

Getting to Know . . .

Kian Flynn, GODORT Chair

Jennifer Castle

Although I've been a GODORT member since 2016, the COVID-19 pandemic and ensuing move to virtual events has meant that there's many of you I still haven't met in-person and there's plenty of new GODORT members I have yet to meet at all. I thought I would take this column to answer a few introductory questions from the *DttP* editor. Feel free to reach out to me directly if you have any additional questions and I hope to see you all in-person or at a GODORT virtual event soon!

1. How/why did you become a government information/documents librarian?

The GODORT Help! I'm an Accidental Government Information Librarian webinar series is for librarians like me! I didn't initially have plans to be a government information librarian, or even be a librarian. In undergrad at Carleton College, my work study job was working the circulation desk at the college's library and I enjoyed the atmosphere and environment so much that after graduating I went from getting my Bachelor of Arts in Mathematics to pursuing my MLIS degree at the University of Washington iSchool.

At UW, I got hired as a student reference specialist in the Suzzallo Library's Government Publications, Maps, Microforms, & Newspapers (GMM) unit and the rest is history! In 2016, I became the Geography and Global Studies Librarian at UW in the GMM unit.

Even though my path to government information librarianship was more a result of a series of happy accidents than a predetermined career path, working as a government information librarian has been a natural fit for my lifelong interests in politics and history, and I even get to put my math background to use when helping students and faculty navigate Census data.

The GODORT community has been an incredibly helpful and supportive community in providing continuing educational opportunities to keep in touch with the national conversation around government information librarianship.

2. What do you love about your work?

I can answer this question in so many different ways! I love that each day is unique from the next. We wear so many hats as librarians that there's always at least one project or reference question that has me excited. This can be a source of burnout, but I find for me it keeps me engaged and interested in my work.

I love the process of solving tricky reference questions, much like working on a satisfying puzzle. My work at UW often involves sifting through historic documents—newspapers,

maps, and gov docs—that are fascinating. It's a joy to help connect the UW community to these documents and get them excited about the research process in turn.

I love working with students and introducing them to new resources, especially government data resources, that can advance their studies and tell us so much about our world.

3. Are there any government documents-related projects you've worked on you've found particularly meaningful?

In the fall of 2019, the University of Washington celebrated UW Global Month, in honor of the University's global impact and community. As part of this celebration, I worked on an exhibit highlighting library collections that spoke to this global impact of the University. In particular I created a display with a colleague that featured government documents related to international affairs from the papers of two long-serving U.S. Senators from Washington state (and with UW ties), Henry "Scoop" Jackson and Warren G. Magnuson.

Looking through boxes and boxes of these Senator's archives gave me a new appreciation for the whole lifecycle of government information—from its creation to the labor that library workers put in to make these documents discoverable and accessible to its long-term preservation. It was humbling, and a fresh reminder of the value of our work as government information library workers.

4. What are you reading?

This is always a three part question for me. I've most recently finished reading Hanya Yanagihara's *To Paradise* (2022). Her previous novel *A Little Life* (2015) was one of the most stunning novels I've read, and her follow-up is not far behind. My favorite novels tend to transport and challenge me, and her alternative history of past and future America told through three generations checks both those boxes. It's a book that left me shaken.

I'm currently reading Frank Herbert's *Dune* (1965) in the hopes of better understanding the recent film adaptation that left me befuddled and I have Gabrielle Zevin's *Tomorrow and Tomorrow and Tomorrow* (2022) next in line, on the recommendation of a friend.

5. What's one interesting/strange fact about you?

I like to run and raced my first 50 mile trail race this summer near Mount Rainier, which was the longest I had traveled by foot in a day. Some people find this hobby interesting, and some people find it strange!