

# THE NEED TO WEED: DEACCESSIONING GOVERNMENT DOCUMENTS PRIOR TO A LIBRARY RENOVATION

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## Abstract

In recent years, there has been a movement to create open library spaces and learning commons in academic libraries which has led to the deaccessioning of library materials in order to create these spaces. This poster presentation details the weeding and deselection process for federal government documents at California State University, Stanislaus, a four-year and above academic library.



## Weeding Non-Cataloged Government Documents

The process for discarding federal government documents was developed in the summer of 2017 and implemented in January of 2018. The project was completed in July of 2019. The process involved the following steps:

1. Beginning with the letter "A," the government documents student assistants searched the shelves for all items with a received date of January 1, 2013 or older. These documents were added to a list with their item number, OCLC number, SuDoc number, publication date, date received, title, format, barcode, and any additional notes. The list also stated whether the documents were available online. A new list was created for each cartload of materials. A template was created for students to input each item and any questions that arose were brought to the government documents supervisor. The government documents supervisor also created lists when time permitted. Lists had to be created by hand as 90% of the collection is not cataloged.

2. The government documents supervisor reviewed the list of items created by the student and made any necessary notes or corrections. The supervisor reviewed all items and recommended items for retention based on the collection development policy, such as whether the items fit the curriculum at CSU Stanislaus.

3. Items on the list were stored in closed stacks for the librarians to peruse. Each list was sent to the FDLP Coordinator for approval to either offer the materials to the Regional Library or retain the materials.

4. Prior to sending the list to the California State Library (the Regional), the government documents supervisor checked the list against the Regional's Previous FDLP Disposal List Offers and the FDLP's Superseded List to verify if the items needed to be offered to the Regional Library. Any items that did not need to be offered to the Regional Library were tracked on a separate spreadsheet. A copy of the list for disposal was then saved and modified to meet the submission requirements of listing only SuDoc number, title, and date received.

5. The list of items for discard was then sent to the California State Library for discard approval.

6. After the California State Library approved our discards, the list was posted and offered for two weeks on the CAL-DOC LISTSERV. California does not use the FDLP eXchange at this time.

7. After offering the items to the Regional Library and other selective depository libraries, the items were discarded. The government documents supervisor marked items off of the government documents shelf list and removed any possible holdings from OCLC. The student assistants also assisted with the discard process.

Using this method of weeding, the CSU Stanislaus Library sent 51 lists to the Regional Library for approval to discard. However, due to the response rate from the Regional Library, we changed the method of disposal in January 2019 to focus solely on weeding the items on the Previous FDLP Disposal List so that we would not have to wait for a response to discard these items.

## Selection Management Processes

Table 1

Percent Change in Item Numbers Selected

Percent of Item Numbers Selected by CSUS	July 2017	July 2019
	58.8%	29.07%

Note: Percent is calculated based on the total number of item numbers the FDLP offers for selection.

During the same time period that the federal government documents were deaccessioned, the CSU Stanislaus Library also began a review of its FDLP Item Selection Profile. Deselection of government documents was conducted via the following methods:

- Shipments were reviewed to determine if items received should be deselected. The item numbers of materials received during shipment were reviewed. If the materials were available online, the online (EL) item number was selected and the paper or microfiche format was deselected.
- As discard lists were created and sent to the Regional Library, the item numbers of discarded materials were reviewed. The item number was deselected if it no longer fit our collection development policy. If items were available online, then the online item number was selected.
- All additions made to the Item Selection Profile since 2012 were reviewed. Since the government documents were not actively managed during this time due to lack of staffing, these selections were all FDLP generated. If the items did not fit our collection development policy they were deselected. Online item numbers were also selected in place of the paper or microfiche formats.
- The Item Selection Profile review is an ongoing project. We are reviewing our selections item by item and making deselection decisions based on whether the item is available online, whether items have been published since 2012, and whether it meets the needs of our community. As of July 2019 our selection profile had decreased by 29.73%. The FDLP Coordinator would like to have a selection profile of 15-20%.

## Objective and Methods

The deaccessioning process was undertaken in order to decrease the size of the collection prior to a renovation and movement of the materials into a long-term storage facility. Planning for the weeding project began two years prior to the move and weeding began six months later. Weeding of the collection was undertaken to decrease the size of the collection and to have the collection better fit the needs of the CSU Stanislaus community. The project was overseen by one full-time staff member who dedicates approximately 30% of their time to government documents. The project also utilized the assistance of student workers. Included in this poster is the process used for weeding non-cataloged government documents, lessons learned from the process, outcomes of the project, and ongoing selection management processes including the selection of online item numbers.

## Outcomes

Table 2

Government Document Discard Outcomes

Project Processes	Total
Student Hours Dedicated to the Project	1,053.2
Staff Hours Dedicated to the Project	1,669.6
Paper Volumes Discarded	24,426
Microfiche Sheets Discarded	72,754
Microcard Sheets Discarded	64,135
CDs and DVDs Discarded	143
Lists Sent to the Regional Library	51
Linear Feet Discarded	1,701.5

Note: Staff hours were calculated at 40% of a full-time year (2,087 hours), for two years, since this project consumed more time than other government documents activities.

In terms of length, CSU Stanislaus gained the equivalent of 4.73 football fields. We also discarded large sets such as the Congressional Record and the U.S. Serial Set that we could no longer store due to long-term storage costs and the need for shelf space in the renovated library. In addition to large sets, we were able to weed letters A through C as well as the entire Previous Offers List maintained by the Regional Library.

## Recommendations

- Focus on weeding large sets or volumes to maximize space. There were a few large sets we didn't get to list that in hindsight should have been listed first.
- If your regional library has a list of items that don't need to be offered to the regional then weed this list first. It takes time to compare a list of offers to the previous offers list.
- Generate a new list for each cartload of discards. This makes it easier to check lists and track discards. After lists are checked they can be combined for offering the items to the regional.
- Store all items offered to your regional library in a closed area with limited access.
- Store items on the shelf in the order they were offered. Clearly mark each list on the shelf and leave space between lists if space allows. If you must store items from multiple lists in a row due to space constraints then clearly label the beginning and end of each list.
- If you are discarding a large volume of materials consider hiring a disposal company to remove them from your shelves and recycle the materials.
- Review item numbers for deselection while weeding the physical collection.