#### A National Policy Agenda for Libraries



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## A policy agenda: Why?

- Among decision makers, there is not a strong awareness or understanding of the contributions of modern libraries
- □ Exacerbated by digital revolution—much changing in libraries, but not widely understood
- Need communication and advocacy for education and awareness of modern libraries to obtain improved access to needed resources
- □ First step of our Policy Revolution! initiative: What and how to communicate? Thus need for a policy agenda to guide the way

# A challenge and a strategy

- □ Challenge: Decision makers often have outdated views of libraries
  - Fondness and nostalgia
  - Little or no understanding of the value of modern libraries
- □ Strategy: Bolster and target communications
  - Build on strengths
  - Need compelling case studies, evidence for how modern libraries contribute to communities
  - Need library community convergence in messaging

# Another challenge and strategy

- Challenge: Decision makers too often do not involve or include libraries in their decisions and programs
- □ Strategy: Be more proactive in policy advocacy
  - Across broad spectrum of interests, organizations orientation is how libraries can further the missions of decision makers and <u>their goals</u>, not library goals
  - Libraries represent a critical national infrastructure—good leverage, ROI for other efforts
  - Need to focus efforts—can't be proactive in all possible arenas

## The policy agenda

- □ The 'stuff' of information policy
  - Our usual friends...
- Organization of this material
  - Focus on technology, digital and analog objects and funding
  - Focus on library services
  - Focus on values

## National policy agenda for libraries

- □ Frequently must be reactive, but...
- □ How for libraries to get more of what we want and need—the need to become more proactive
- □ Must answer the question "what do we want and need?
- □ Goal: Strive towards conceptual consistency—library sector is inherently decentralized and diverse in disciplines
- Many familiar topics—which include digital preservation, copyright/licensing, access to government information—see agenda for many more

# Strengthening library-related functions in the federal government

- The visibility and champions for libraries and related institutions within the federal government are dispersed and loosely connected, which means that our sector is less powerful and visible than it could be
  - Many standalone entities
  - Dispersed units of cabinet departments

#### Audiences

Members of Congress and congressional staff; with focus on specific committees depending on issue, for example: Senate HELP Committee or Commerce Committee, House Education and Workforce Committee

Individuals within the judicial and executive branches, including Federal agency executives and regulators; with focus on individuals within specific agencies depending on issue, for example: Federal Communications Commission, Department of Education

Private sector, thought leaders; with a focus on companies that can determine policy and/or lead policy change (e.g., publishers determining whether or not libraries may license and lend e-books)

Private sector thought leaders

Coalitions,
associations, foundations
and other
industry or
issue-based
groups

Academics and think tanks

**Journalists** 

State-level leaders

Our audience is made up of two distinct groups:

- An inner circle of decision makers who create laws and policies, as well as determine how they are implemented and enforced.
- An outer circle of influential groups and individuals who provide decision makers with facts and guidance.



#### Current state

- Priority issues for the next 2 years in light of 2016 elections--include rural areas, veterans/military families, entrepreneurship
  - Background research
  - Engagement
- Convene a Public Policy Advisory Council
- Plan a National Policy Convening
- Bolster communications capabilities

#### Contact information and resources

- □ Alan S. Inouye, <u>ainouye@alawash.org</u>
- www.ala.org/oitp; 202-628-8410
- □ National Policy Agenda for Libraries:
  - http://www.ala.org/news/pressreleases/2015/06/ala-releases-national-policyagenda-libraries
- District Dispatch, the blog of the ALA Washington Office:
   www.districtdispatch.org