



Partnerships for the Future

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It is hard to believe that this is my fourth and final “From the Chair” column for *DttP*. Thanks to the time constraints of publishing, I am writing this column three months prior to the end of my term as ALA GODORT chair 2013–2014, however, you will be reading it after my term ends and Helen Sheehy has taken office. Like many before me, I wish that there had been more time to devote to my duties as GODORT chair. I am frustrated with my own personal time-constraints of my full-time job and family obligations that have sometimes interfered with the fulfillment of my chair duties. However, I do think we have made some steps forward in communicating some of our most important concerns and issues to other members of ALA. This is due to the hard work and dedication of all the members of GODORT, especially those who are serving on GODORT committees. In particular, I want to thank the GODORT Steering 2013–2014 members for the wonderful job they have done in moving GODORT forward.

Conducting the business of GODORT is a partnership of sorts between GODORT members, GODORT committees, and ALA committees—multiple groups working together to achieve a specified goal through mutual responsibility and cooperation. Partnerships are not a new concept to libraries in general. Many libraries have formed at least one partnership with community entities or leaders to collaborate on services. Libraries that are part of the Federal Depository Library Program (FDLP) partner with the Government Printing Office (GPO) to provide no-fee permanent public access to government information. As I am writing this column, I am also attending sessions at the Texas Library Association Annual Conference. One of the sessions I attended was the “National Plan for the Transformation of the FDLP in the Digital Age” presented by Mary Alice Baish, Superintendent of Documents. The plan is full of opportunities for formal partnerships with the GPO and is extremely ambitious. Some of the highlights from the plan are as follows:

- All government information from 1789–present catalogued
- All government information from 1789–present discoverable and freely accessible
- All government information from 1789–present preserved (print, microfiche, tangible electronic, and digital)
- New roles and opportunities for Federal Depository Libraries

- Dependencies: funding, staffing, collaboration, partnerships, and Title 44 modernization

This plan will be further discussed at the Depository Library Council Meeting and Federal Depository Library Conference at the end of April 2014 that many of you will attend. While ambitious, I think it is obtainable. It will require institutions to join with GPO in formal partnerships to accomplish the desired outcomes. I am excited about the future this plan outlines and hope that the community stakeholders will take advantage of the partnership opportunities to move the FDLP toward these goals.

Earlier this week, I also got word that a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between GPO and the University of North Texas (UNT) was signed. This MOU expands on previous partnerships between GPO and UNT. It ensures permanent no-fee public access to the government information in the UNT Digital Library. I am very pleased that we have been able to solidify and strengthen the work between my institution and GPO. We are also moving forward on plans to create a Government Information Connection Library in the center of campus. This library will contain our entire collection of government information as well as a Foundation Information Network collection and GIS services. The staff at this new library will be asked to partner with community organizations like the Denton Chamber of Commerce to collaborate on projects that will benefit the North Texas region.

At ALA Midwinter, GODORT Steering approved a motion from the GODORT Legislative Committee to create an Ad Hoc Committee consisting of representatives from the library community and commercial vendors to discuss ways to get funding for preservation of tangible and born digital documents. I am in the process of asking individuals to serve on this committee and hope that they will have some time to begin work prior to ALA Annual 2014. This partnership will hopefully result in some dynamic ideas on how to acquire the necessary resources to increase the amount of preservation quality digitization of government information and capturing of born digital documents.

These are just some examples of partnerships that already exist or are being formed. I believe that ALA GODORT is uniquely positioned to be a leader in encouraging the development of more partnerships to solidify the future of permanent no-fee public access to all forms of government information.