

Long-term Impact of COVID-19 Working Group: Initial Findings – Transcript of audio

Welcome back. Our Depository Library Council session. But all questions comments in the chat box in the lower right corner of the screen pick at the end of the presentation, we would have the presenters addressing all of your thoughts. A reminder, yes, every session is being recorded and every registrant will receive a link to all of the recordings. With that come I would like to introduce Rick.

I'm here to talk to you about an update on the cover 19 working group which was founded last summer. I will talk about and highlight our members of the DLC working group members, Amy, Alan, Richard, Lisa, Rick, Suzanne, Haley, the DLC numbers, Laura, Abigail, Cynthia, sorry, the GPO members, and today's presenters will be Amy, Cynthia, Lisa, and Rick. For context, our chart, we were designed as a response to session last spring. There was discussion around the community to talk about sort of the impact that of it is that on the community specifically how it has affected policies and we go about the day-to-day interactions of making collections archers to create a study or to start studying this issue of not just the immediate policies put in place but sort of tracking and looking at the long-term implications of the chart or the changes we have put into place. This group was formed and what would like to do today is talk about this initial report and I want to provide an update on the process of the working group and what they were actually doing, provide and discuss some of the initial feedback from the biennial survey, but information on the working group data analysis methods and processes, and then to outline next steps. At one point, I do want to raise at the outset, it is that because the data we are using came from the last biennial survey, obviously quite a bit of time was a lapsed so not all of this information will be immediately correct which is fine. Idea of the study was to be the first of many to sort of get many snapshots in time of policies and practices so that as a sort of longitudinal study, we can go back and sort of track changes over time.

So to give you a background, in order to track how the larger FDLP community is dealing with or has been doing with pandemic the last couple of years, we drafted a question on the biennial survey, sorry to all of you who had to enter that and filled it out, we had drafted this question, question six, and it was fairly open-ended and we wanted to see how all of our members were engaging with the pandemic. So we left this fairly open-ended and we will be to, there are dozens of categories of our labors maybe changing procedures and policies to deal with pandemic. Once we had collected this information, as you can imagine, we had a little over 1100 respondents which is excellent. We took the information we broke into qualitative and quantitative information, so the quantity was fairly easy to get through, examining, coding, and making sense of the information was a bit trickier so we took the responses from the survey, broke down topically, we created small mini groups within the working group itself and those were made more or less at random so that there would be sort of an even mythology across at each of the small teams, each of which had three people assigned went through all of your responses made a list of sort of the common themes, and compile them in to sort of once responsible in the end, we had about a dozen subgroups each of which had gone through responses so for instance how your libraries change policies with regard to shelving or with regard to reference or with a to instruction, we went through and sort of identify the key themes for each of those hand, for this session, will be talking about that in a bit more detail sort of the responses that people have given with regard to how members have been coping the last 2 years. This is actually the breakdown and a special thank you to Suzanne for making this book you can see that we have had, not every letter had responded to changes all of the categories. So you can actually see 422 libraries responded set that they may changes to public access which is not terribly surprising, 340 had changes to instruction, 248 changes to staffing, 232 had

changes to outreach services, 173 libraries the changes to enter a library loan service is an interesting 141 libraries reported no changes at all in any of their policies with a look over the last 2 years so that is an interesting figure. 121 had changes to maintenance. 116 had changes to processing. 94 had changes to reference services. 44 had changes to their selection profile but I confess I was actually personally expected to be much higher. 23 had changes to storage. And then 69 had changes that are classified as other. And those of you who feel, they recall there was sort of an open-ended paragraph to explain otherwise, so it's a fairly wide range of changes in will note if you do the math on this, it adds up to more than the number of respondents and that is just because some areas, change the multiple categories in a few cases, changes across the board so we have not yet taken into account that idea of two or three things together at the same time this gives you a general Egyptian that were in the first year in response to go. As an organization for this report, we haven't broken into three categories. The first half will be delivered by myself and then I will hand it off to Barbara. Generally speaking to all of the responses, there are three large brackets that the responses fall into picked first when a sort of administration related, public access staffing, and most of the others are structural changes in collections, so of course collection maintenance, shelving, storage, item selection, processing, so changes directly relates to clinician and services related, reference, instruction, outreach, ILL, so again mostly what you would expect in these were sort of the comedies with ideas that we baked into the original question.

So to start, looking at public access which we had a few respondents, you can see that there are quite a few major changes that have arisen plummeted as a result of it. None of which are super surprising, so there's more demand for public access can reduce our some appointments for access come close to the public, close deck, limited public access, limited to local community, focus on virtual services, restricted number of pages the building, restricted access, no printing, remote services only, items only accessible through reserve, masks required, proof of vaccination required, totally closer no services, curbside services, security solutions created to restrict access, online services only. One thing the working of my look at if we have the ability, we have the ability to look at the data based on institutional individual institutional but also region so it might be interesting for instance to compare be stayed in the question of proof of vaccination required, the group could considerably look at the data and see how that varies between states and regions as well and that's something we can do with the data. In terms of staffing, again, nothing I think that will be super surprising to folks. Most of the respondents in this section reported a move toward remote work, new and additional duties, particularly as a result of vacancies that were not filled, reassignments, retirements, furloughs, hiring freezes,

Moving on to collection leader products with collection maintenance and weeding projects and we found the collection and maintenance and weeding projects were suspended, paused, or halted because of limited access to physical collections or review of databases was paused and there was a lot of pausing and what was going on and as people started to realize what was happening and decide how to make changes are not. Collection maintenance and weeding projects were launched or prioritized. If the letter was close to users and the staff was on site, we could steal be there to a the collections in a lot of cases. And library facilities were reorganizing including moving materials to off-site storage, moving materials in the building, making space for social distancing so tables and things just moved to accommodate.. But we find now into the pandemic, we are really looking at changes in we are really focusing on, refocusing on what we are doing and we are increasing the use of resources because of closed library situations because less access because of local protocols. As we move into shelving, as was impacted by the fact that there were a lot of facilities, a lot of locker rooms that were closed or partially closed or only open to staff and one more people begin to work remotely. It wasn't just that they could work but now they were working remotely, finding new ways to connect to their jobs and to other

people in the library and the people they were serving. So their new procedures to deal with the contamination of the covered protocols like wearing masks and gloves and wiping down materials and having pointing period for materials that was being returned, and again, part of this is some space reallocation within the facilities to make accommodations for the social distancing and other new protocols. This was impacted by staff turnover as well. Looking at the storage, interactions to access of our site storage, facilities again, this kind of trickles back down to not having people work on site, more people working remotely, and just the new protocols of openness or lack thereof in libraries, again, just so any relocations away from the two real storage to other uses, work-study areas and motor socially does the staff for errors were incorporated in quarantine procedures as mentioned a lot of this was guided by OCLC realm, the project work that was being done. Things were changing. We begin to see a couple of different trends, when in cataloging and discovery and one in digital that prioritization of digital content so as the pandemic moves on, we are looking at more digital content we're looking less at tangible materials and a lot of day selection of print and the staff issues impact the ability to actively curate selection profiles with the buildings, some of closed, levers close, sometimes staff were permitted and not permitted in all these kinds of things wreaked havoc on actually working with the materials and/or collections. That is not surprising.

Processing, the list of things here the people mentioned has been affected, having to implement health particles from the court is the social distancing come the cleaning and the materials, shipments, physical processing stoppages. We know that GPO early on give the option to stop shipments at libraries because we were also working on decreased staffing at the time so that we could have different shifts throughout dividing of the staff into different periods. And for a while, that even halted shipments to libraries so we were all a part of the decision-making process here and we also have protocols and operations for which we had to make adjustments that trickle down the line to your libraries. In some cases, libraries had staff process materials off-site and they were doing tasks that were often seen, since this is what we do in the summer, we are on a more relaxed and we stopped working on these different projects like record cleanup and updates and you take a look at your workflows and what needs to be changed and you get backlogs that you have, backlogs that are growing because of the closures with a lack of staff during this time period. A lot of things are changing. But work is still getting done and is being transferred primarily to additional resources. With that's, we come to the service area. And I am going to turn things over to Amy.

Thank you. We are now looking back a couple of years. And we have now looking at the largest area where virtual reference is the biggest theme. And how we manage her collections was a very tall order. But the transition to virtual services was really large and as librarians and depository coordinators, we had to try to figure out how we were going to offer our services and at first with that we were going to be closed for a short time and it ended up being a very long time and most of us were already offering some kind of virtual service, whether it be email or chat or face-to-face, text, but now we have to figure how we were to QB services going and so we started looking a new, different kinds of technologies on how we are going to innovate reference services. But then this also then started to go into we also offer our instruction services, how are we going to offer outreach to our communities. So we had to change her methods and this led to appointments for some libraries and we had innovate to ensure that our users could find us and we had to create online ways as we had to start looking at safety protocols as buildings started to close down and it was temporary versus more permanently and we had to figure different ways of how we were going to do these only changed hours. Some letters were only open restricted hours and some were restricted permanently and so everything we did as our public facing services changed, we had to ensure that we meeting the needs not only as a depository library but just as libraries, how could we make this change is more permanent. And what kind of safety or safety net

could be ensure for our users, especially our regular users? We had various committees required special assistance like the underserved and those who rely on the Internet for example who come in and use of the depository services, especially those since we offer a computer for the DLP, they need to make sure that those are available so had to come up with different things a little bit before so some of the ways we looked at it is how do we move to synchronous and asynchronous services. We provide online consultations. We started looking at different technologies, zoom grew, and became probably the most popular technology used but also WebEx grew and we started creating more and more live guides until spring sure developed and we have other technologies that came. We started having online classes both for regular library instruction as well as teaching information literacy and we started doing hybrid instructions and suspending our regular classes. We have mask mandates now. We have all different kinds of trial and error try to figure out how we are going to offer our services. Limited attendance was tried various libraries and we have registration requirements since the demand came so very involved in we saw different kinds, all different areas tried all different kinds of service models in order to create as some of the demand for information literacy so we saw just all special come on this question. So our outreach services sought there was an increased need for frequent we saw. I believe it was Cindy who talked about the staffing or Rick talked about staffing changes and we saw a need for in person outreach and positions shifted. So as we shifted to more permanent outreach services and online outreach services, our duties all changed. And now we are seeing that this has changed. So as we have moved from this was a temperate change to becoming a more permanent change, we are starting to this question of even though is in the biennial survey, we have started to see that the snow becoming a regular part of her duties. We needed increased signage, for example. We need to see outreach for digital collections and so we had to come up with new methods of how our digital collections which became a primary collections although we offered services such as curbside services and this was outreach so we had to start figuring out ways of how do we market that, that we can offer curbside services for example and then duties then incorporate all of these services and we had to put in new policies and procedures that were put in social distancing to masks as well as how do we create online communications so teams, mix of teams and chat for internal chats as well as the external, so we have to learn for new workflows which become permanent. Now we have prerecorded videos as well as recorded presentations. We see whole change the structure of how librarianship has been conducted. We still traditional reference as well as virtual reference. Social media has taken over as far as a way for marketing and it just gradually, day by day, we are always increasing and this is the beauty of librarianship and depository librarianship. We always are seeing technology and utilizing that as a tool to make us better communicators. We started to learn how the virus is transmitted, we started seeing more with electronic loans what we could do with virtual lending and digital e-book lending and the library started dropping find that we started adding rapid ILO. The started coming really important, especially for all libraries. We changed became quarantined and changed processes. Some libraries decrease the number of IOLs per person. Other libraries looked at the overall volume of requests per person and some libraries, I know they did actually increase the number of interlibrary loans later as the pandemic started to decrease and I believe the next slide is where I turn it back over to Rick and can find them in my list here and I hope you will ask some good questions. This was the first half of the study we have been cooking is sort of what people have done so the rails aspect and sort of these questions to quantify it. The second half of our charge is to look at the second of the question which is how many of these changes have remained in effect over the scope of COVID. You can actually see that about 50% of the respondents who told us what changes they made during COVID have said they have already gone back to pick up levels which means as of last December about half of the libraries have kept changes in place so we are really interested in the second half of the charge going over and seeing what comes the move towards online in the 90s and how that fundamentally changed the way that we as depositories operate and one of the sort of long-term questions of all of this studying is to see 10 years from now

what changed since that were implemented the last year's history stayed on and how this changed shape of the community overall so we hope to have a study, have our portion of the study done by the spring and will have a by the end of this upcoming term just so that when the next survey starts getting drafted I guess next year, this same question can be asked over time. I will also say the amount of data we have collected in this project is really interesting and quite substantial. Many of the questions that races are going to be outside of the scope of this group so I also that in addition to our findings, the community will look at the data and ask some interesting questions as well. I am sure those are the types of studies you would be really interested in pursuing as well so that is a feature work so we look at the remaining data that we have so we get a sense of which of these long-term changes are some of the 60 place over time but alternately kind of creative foundation on which the same question the same study can be repeated a few more times to get a sense of what the long-term change really has been because we cannot predict what it is right now so I'm interested to see what trends we can track over future years. We have ample time for question. I know the chat is being moderated anyone in the working group, I would be more than happy to answer question so we will pick up.

There's a question for Charlie but did any libraries initiate withdrawing from the FDLP during the pandemic period that you can see from the data? I'm sure someone from GPO would be able to respond to that.

I think Kate can respond to that but I think she is down in the audience. So we did get information to the question. Kate, Laura, the could potentially is in a question if they are not in the session and will get you that information.

It looks like a says administration at Chicago public library, are you saying that they initiated that's, Barbara, during that time?

Yes.

Here comes Laura with answers in the chat from GPO.

Okay. Yes. Laura says the answer is yes. But we would have to pull some data to get the exact numbers for you. Kate says she so that the numbers but they can get it together if that is a question the committee would like to know about.

Thank you.

Some related to that and look at the data came income I was surprised by the relatively small number of depositories that reported changing their selection profile. I really expected quite a few libraries to have canceled pretty in favor of electronic so that is what my institution had done. I think maybe one in 10 reported that and so as actually, that was probably the biggest surprise but I really thought everyone was being or moving toward digital. If none of us were receiving, it would in and out of sight, out of mind time.

So far added, the administration heard that the FDLP would be going digital.

I received three phone calls from coordinators who are instructed by their directors to withdraw from the FDLP because they didn't think there was any point during the pandemic.

So when he says that the Potomac backlog of federal registers and congressional records was one thing that contributed to her library driving print once the originals were allowed to do so. So that is interesting.

[silence]

We added one library to the FDLP and eight dropped the program. This is brought up by some of the chats. One of the limitations of this study in particular is that the data just cough in December faster because it was ace in the biennial survey so we do know that this really is sort of snapshot in time. The hope is that after doing a few of these, will have sort alarm term trajectory to look at it as well so this recently not a state of the current FDLP, sort of, it is a snapshot of how was about a year ago and hopefully will be the first of several so we can get a really comprehensive longitudinal study of the topic as well.

Barbara says the problem for us as many people do not have their own computers. They are limited for people to use to access digital, federal information. I added a digital. We are, where our extra computers when you come from? Also we need librarians trained to access the FDLP info online so that is in reference to the comment about things going all digital. Charlie, what was your comments? I wonder how much of that was impacted by wave of retirements. Charlie says in reference to comment about getting to print and moving toward all digital I didn't get to my library until March, okay, that is 100 predecessor started, René, so Charlie says cannot stress how important it is to some of equally talk to directors and had been and remind them of the legal requirements the program. I think that ties in with succession planning discussion that happened during the session yesterday just make sure that everyone at your institution knows about the program and your obligations and its history and importance. Barbara says a problem about computers, Deb says the workload involved in processing tension materials is concerning given the current labor market. Charlie says I am a broken record with that question myself. Thank you, Charlie. Lots of comments about that, about the workload and maybe even finding student workers willing to work for student worker wages or other staff thicken up with that. Deb also says even if you have funding for positions, it is such a tight labor market and the housing crisis and any agrees that like that is just staffing for all industries and areas of employment is such a problem we all know that library work is not the most lucrative work. I had a question if I may about your idea of looking at it regionally. That was super intriguing. My library was not closed very long at all. So I spent a lot of time shoving chairs into storage spaces to create physical distancing. And so that idea of looking at where libraries remained closed for a long time and where they reopened pretty quickly, I think, is interesting. Is that something you can get from the data?

Yes. I think one of the big questions for this working group for this what specific questions we went to answer just because the data is really fascinating and those are questions that we cannot actually figure out with the data and I think as with all data study projects, it is a question of, like, not answering more and more questions any financiers and so I think to base a question, yes, I think it can be sort of derived. It is just a matter of quick questions that want to spend its time on pivot you generally hope that after the study is done, it is going to be public accessible to everyone and I really hope the questions in this working group does not ask, members of the community to come I know those of you have to publish to keep her jobs, this data, because we had so many respondents who legally had to respond, the data for this is just exquisite. So those and other questions of group may not be able to answer because they are just outside of our church are certainly things that ambitious researchers can answer and I personally would love to see those studies and documents to the people in other venues.

I agree. That is a good idea. Recess, and I think this is really important to point out because often magical thinking occurs when people are talking about switching to electronic resources, Chris says the workload and processing electronic resource will also have an impact on library staff. I think administration often forgets that all of those electronic records and ways of helping people discover them, thank you Chris for that, and he says housing costs are too high never lost a lot of faculty. No one has addressed how to discard we'd electronic resources pick into so much. That is the question for me. Charlie says they should start posting selling ranges. Yes. That would be the humane thing to do. Cases during FY 21, they had a library to the FDL P and three libraries dropped from the program. Thank you, Kate. That is it for the questions for the moment.

.gov and wanted to but I agree 100% with the salaries. I have actually emailed people at ALA about this and they said that too many universities push back on it the last time he tried. Set but no, I 100% agree that those should be all listed. Going back and look at the question of which questions do we want to delve more deeply into and find out various bits of information, for example, the states, the regions, think about the federal depository library directory intrigues there are for all of the libraries because the biennial survey is tied to the depository library number and we can get all of the data by size, type of library, all of that information that is in the directory, the survey data can be sliced and diced in so many different ways it really is a rich set of data and I think that we could very easily do some of the original data that people are talking about it I think the idea of looking at the local restrictions, the local protocols that were put into place, and looking at a geographically, that could be some very interesting data and the reason why things are changing or not in certain libraries, interesting questions.

I want to take this moment to really thank everyone on this working group. Because we were waiting for the biennial survey information to get compiled by GPO, thank you to GPO as well. There was a lot of sitting around and waiting the last few months when this, we got this and is kind of them so I really do appreciate everyone on the committee and putting up with my emails last few months. So I generally think the members of this working group. I really appreciate your hard work on this.

Chris says there's lots of discussion about salaries and the difficulty of filling positions and a lot of agreement there. Chris says some administrators think of everything online so why be a depository. The question of the moment I think. And Charlie says thanks everyone, that's data to wait three. Debra says there depository person more for have to pick that's something we're hearing a lot of sessions. It is a difficulty of having the coordinators just one part of your job having it added onto your job that already seems impossible to do. There are a lot of think use. Or someone else who says I am the library capital. I imagine you are more than that. But that is -- we all get it. If I could count how many, oh, people are counting the number of hats they are wearing, balancing those, 12 those, whatever we are doing which is why am not going to stop to count. I got you. Charlie says I am hearing it at times remember to answer the question for myself as we go all digital, okay, thank you, Charlie, for sharing that with us in the Navy says a depository is more than a collection and you have to look at the expertise and services, including what GPO provides. Absolutely. I mean, funny, like, my community get so much out of it. So your administration on that. Charlie says it is a tough sell dad says yes. Question being a depository and becomes freely available for you online and agreed, Charlie. There is a lot of discussion about that perhaps with your project to Boston and everything is online, yes, absolutely, David is right, and then we probably want to go digital because of the idea if it is not digital, why keep it so that could be a motivation for someone to keep a print collection even as things move more toward digital that even because once you got rid of it, than what would be the argument that you could make for spending staff time, making sure they have that professional development. Chris says we need talking points for benefit of being an online depository. I think that is right. And a bit you those coming from GPO and

from the community. Suzanne says free online doesn't mean findable. Thank you . think that is the most one thing that the expertise it takes to connect people with those resources and the presenter the other day talked about how if you have limited Internet, like you are checking email, chat, Facebook, you are not going out to some of these sites that might help you with your information needs. David, yes, so David is saying there is, he says yes, that David, Kate says David, I am in, Kelly says +1 David, a lot of +ones. Suzanne plus one day become a lot of agreement here about we needed different way to talk about that but I would love to see acidification series similar to what Westlaw and Lexis offered a law student put a sticker on the link in profile with pride. Tablets is also if we go all digital, what I mean that the public has access to every item GPO publishes or will still be a limit to access certain items with the selective FDLP library purchase. Good point. That needs to be for all academic libraries. I think that's a good idea. I think people besides the coordinators like something like that also. That's just as professional development to be able to learn more about how to do that because we don't have a variance to assist in finding, sorry, is that the way. The chat is moving at a space here. Barbara says if we do not have a variance to assist people with finding information, they are going to get the answers. King says Charlie, let's talk about certification. Wonder if Jesus would be a good afternoon. Alyssa says Susan, I did that's a few months accommodated feel really special, LOL. Maybe partner with library juice for programs. Rick says run the certification via FDLP Academy similar to the one that I have for new coordinators. Charlie says sounds good, I would like to see for any university student but there can always be levels from a variance, researchers, students, lawyers, et cetera. It's kind of a tiered program. Rick says the difficulty with library juices the cost. That would be the way to go as far as making sure that it is a free resource. And if I missed anything, please jump in and restate your point if there is something that I like it by me.

LinkedIn badges of free advertising. One of the technical service library that does the day-to-day catalog as one of them, I really appreciate hearing your feedback and experiences. Thank you. Amy says I'd be interested in helping certifications& I gave Kelly the ball so she is unmuted. That is okay. Any of the questions regarding your city?

[silence]

Rick, I am going to meet myself and let you wrap up if you would like to do that.

I would like to think everyone on the was good but also all of you who filled out the survey has idea of having a much of The people had to fill out a survey is a dream. They can for doing it. Appreciate it because I said, hopefully the plan is to have wrapped up with our analysis of this first biennial survey in the spring and leave it to another group of DLC members to do a second one and a third and fourth and I am generally interested to see what sort of the long-term changes, hopefully something better as well come out of this. So thank you all for your excellent questions. And I hope what we hope to have more for you in spring.

Thank you to everyone. Will be back in history in just over 50 minutes with our next session for the Depository Library Council . Thank you.