolved over time—including how important it has been for connecting with state agencies and offering our services and resources within our new reality of remote work. I will outline how the embedding program came to be, how it was developed, describe how it creates stronger connections with our state agency patrons and the various outreach programs we have developed to promote the program. I will also provide some examples of what has worked, and what has not, in the program.

History

The “embedded” librarian program was developed as part of the 2015–2017 biennium outreach plan for the Government Information and Library Services (GILS) Division of the State Library. The idea being that each reference librarian would “embed” or become a liaison with specific agencies that fell under their areas of expertise, with each agency being assigned a librarian. This would help develop deeper research focused relationships with state employees and their “embedded” librarian. It would also allow the librarians to focus more specifically on outreach for their agencies. The plan involved a number of activities to help library staff become more familiar with agency goals, initiatives, legislative issues, and staff needs. Embedding includes both internal & external outreach where librarians visit with agencies “in-person” or build specific resources relevant to agency needs. The original plan for how this process would take place was very detailed and involved different processes for agencies of varying sizes. It included having the librarians closely track all of the policy bills and budgets their agencies submitted to the Legislature, attending agency board and policy meetings, and following mentions of their agencies in the media. The State Library generally has four or five reference librarians on staff at one time—meaning that each librarian would be embedded with 20–25 agencies at once. It quickly became clear that this extremely time-consuming work plan was not going to be possible.





Reference Librarian Jerry Curry doing instruction for one of his embedded agencies.

Evolution of the Embedding Program

I joined the State Library as Reference Coordinator for the GILS Division in the summer of 2017. The reference staff had been embedded for a few years and had learned that the relationships with their agencies had evolved much more organically than the original plan outline had dictated. The most effective way to build these relationships was connecting in person (in-person library resource trainings tailored for the agency) as well as doing immediate introductions with new agency patrons, so they knew right away who their embedded librarian was and would feel comfortable reaching out to an individual for research assistance. As Reference Coordinator, one of my tasks was to track the success of the embedding program as well as work with the Outreach Coordinator (Jerry Curry) on its continued development. We do this in two ways. Our quantitative measure of success comes from tracking how much time we spend specifically on reference transactions resulting directly from our embedding efforts. Our qualitative measure of success is tracked in bimonthly summaries of the embedding work we have done and discussed in reference and outreach meetings.

Outreach and Promotion of the Embedding Program

One big hurdle that we wanted to get past was to share our embedding program with state agency employees that work outside Salem, and encourage them to start using our services. The embedding team decided that we would go on the road and visit agency offices in more far-flung parts of Oregon. We have done road trips to Eugene, Hermiston, Newport, Bend,



Roseburg and Medford in the last two years. The librarians set up trainings with their embedded agency offices in the area, and then send out invites for any state agency employees who work nearby to attend as well. This has helped the state employees outside Salem gain awareness about everything the State Library can do for them, even from afar.

Every week, we scan the list of new registrants to the State Library, and the embedded librarian sends an outreach email introducing themselves and the services we provide. This allows new patrons to immediately have the name of the librarian embedded with their agency and have a better understanding of what the State Library offers. This has been a successful way to get embedded in research projects right away, as well as set up training at specific agencies.

Embedded librarians make a point to attend meetings, within their agencies, to stay informed on new policy research that is being done to be better able to offer assistance. This enables us to be more proactive and also put names with faces at the agencies.

The embedded librarians also reach out to agencies to give in-person customized training to smaller workgroups, divisions, and research teams within them on how the State Library's resources can assist them in their work. These in-person trainings have probably been the most successful aspect of the embedding program. The feedback we receive has been fantastic and the trainings quite often result in follow up reference work or scheduling further training sessions at an agency.

For lack of a better word, "colder" or more general outreach attempts have been less successful. Cold calls and emails to agency staff rarely get much traction. Also, sending out communications on general topics have tended to illicit less response compared to specific topics. For example, sharing information about resources on specific topics (remote work skills, DEI/EDI resources, leadership, software training) is much more successful.

LibGuide Collaborations with State Agencies Developed from Embedding

The goal of the embedding program was to create closer collaborative relationships with state agency employees.

One service we began to offer through embedding is creating information guides (LibGuides) that agencies can use to share important information with their colleagues or the populations they serve. Some examples of LibGuides that have been or are being developed collaboratively since the embedding program began are:

- [Oregon Foster Parent Resource Guide](#)—developed with the Child Welfare Division at the Department of Humans Services (DHS). Used to give resource guidance to foster parents in Oregon (private guide).
- [Health Equity Measurement LibGuide](#)—developed with the Oregon Health Authority (OHA) Office of Equity and Inclusion.
- [The Vocational Rehabilitation Library Toolkit](#)—developed with the DHS Vocational Rehabilitation Services division.
- [Census 2020 Resources for Oregon Libraries](#)—developed with the Governor's Office to give guidance on the 2020 Census.



- [Trauma-Informed Practices LibGuide](#)—developed with OHA and Department of Corrections

Embedding During the COVID-19 Pandemic

Since the stay at home order due to the COVID-19 pandemic was issued by Governor Kate Brown in mid-March 2020, many state agency employees have found themselves suddenly working remotely from home, often for the first time. The State Library has tried to use these unusual times as an opportunity to both expand our embedding reach, as well as inform state employees about the resources they still have access to remotely. Some interesting collaborative projects have arisen from these efforts:

- The Department of Human Services (DHS) has been collaborating with their embedded librarians to create database training tailored to the agency. These have been very well attended and have also resulted in requests for more specific training by individual teams at DHS.
- Some of the embedded librarians have started holding virtual “office hours” for their agencies, based on need. The Vocational Rehabilitation Services division at DHS as well as the Department of Environmental Quality are two agencies currently participating in these office hours.
- The Oregon Advocacy Commissions have taken this time to connect with their embedded librarian about making sure publications from all the commissions are cataloged at the State Library. They have also asked the embedded librarian to start joining virtual commission meetings to discuss resources at the State Library that can assist them in doing their policy work remotely.

Conclusion

The embedding program has been a great way to develop more collaborative relationships with the state agencies served by the State Library. It has resulted in much more in-depth research and reference projects, the development of more nuanced training, and it has brought in patrons from more diverse agencies and work regions than in the past. It has also been valuable during the pandemic as it gives state agency employees individual librarians to reach out to in order to learn what resources are available to assist them in their remote work. 

Acknowledgments

The current reference librarians working on the embedding program are Jerry Curry, Amy Coughenour, Dave Hegeman and myself. They assisted me in developing this article by sharing their embedding experiences and the history of the program.



The Hunt for Digital Oregon Documents: Building and Populating the Oregon Government Publications Digital Collection

by Jey Wann

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When the Oregon Documents Depository Program (OrDocs) began in 1907, the only way to access an Oregon state government publication was to get a paper copy. The OrDocs program distributed (and still distributes) state government documents to designated depository libraries around the state, enhancing government transparency and citizen engagement.

By the end of the century, however, it was obvious that the old model was no longer sufficient. The internet was becoming an additional avenue, if not the only avenue, for the dissemination of state government information. Libraries nationwide, including the State Library of Oregon (then known as the Oregon State Library), were looking for solutions to the problem of collecting digital documents.

By the early 2000s, the State Library, working with the Department of Administrative Services, OrDocs depository libraries, and the Documents Interest Group of Oregon, had begun planning a way to collect digital OrDocs. The culmination of this effort, in 2006, was the passage of House Bill 2118. The bill required state agencies to provide digital copies of their publications to the State Library, regardless of whether the publications were available online or not (Hulshof-Schmidt, 2006, p. 7).

At the State Library, we were in a good position to work with agency web publishing. We administered the search function on the Oregon.gov state web portal. We established the metadata scheme that agency publishers used, trained them to metatag, and worked closely with the e-government contractor. Most state agencies used a central content management system, which provided a single source for state web publishing.



With the help of our e-government ties, we developed:

- A metatag that agencies could use to indicate if a digital publication should be collected by the Library. (We later abandoned this, as agency compliance was spotty at best.)
- A daily feed from the content management system of all the new and changed documents pages published on <https://www.oregon.gov/Pages/index.aspx>.
- An in-house tool to review the documents and sort them into workflows for further action.
- An in-house site, the Oregon Documents Repository, to store digital documents and make them available to the public.

We dubbed the in-house tool the Repository Acquisitions Tool, or RAT.

Kyle Banerjee, the RAT's inventor, recalls:

One of the biggest challenges when creating the RAT was identifying which of the thousands of documents created each day on State of Oregon systems were good candidates for archiving—manually doing this was unfeasible. Another challenge was building workflows and structures that supported their processing and use. (K. Banerjee, personal communication, July 2, 2020)

It's difficult to over-emphasize the importance of the RAT. As far as we know, it's unique among state documents depository programs. Similar programs in other states rely on other methods, such as using a web crawler, regularly reviewing agency websites, or relying on agency staff to submit digital documents. Oregon Documents Specialist Angie Jannelli says "Having the RAT do the work of finding documents and acting as a tool to manage our workflow frees up so much staff time that we can then use to catalog digital documents. We are so grateful for it" (A. Jannelli, personal communication, July 8, 2020).

The State Library had been collecting physical Oregon state government documents for over 100 years. We had a proven workflow in place for collecting and cataloging the documents and distributing them to our depository libraries around the state. Now, we were faced with a virtual flood of digital documents, broad statutory definitions, and little previous experience to draw on. Arlene Weible recalls, "Once we were able to see the full range of state agency web publishing, we were overjoyed but also somewhat overwhelmed by the volume of material we now had to review" (A. Weible, personal communication, June 26, 2020).

We established criteria for collecting digital documents, including:

- Generally collect documents as-is, but convert Word, HTML, etc., to PDF
- Break extremely large documents into more manageable chunks
- Combine small documents published in multiple pieces into one file



We decided to do full MARC cataloging for all the digital documents. This made sense, as that's what we did with the physical documents. In addition, depository libraries are required to include records for all OrDocs in their online catalog or other finding aid, and were used to getting catalog records from us.

In the case of PDFs and Word documents, it was fairly easy to decide whether or not to collect something. Web pages were harder: when were they the equivalent of a publication? It was, and still is, not uncommon for something that was previously published as a tri-fold brochure to change to an HTML page. We initially developed an in-house tool to capture these, but it was a cumbersome process. We later decided to convert them to PDFs.

Although the RAT is still our all-purpose tool for identifying documents, hosting the Repository on State Library servers became an increasing problem. We migrated to the Islandora digital asset management system in 2017. The new platform enabled us to expand the scope of our digital collections, eventually including the digitized [Oregon Index On-line](#). We changed the name of the Repository to the more descriptive Oregon Government Publications Digital Collection.

Most of the documents we collect are PDFs, or are easily converted to PDF. Other formats can be troublesome. For years, we weren't able to collect digital video; we're now able to with Islandora.

We collect complex HTML documents via our Internet Archive partnership. Unfortunately, we can't upload these files to Islandora, but they are available in our public catalog.

More troublesome are formerly static documents that become interactive. Early on, we discovered that a number of directories had turned into databases. The most recent, notable example of this is the *State of Oregon Telephone Directory*, which lists state employees and agencies. It switched to a database in early 2020, ending a run of directories that started in 1938. The most ironic switch was the *Directory and Statistics of Oregon Libraries*, which ceased publication with the 1996/1997 edition. Recently, a number of statistical reports have also switched to databases. The amount of information available from them is incredible, but we have no mechanism to collect them.

Collecting born-digital publications is one thing. But there is another big thing: our physical Oregon Documents Collection, which may be the most comprehensive collection of Oregon government publications in the world. We want to make the entire collection available digitally, but the task is huge. One estimate, done a few years ago, projected that at our rate and staffing at the time, it would take 50 years to digitize the entire collection. Our staffing and equipment have improved since then, but it's still a monumental task. At the time of this writing, we have approximately 19 percent of the physical collection digitized (20,277 items).

We decided to prioritize digitization based on how widely the title is held, where:

- We only have one copy, and no other library holds it
- We have multiple copies, but no other library holds it

We also digitize publications for other reasons, including:

- Patron requests



- Inclusion in special [digital highlights](#)
- Cooperative projects with state agencies, such as anniversaries
- Other special projects based on special handling needs

Cooperative projects with other state agencies include [state highway maps](#) (with Department of Transportation), [Oregon National Guard newsletters](#) (with the Military Department), or celebrating the [centennial of State Fire Marshal](#). Cooperative projects benefit the State Library, the state agencies involved, and the citizens of Oregon.

Collecting digital publications takes planning, hard work, and attention to detail. But it also can be fun. We never know what we'll encounter, whether reviewing born-digital documents or digitizing historic documents from our collection. From the State Fire Marshal's recent [Sasquatch stand-up character](#) (you can dress him in various fire-safety outfits) to [Depression-era scrip](#), the collection is full of surprises. Digitization Specialist Kate Anderson, a Western Oregon University alum, was surprised and amused by [rules for women students](#) at her alma mater in 1925.



History

1907

Oregon Documents Depository Program established by the Legislature

1951

State Library begins publishing *Checklist of Official Publications of the State of Oregon*

1970s

State Library becomes the central cataloger for Oregon documents and establishes the OrDocs classification system

1979

Checklist ceases publication

1994

Two-tiered system of Full and Core depository libraries instituted; agencies required to appoint a publications liaison to the State Library

2005

Statutes governing the program changed to include digital publications; number of depository libraries reduced to 10; two-tiered system eliminated

2006

State Library begins collecting digital publications

2017

Digital documents move from an in-house platform to Islandora

The State Library has been collecting Oregon government publications for over 100 years, and collecting digital versions for less than 20 years. We're sure there will be changes in technology and new formats in the years to come. We're confident that State Library staff will rise to the occasion and continue to provide permanent public access for the citizens of Oregon. 

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Useful Sources

Oregon Government Publications Digital Collection:

<https://digital.osl.state.or.us/islandora/object/osl%3Adocs>

State Library of Oregon Digital Highlights

https://digital.osl.state.or.us/islandora/object/osl:digital_highlights

Oregon Documents Depository Program website:

<https://www.oregon.gov/Library/collections/Pages/State-Government-Publications.aspx>

Access to Oregon Government Publications infoguide:

<https://libguides.osl.state.or.us/OrDocsRefRoom>

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Ready to Read Now and Then

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GRETA BERGQUIST has worked in public libraries, schools, and afterschool programs from the East Coast to the Pacific Northwest. She holds a Master of Arts in Teaching from Johns Hopkins University and an MLIS from the University of Washington. Bergquist greatly enjoys working with public library staff in her role as the Youth Services Consultant at the State Library of Oregon.

The Ready to Read project at your local public library is building literacy skills in early learners and summer readers, even as I write these words. Oregon libraries use Ready to Read funds in their daily work to support visiting Head Start classrooms with storytimes, to offer teen or foster parent literacy classes, to implement summer food site reading programs, and more—all to ensure that as many Oregon kids as possible have the opportunity to build literacy skills in their communities.

The reach of this program is broad and deep. In 2019 alone, public libraries used Ready to Read funds to meet the needs of 252,397 young learners from ages zero to five. Along with these early learning services, libraries worked to implement summer reading programs serving over 211,000 kids from ages zero to 14, partnering with an incredible number of 750 community organizations across the state to help ensure young learners have safe spaces and resources they need to keep learning over the summer months.

It can be challenging to capture the commitment, energy, expertise, and joy that goes into running and implementing children's services at any public library. Ready to Read annual applications and reports tell one part of the story. Another piece of this story is found in Oregon's laws, amended over time, and State Library Board meeting minutes, detailing Ready to Read's trajectory over time. (Minutes cited prior to 2012 can be found in the State Library's stacks on the fourth floor, while more recent minutes are available online. Should you be interested in viewing the older print editions, we'd be happy to assist you in your research!)

The beginning of this non-competitive grants program looked a bit different from the way Ready to Read is implemented today. In 1977, the Oregon Legislature enacted SB 23, intended to offer financial assistance to public libraries supplementing any (if at all) funds received from local government, with an initial allocation of \$300,000 for the biennium. The original purpose of these funds was to broaden access to existing information resources, reach Oregonians not currently served by a local library, and foster new library services. This



bill passed after much work from Oregon Library Association members in 1975 and 1976. They proposed how such a program would work and shared with the library board how it would greatly support Oregonians in accessing necessary library services in their communities (1976).

Over time, changes were made as Oregon grew and so did Oregon libraries. In 1985, grant amounts became connected to the number of people libraries served, as well as geographical areas, to help ensure that rural areas would receive funds. Areas not served by local public libraries were the responsibility of the State Library. Also, in this biennium, the general funds allocated to Library Development “per capita” grants grew by 50 percent. According to board meeting minutes, this was the result of the Oregon Library Association working with the legislature to present the importance of this program to libraries (1987).

In State Library Board meeting minutes from 1990–1991, there are a few mentions of work being done to focus these grant funds towards serving children. In 1993, the law was amended so that per capita library support grants were specifically directed towards youth: “The grants shall be expended to develop public library services for children, with emphasis on preschool children” (SB 22, 1993). Also in this amendment, the State Library stopped being responsible for Oregonians not currently served by a local library. All grant funds were allocated on a per-child basis to city, county, or district libraries. The State Library had been reserving about \$32,000 for unserved populations, and the board notes that this amount should be included in future distributed funds (1992).

Also in 1993, Ellen Fader became the Public Library Consultant at the State Library. With her service on several Association for Library Service to Children committees and as a book reviewer for the Horn Book and School Library Journal, she was uniquely positioned to support libraries transitioning to focus their grant funds on serving children and youth. State Library Board Meeting minutes note Fader’s work began with an emphasis on library services for children and youth and the “per capita” grant program became known as the “Children’s Services Improvement Grant” (1993).

In the fall of 1993, B. J. Quinlan, who at the time was serving as Children’s Services Coordinator for the Salem Public Library, presented about children’s services at a State Library Board meeting. She included her perspective that given Oregon’s “ready to learn” approach for children entering school, public libraries offer critical services and excellent opportunities to ensure children are ready for kindergarten. Descriptions of proposed Children’s Services Improvement Grant projects from other libraries were also shared at this meeting, including Eugene Public’s plan to serve unhoused children and Coos Cooperative Library Services’ plan to increase their Spanish language children’s collection (1993).

Included in this meeting’s notes are a report on the State Library’s 1993–1995 biennium goals, one of which was assisting public libraries in improving services to children. The report includes an increase in consulting hours focused on youth services, working with regional associations of children’s librarians, offering training with a focus on children and youth, and providing recognition to exemplary children’s services projects.

This work hums along throughout the rest of the 90s, and in 2007 there is a minor amendment to the law focusing specifically on early literacy (HB 2116, 2007). Then we see in 2012 new laws establishing the Early Learning Council, as well as multiple amendments and changes to early learning support structures across the state. As part of this larger early learning-focused re-write, there is a small change to Ready to Read to focus on birth to age six. (Previously the focus was up to age five.) (HB 4165, 2012)



In meeting minutes from April 2014, there are significant notes on State Library-led work to propose changes to the current Ready to Read program, with efforts led by then Youth Services Consultant, Katie Anderson. Anderson worked with a Reimagining Ready to Read committee of 12 members to evaluate all aspects of Ready to Read and propose changes to be made starting in the next biennium. Some of these changes included raising the age limit for summer reading, increasing minimum grant amounts, and changing the name of the grant program. The State Library Board voted to approve these proposed changes in order to better align with state-level education goals (2014).

Legislation passed in 2015 included many changes to the State Library's governance as outlined in House Bill 3523. The 2014 Reimagining Ready to Read proposed changes were not included in this bill, and no other significant changes to Ready to Read were made. The only amendment to Ready to Read was in the wording of Sections 26, 27, and 28 to declare the State Library Board as the entity libraries apply to, where previously this had been trustees. However, since that 2015 session, many of the Reimagining Ready to Read ideas that came from the 2014 committee have been incorporated into the application and reporting process, including outcome measurement and a focus on working with community partners and underserved families.

In 2018, Ready to Read process improvements continued to make the grant application and reporting more streamlined and accessible. Staff including myself, Tamara Ottum, and Ross Fuqua collaborated with other state agency grant-makers at Oregon Parks, Travel Oregon, the Arts Commission, and Oregon Department of Veterans' Affairs to research, evaluate, and acquire an online grants platform that would allow libraries to create one online profile and apply for both Ready to Read and LSTA grants from that profile. All three of us shared our work around this with the State Library Board last fall (2019).

In 2019, the State Library started a Strategic Planning process for 2020–2023 that incorporated Ready to Read with an initiative designed to support one of our Agency's proposed Key Performance Measures. This measure assesses statewide participation in a Ready to Read project. As part of this work over the next three years, we plan to better align Ready to Read Program goals to other statewide early literacy initiatives from the Early Learning Division, such as Raise Up Oregon. The State Library Board approved the proposed Strategic plan on April 29, 2020.

Of course, the Law, subsequent amendments, and State Library Board meeting minutes do not tell the whole story of Ready to Read's impact on children across our state. These small pieces of documented work are important snapshots in time of the labor State Library staff have done and continue to support public libraries carrying out Ready to Read projects. These brief snippets help us understand we are deeply indebted to local library staff past and present. We know the Ready to Read mission of ensuring Oregon children have access to quality library services, are ready for kindergarten, and have a safe and joyful place to learn in the summer months is greatly strengthened by local library staff who bring energy and expertise to this work every day. We are grateful to be stewards of this program supporting children and families across our state. We look forward to continuing our work with Ready to Read into the future. 



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