

SLA First Five Years Blog

A group blog by, and for, early career library and information professionals

Digital Government Strategy: Building a 21st Century Platform to Better Serve Our Constituencies

Posted on [June 24, 2014](#) by [andornotnear](#)

This is a write-up by Angela J.A. Kent of a session held at SLA Annual 2014 on Tuesday June 10 2:00 PM, presented by the Environment & Resource Management Division, Government Information Division, and Taxonomy Division. For more session write-ups, [click here](#).

In this session, representatives from the municipal and federal government agencies discussed how they reach their constituents through digital strategies and platforms. The constituents in these case studies included a large population municipality (Vancouver city), primarily national audience (U.S. Federal Reserve), and multiple communities throughout the world (U.S. State Department). The speakers included Sandra Singh, Katrina Stierholz, and Chris Zammarelli.

As part of a state library that provides access to state and federal government information to residents throughout a geographically large state, digital strategies and platforms to reach our constituents is a necessary reality in our work.

A digital strategy of digital services should be coordinated among all the service providers (e.g., each division or department within the representative agency). To scope down the strategy there must also be a general agreement on what digital is and should include. For some, thinking a digital approach may mean providing a digital equivalent for every analog interaction that would occur. For others, a digital platform may be distinct, but complementary to the services that are provided in person.

A key suggestion in assisting your agency with outreach of your digital services was to identify groups that could get their information to the wider audience. This includes textbook publishers who cite their online services; librarians (particularly government documents librarians); and teachers. They also noted that they try to make their website text social media friendly (i.e., “Twitterable”) and cross promoting through linking content and referencing, when appropriate, to Wikipedia. Working with digital organizations like the Digital Public Library of America was also noted.

Related links

- U.S. Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis, Education Resources www.stlouisfed.org/education_resources/
- Digital Public Library of America dp.la
- Digital Government Strategy: Building a 21st Century Platform to Better Serve Our Constituencies <http://sched.co/18OrOyT>

Angela J.A. Kent is a 2014 SLA Rising Star. She received her MLIS in December 2013 and is now a Reference Librarian at the Texas State Library & Archives Commission. She is part of the library's division that is responsible for federal and state government documents. Angela's

information policy areas of interest include copyright, open data/open government, open access, and fair use.

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Government Information Access in the U.S. and Canada: Implications for Librarians

Posted on [June 27, 2014](#) by [andornotnear](#)

This is a write-up by Angela J.A. Kent of a session held at SLA Annual 2014 on Tuesday June 10, 11:00 AM, presented by the Academic Division, DSOC Labor Section, and Government Information Division. For more session write-ups, [click here](#).

This session was intended as an update on accessing government information in Canada and the U.S. The speakers were Carla Graebner (W.A.C.) and Donna Scheeder (U.S. Library of Congress) and they shared their experiences and advice on capturing and archiving government websites and publications. The discussion also included information policies that affect access to government information.

Working at a state library that serves as a federal and state government documents repository, our division has a responsibility to maintain and make accessible to the public these government documents and data.

From a practical standpoint government documents libraries are involved in the following activities: implementing applications and a strategy to capture and archive government websites; coordinating with government agencies and other libraries to consolidate collections — particularly as libraries and agencies close or become consolidated; and understanding the latest in information policy decisions.

In Canada, when the government libraries began closing, collections disappeared, specialists who understood collections were gone, and there was an increase in the use and reliance of access to information requests. Additionally, foreign exchange agreements with government collections ended and depository library agreements were no longer subject to retention. The libraries response included implementing a strategy to capture and archive government websites and building up a LOCKSS network of Canadian Government Information.

From an information policy standpoint, librarians working within government libraries or with government document collections, should be aware of information policy agendas that can assist with accessing government information. Donna Scheeder introduced the U.S. national information policy as having a new agenda. She noted that NARA (National Archives and Records Administration) should be watched for reformed government records policies. For best practices, the Center for Excellence in Digital Government was worth reviewing, while the GPO (Government Printing Office) remains the standard bearer of official, digital, and secure government documents. These will be important resources for librarians as government agencies continue to publish more born digital publications.

Librarians should understand who their allies are in this arena, namely the Open Access Movement, mobile strategies by citizen engagement groups, and authors alliances. In today's government information world, librarians are not just providing access to government information, but are providers of enhanced government information.

Related Links

- National Archives and Records Administration www.archives.gov/
- Center for Excellence in Digital Government www.gsa.gov/portal/category/101991
- Government Printing Office. Authentication www.gpo.gov/authentication/faq/
- IFLA. Committee on Freedom of Access to Information and Freedom of Expression (FAIFE) www.ifla.org/faife
- Canada's Action Plan on Open Government <http://data.gc.ca/eng/canadas-action-plan-open-government>
- LOCKSS. Lots of Copies Keep Stuff Safe. www.lockss.org/

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