

# History of the Oregon Document Depository Program

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(This history is based on a presentation given during the 2000 Oregon Documents Conference, and was updated in 2006.)

## EARLY HISTORY

Oregon has been publishing things since before it was even a state. The oldest Oregon document that I can find in our collection was published in 1851: the *Journal of the Council of the Territory of Oregon During the Second Session of the Legislative Assembly, Begun and Held at Oregon City, December 2, 1850, in the Seventy-Fifth Year of the Independence of the United States*.

So we know that Oregon government has a publishing history reaching back around 150 years or more. But how have all of those publications been collected, organized, and made available to the citizens who paid for them? Sounds like a job for a library.

In its early days, Oregon had two entities that acted something like the current State Library: something that was actually called the State Library, and the Oregon Library Commission. The Library Commission was responsible for bringing library services to Oregon citizens who did not have access to a local library, and for advising public and school libraries. The State Library was a law library. Both the State Library and Library Commission had offices and collections in the Capitol Building. The Library Commission provided research services for the legislature, but the State Library collected the bulk of the Oregon documents.

In 1905, Cornelia Marvin, the secretary of the Library Commission, had been trying to compile a bibliography of Oregon state documents for a national publication. This was evidently a frustrating experience, because the Report of the Secretary of the Oregon Library Commission, Oct. 8 to Dec. 13, 1905, states: "The state documents have never been listed and it is very difficult to find out what has been printed ... It will certainly be well worth while to make some provision for making a list, and to arrange for preservation and distribution of documents through public libraries, among which should be designated depositories ....People in different sections of the state should know that all the state documents may be found in certain libraries."

In 1907, the 24<sup>th</sup> Oregon legislature passed Senate Bill 136 "to provide for the binding and distribution of public documents". It required the State Printer to send the State Library (that's the State Library, not the Library Commission) copies of state publications. The State Library was required to keep three in its collection, place ten in reserve to replace lost or damaged copies, and distribute the remainder to: the Governor; the Secretary of State; Library of Congress (2 copies); the territorial, state or district library of each state; any

foreign state of territory with which the library has or shall arrange for the exchange of publications; and to what were evidently the first Oregon Documents Depository libraries:

University of Oregon  
Oregon Agricultural College  
Oregon Library Commission  
and

"each public or normal school library as may be designated as public depositories by the Library Commission".

In April 1907, the Library Commission designed the following public libraries as depositories:

Portland  
Eugene  
Dallas  
Baker City  
Forest Grove

Having two library entities in the old state house did lead to some rumination about who should be doing what. In 1908, the report of the Secretary of the Library Commission said "It has been suggested that the documents part of the Library be turned over to the Commission. It is undoubtedly true that no one uses it so much as the Commission and that it is unwise to build up two document libraries in the State House, but it would be impossible for us to receive it without some provision for an assistant to care for it. Our legislative reference work does, of course, depend upon having this library kept up and the only question is whether it should be kept up by the Law Library or the Commission." In 1912, the State Library was preparing to move into a new building which did not include shelving space for the documents collection. They offered to transfer their documents collection to the Commission, along with "... the privileges and duties of a designated depository for state and government documents", and suggested that the Commission join with them in drafting a legislative bill to make those changes. The Commission replied that it sounded like a good idea, but they would need \$11,000 more per year to be able to do it. In its annual appropriation, the Commission included an increase of \$500 to cover the cost of shipping depository and exchange documents.

In 1913, the State Library became the Supreme Court Library, and the Library Commission became the State Library.

The new Supreme Court Library transferred all of its federal and state documents to the new State Library, and also "such Oregon documents as are now held or shall in future be published for distribution and exchange, with the duties of custodian of documents as provided in sections 2697-2703 of Lord's Oregon Laws". (Oregon Laws, chapter 149, 1913). In May 1913, the soon-to-be State Library reported that the soon-to-be Supreme Court Library had a total of 39,329 items to transfer to them, of which 21,864 were state documents. There was one spanner in the works, however, since the same legislature that morphed the Library Commission into the State Library also repealed the law that required the printer to send copies of documents. However, evidently the State Librarian immediately

saw the potential difficulty and was able to resolve it without major problems.

The new State Library obviously weathered the transition, because the collections and the documents depository program are still here. The early days may have been difficult, however, in a 1914 report to the Board of Trustees, under the heading of "Documents Library", the first sentence is "No help for this department yet". Among other problems of distribution and exchange programs, they had inherited a backlog of 3,000 uncatalogued documents.

The earliest record we have of the receipt and distribution of depository documents is a ledger in our Special Collections.

### **THE PROGRAM GROWS AND CHANGES**

This early program was set up not only as a depository program, which guaranteed that designated libraries around the state would receive copies of Oregon documents, but also as an exchange program with other states and countries. The requirement for the number of copies the Library received of documents sounds very high to us today. For instance, at some points, the Library would receive up to 50 copies of legislative bills and calendars, and 125 copies of legislative interim committee reports. This was way more than needed to supply the depository libraries. The remainder were kept in stock, where they could be used to replace worn or missing copies from the Library's collection, or meet requests from other organizations. By the 1960s, the Library published a quarterly *Checklist of Official Publications of the State of Oregon*, which it distributed to 450 organizations: Oregon depository libraries, Oregon state agencies, state libraries, some colleges and universities, the British Museum, and the national libraries of Australia, Japan, and Sweden. Organizations that received the Checklist could request copies of publications from the Library's stock. In 1979, the *Checklist* ceased publication, and was replaced by the microfiche edition of the Library's catalog. (The fiche catalog, in turn, ceased publication in the 1980s.). The stock area dwindled over the years, until it was eliminated entirely. By the 1960s, and continuing on into the early 1990s, the depository program ranked libraries in a hierarchy, with the State Library and the Library of Congress as the beginning, and arranged shipments that way. The idea was that the larger libraries, by being nearer the head of the line, would be more likely to receive publications when there weren't enough copies to go around. The State Library received three copies, and LC received two. In 1972, the documents librarian evidently realized that a lot of depositories were not keeping all of the publications the State Library sent them; in fact, some evidently sent back the ones they didn't want. As a result, depositories were given the opportunity to become "selective", rather than full, depositories. Rather than getting a shipment with a shipping list in it, they received the Oregon State Documents Selection List, from which they chose the items they wanted. Twenty-two libraries chose to become selective.

### **SHARED CATALOGING AND THE OrDOCS CLASSIFICATION SCHEME**

In the late 1970s, there was a push for centralized cataloging of all Oregon documents. The State Library assumed the responsibility for cataloging OrDocs: what that meant for the depositories is that they could use the State Library's work rather than having to do it themselves. This also included what in the library world is known as "authority control". For OrDocs, that consists of establishing what the true form of an agency's name is. For instance, are we the Oregon State Library, the State Library of Oregon, or just the State Library? (For the record, it's Oregon State Library). Another aspect of shared cataloging is the Oregon Documents classification scheme. For the non-library people: classification is the number you're used to seeing on a book's spine, which says where it lives on the shelf. The most familiar classification schemes, Dewey Decimal and Library of Congress, classify by subject, so that items on the same subject live next door to each other. The OrDocs scheme, which is based on a similar scheme for federal documents, classifies by the issuing agency, and then further subdivides by the type of publication. Here's how it works.

OR	Every OrDoc number starts out with OR, for Oregon
Con	Each OrDoc number is then subdivided by agency - for instance, Con for Consumer & Business Services
Con/Oc1	Numbers may be further subdivided by Division - for instance, Con/Oc1 for the Occupational Safety & Health Division
	Each number is decimally subdivided by the type of publication:
.1	Annual, biennial, or financial reports
.2	General monographs
.3	General serials
.4	Series
.5	Ephemeral (brochures, posters)
.6	Laws, administrative rules
.7	Statistical reports
.8	Directories, handbooks, manuals, guides, bibliographies, maps
.9	Minutes, proceedings, testimony

For more information on cataloging and classifying Oregon documents, see the Cataloging and Classification section [here](#).

### **MORE CHANGES**

The number of copies required for the program fluctuated from time to time. However, in 1979 SB 246 authorized the State Printer to withhold 45 copies of appropriate publications and send them to the State Library for the depository program. The bill, which was backed by the State Library, the Oregon Library Association, and the State System of Higher Education, passed.

In August 1979, depository libraries met at the State Library (for, as far as I can tell, the first time until today). At that meeting, all depositories switched back to full status. Here's the 1980 list of depository libraries. As you can see, it had grown considerably since 1907: Oregon State Library (3 copies); Library of Congress (2 copies); Multnomah County Library; Portland State University; University of Oregon (2 copies); Oregon State University; Oregon College of Education; Eastern Oregon State College; Albany Public Library; Astoria Public Library; Southwestern Oregon Community College; Eugene Public Library; Klamath County Library; Jackson County Library; Malheur County Library; Oregon Historical Society Library; Tillamook County Library; Baker County Library; Deschutes County Library; University of Oregon Law School Library (shipping list only); Pacific University Library; Josephine County Library; Hillsboro Public Library; Hood River County Library; La Grande Public Library; Linfield College Library; McMinnville Public Library; Blue Mountain Community College Library; Northwestern School of Law Library (shipping list only); Reed College Library; University of Portland Library; Douglas County Library; Salem Public Library; Willamette University College of Law Library (shipping list only); Wasco County Library.

In addition to distributing the documents and shipping lists, all depository libraries also received one catalog card for each new title they received. This was part of the shared-cataloging effort. With the rise of online catalogs, the catalog card eventually became unnecessary, and we stopped providing them in the mid-1990s.

### **PROGRAM REDESIGN IN THE 1990s**

In 1994, a task force of staff from the State Library and members of the Documents Interest Group of Oregon (DIGOR) met to draft legislation to make changes to the depository program. The idea was to continue to provide good access to government information, while at the same time reducing the number of copies agencies needed to provide. The 45-copy requirement, for example, always resulted in the State Library receiving extra copies, since as far as I can tell, there had never been 45 depository libraries. Also, a few libraries that were technically listed as depositories actually only received a few legal publications, or just the shipping list. HB 2077 made the following changes:

- Reduced the number of depository libraries to a maximum of 30, of which no more than 15 could be designated Full depositories
- Established a two-tiered system of Full depositories and Core depositories
- Defined Core Public Documents as "... those public documents for which members of the public have the most significant and frequent need"

Required each agency to have a publication liaison to the State Library, who must supply an annual list of the agency's publications.

HB 2077 passed, and the same group met to draft the Administrative Rules, which list the full and core depository libraries and their obligations, and to draft the Core list. Prior to the Administrative Rules for the program, there had been only informal guidelines for retention of publications. Having a publications liaison at each agency has been a great help. For an outsider, it can be very difficult to navigate the intricacies of a large agency trying to get information about a publication. Having a central person to contact speeds things up considerably. We're not getting as many publications lists as we'd hoped, even when we remind people. Those lists we do receive almost always includes documents that have somehow fallen through the cracks, however.

## **THE OrDOCS PROGRAM IN THE 21ST CENTURY**

In June 2003, the State Library moved the concept of shared cataloging ahead another step. Depository libraries now have the opportunity to FTE bibliographic records directly into their local catalog. This speeds up the process of cataloging, and makes Oregon documents available to citizens more quickly.

Oregon state government has embraced the internet and has been providing significant information via the World Wide Web since the mid-1990s. As more state information migrated to the internet, we become more and more concerned about web-only information that disappeared from agency websites. Could we collect and archive it? Working with the State Archives and Department of Administrative Services Information Resource Management Division, the State Library submitted HB 2118 to the 2005 legislative assembly. HB 2118 was signed by the Governor May 13, 2005. In July 2006, the Oregon State Electronic Document Repository went live.

There are now a total of 10 depository libraries, and agencies are required to supply only 10 copies of each public document. The Core designation has been eliminated.

Agencies are now required to deposit an electronic copy of each public document with the State Library.

the State Library will establish an archive of these electronic documents and provide access to them via the [online catalog](#). Depository libraries are required to include the bibliographic records for the electronic documents in their catalogs. We hope to include the Repository in the search engine on Oregon.gov eventually. Visit the [Repository](#) for more information about the program.