

[Virtual Opportunities for Students to Help GPO Build the National Bibliography](#)

FDLP Connection - Featured Articles

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What's one of our ongoing tasks in Library Services and Content Management (LSCM)? We work to build a National Bibliography of all U.S. Government publications. What's one recognized gap in the National Bibliography? Some depository collections include fugitive documents, which are not in the Catalog of U.S. Government Publications (CGP). What's one new way to work on this task? Offer virtual research opportunities to library school students who seek to learn about Government documents and earn academic credit for their research.

LSCM sponsored a virtual practicum during the Spring 2011 semester for research to be conducted in the University of Washington Suzzallo Library. Cass Harnett was the local guide for Cathy Zegelin Wagner, iSchool student at the University of Washington. Based on this successful



Left to right: Cass Harnett, University of Washington Suzzallo Library; Cathy Zegelin Wagner, iSchool student at the University of Washington; Gary Klockenga, San Diego Public Library; Liz Soskin, MLIS candidate at San Jose State University.

experience, the U.S. Government Printing Office (GPO) can now begin to offer more virtual student opportunities in 2012.

Cass commented on the experience by saying, "I began to think about our documents collection differently because of Cathy Zegelin's practicum. I met three times with University of Washington iSchool student Cathy Zegelin during her Directed Fieldwork with GPO. Cathy has a refreshing, inquisitive approach to identifying items in our Government documents collection that came to us via other means than through GPO. Thinking about these materials - beyond our typical view of "fugitive documents" into a more careful analysis of what actually exists in university library collections - and watching a young pre-professional at work... these were both high points. The GPO practicum concept strikes me as a classic win-win, providing unique opportunities for both GPO and students."

Cathy also commented on her experience with the practicum. She said, "I really enjoyed working on this project. I learned a great deal about the FDLP, the tools available to the public, and the documents and information contained in these collections. I am glad to have had the opportunity to work with staff at GPO and to learn about the value of projects like these in preserving the records of the U.S. Government for future generations. I hope the work continues to bring fugitive documents to light and to ignite a passion for government documents in the hearts of LIS students to come."

These "virtual" opportunities bring students across the country into depository libraries, educate students about Government publications, provide students the opportunity to earn academic credit, and help GPO build the National Bibliography.

LSCM is currently sponsoring a student practicum at San Diego Public Library where Gary Klockenga is acting as the local guide for Elizabeth Soskin, MLIS candidate at San Jose State University.

Gary shared his thoughts by saying, "We are delighted to be able to cooperate with SJSU and the GPO on this project that increases the visibility of titles that might otherwise be overlooked. Although not distributed through the FDLP, there are documents in our

collection of local interest or historic in nature. These documents are an important part of our collection.”

Liz commented on the experience as well by saying, "Fugitive documents are part of what makes each depository unique. Every document is a part of the puzzle that makes up the National Bibliography and therefore must be found and included. I am excited about contributing to the National Bibliography".

Resources for Students

One of the goals of the first virtual practicum was to create a guidebook for other library school students who want to conduct research in a depository library and earn academic credit for their work as a practicum, field experience, or independent study. How did Cathy Zegelin get started examining a large academic collection with fourteen different locations? What should a student know in order to recognize and identify a Government publication within scope? Cathy's Web site, with links to resources, is available [here](#).

Role for Local Depository Staff

Having the cooperation of a local depository librarian is critical to being able to offer virtual opportunities to students. Students report to and receive guidance from GPO staff, however, only a local expert can explain the unique nature of each depository library and their collection. The local depository staff plays a critical role in pointing students to special collections and explaining local policies for cataloging and depository receipts.

Would you like to participate?

GPO encourages library school students around the country to consider earning academic credit for doing research at a local depository library. When a student asks to conduct this research in a depository library, GPO asks for their resume and looks for a local depository collection with depository staff available to act as guides to the local collection.

Student resumes are submitted to GPO. Resumes are examined to discover things such as the student's:

- Knowledge of the structure of Federal Government
- Ability to conduct research in a substantive depository collection
- Experience conducting independent research
- Experience working with Government documents

If GPO can match a qualified student with a local depository, GPO completes the paperwork with the library school and develops a work plan so the student's progress can be tracked and evaluated.

If you're willing to act as a guide to your local depository collection, contact [Robin Haun-Mohamed](#). Together, we can educate and usher in the next generation of Government information professionals!

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