When the Government Hands You Lemons...
Or nothing at all.

Turning a Bad Situation into a Good Opportunity
Lest we all forget...

The 2013 Government Shutdown
Or, as I like to call it, Judgment Day.

Sites were on “hiatus” during the shutdown, so we had to rely on our PRINT collections to get us through.
Actual footage of Sonnet answering a reference question over the phone.
The “Old Way” ≠ The Wrong Way

New ideas are great. They drive us to think about how we do things, as well as why we do them. They help us to evolve.

But that doesn’t turn old ideas into bad ideas. They are just different. And just like diversity in the workplace...different is good. Different offers more options...more perspectives.
The Dangers of Ignoring the Old Ways

The shutdown, more than any other time, showed us how important it is to know how to answer questions using the old-fashioned way—

GASP!!!

going to the physical documents themselves.
The Tables were Turned

The shutdown, while upsetting for all of us, was particularly distressing to this newer, more digital generation. It humbled any of us who thought we knew what we were doing.

It was also a great opportunity for us to turn to the wise sages in our field and ask them to help us learn how to answer questions when our digital documents and sites fail us.
The River Runs Dry

It also reminded us that we rely on the Internet as though it were a mighty river. It may change course over time, but it is always there, waiting to serve.

Yet...there we were. Without some of the very resources that we rely on every day. This shows us that nothing is certain. While the Internet may still be there, that doesn't mean that all the things we need will be as stable.
If You Listen, Opportunity Knocks

Dare I say...

The shutdown was the perfect opportunity for librarians to show that there is a need for our profession...

especially for librarians who work with or specialize in government information.
After all, if some of us were stressing out about finding information that we’re familiar with...

Imagine how our users felt...
Collecting Dust? Not Any More

It was also a great opportunity for documents librarians to defend their collections. Some gov doc librarians across the country have experienced pressure from their Deans and Directors to heavily weed their print collections...

Or to even bow out of the Federal Depository Library Program because “everything is online now.”
Being Needed

Our users not only needed our knowledge (and our physical materials) to help them through...

They also needed our network. This was a wonderful opportunity for depository libraries across the country to assist each other, whether with guidance on how to answer a question or emailing/faxing needed documents.
But Enough About That...
Balancing the Physical with the Virtual

But that doesn’t mean we should shun all things virtual. In fact, now is a great time for librarians to embrace the power of social media....to either share content or create content.
Library as a Place for Unity

During this time of upheaval, the country was forced to watch Congress erupt in vitriol, each side blaming the other.

As a result, users can’t always trust what they read or hear. And isn’t this why we are here?
YES!!!

To inform our users, without bias, about what is happening and how it will affect them and the agencies they rely on.

Social media can, and should, be an important part of that.
Ways to Use Virtual Tools
Some of us used Facebook

Lori Smith

When the U.S. government shuts down, it doesn't really shut down entirely. Various vital services will continue to operate. Agencies like the Federal Aviation Administration and the Coast Guard continue to ensure our safety. The mail will still be delivered and food will still be inspected. However, many very important services will cease temporarily and federal facilities, such as the National Zoo, will be closed. For more details about which federal government functions will continue and which won't, see this page from the USA.gov site maintained by the General Services Administration. Many government websites may also be unavailable during this time, but fortunately, USA.gov does not seem to be one of them.

Government Shutdown | USA.gov
usa.gov
1-800-FED-INFO Call us toll-free at 1-800-FED-INFO (1-800-333-4636) for answers to government questions.

Like · Comment · Share · October 1, 2013 at 10:27am

6 people like this.

Write a comment...
Some used Libguides

Alternate Government Research Sources

Tags: anthropology_middle_eastern_cultures, business_economics, government_documents, mathematics_statistics, political_science_public_admin, quantitative_analysis, sociology

A dynamic guide to alternate research sources for use during the 2013 Federal Government shutdown.

Last Updated: Oct 17, 2013 | URL: http://guides.library.mississippi.msstate.edu/altgovsources | Print Guide | RSS Updates

Status Updates & News

- 10-16-13, Night: Shutdown Officially Ends
  The Senate and House pass the Continuing Appropriations Act, 2014 to end the shutdown, and the law is signed by President Obama in the early hours of 10/17/13. Federal employees are informed they should report to work the next morning.

- 10-16-13: Euromonitor Offers Free Access To Passport: Countries and Consumers
  Free access to Passport: Countries and Consumers offered by Euromonitor for socio-economic data while the government sites are down. This system includes data from the US Census Bureau, Bureau of Economic Development, and International Trade Commission. Free access is through Nov 8. To access the database you must register for an account at www.portal.euromonitor.com.

- 10-6-13: Social Explorer Offers Free Full Access To Census Data During Shutdown
  The current shutdown in Washington is limiting the access that scholars and researchers have to vital materials, including the US Census website. To that end, Oxford University Press and the Social Explorer team will open up access to Social Explorer for the next two weeks. Social Explorer offers users Census data from 1790 to 2010 and US Census data for 2010 for...

Updates & News

- What's Open, What's Closed
  From CNN: what's open, what's closed, total # of employees, # expected to work during shutdown, # furloughed, notes.

- Agency Contingency Plans (OMB)
  Plans for all agencies.

- National Journal
  Issues older than 14 days are available online from MSU Libraries.

- Government Executive
  Issues older than 14 days are available online from MSU Libraries.

- NY Times, Fiscal Crisis: Continuing Coverage of the Budget Debates

- Washington Post: Live Updates: The Shutdown

- HuffPo: Government Shutdown

- Pew Research: How to Get Census Data During the Government Shutdown

Comments (0)
Some used blogs

Federal Documents @ Earl K. Long Library
A blog designed to help you keep up with press that might otherwise be overlooked.

Day 3 of the Government Shutdown

Well, it's official: The 2013 Depository Library Council Meeting and Federal Depository Library Conference has been cancelled with hopes of actually holding the Meeting and Conference in the spring of 2014. Read the letter from The Superintendent of Documents, Mary Alice Baish here.

Thursday, October 3, 20...

Day 3 of the Government Shutdown

During the shutdown, more than any other time (dare I say), is the perfect opportunity for librarians to show that there is a need for our profession—especially for librarians who work with or specialize in government information. It is also a good reminder that we must always keep our skills sharp. I confess, I’m guilty of relying too much on our electronic overlords (aka, computers). But we rely on the Internet as though it were a mighty river. It may change course over time, but it is always there, waiting to serve. A great example of this is the cautionary tales of teenagers and young adults posting pictures that can come back to haunt them because “once it’s out there, there is no erasing it.” Yet...here we are. Without some of the very resources that we rely on every day. This shows us that nothing is certain. While the Internet may still be there, that doesn’t mean that all the things we need will be as stable. So...this is why it is important to know how to answer questions using the old-fashioned way—going to the physical documents themselves. So let’s take this opportunity, especially the younger generation of documents librarians, to turn to the wise sages in our field and ask them to help us learn how to answer questions when our digital documents and sites fail us.
And some of us used Twitter
@feddocs #govshutdown2013

I started out tweeting about which government sites were shut down...

Then memos and plans from various agencies on how they were handling the shutdown...

Then the occasional resource about the shutdown...

Then articles regarding the shutdown...
Including a list of the 17 government shutdowns.
When the Lights Came Back On

So now everything is back to normal...

Some of us have continued to embrace the social media we used to reach users across the country...even across the globe.

Here is what I’ve been doing...
Suggestions

Explore different social media programs.

Twitter may make more sense for one library... But Tumblr is better for another.

Take a look at how we use our different accounts, and cobble something together that suits you.
Suggestions

And spend some time “hitting the books.”

Explore your print collection during a non-stressful time...okay, a less-stressful time?

You might not remember everything you learn. But, when you need it, you’ll find it comes a little easier.
Final Thoughts

Hopefully, we won’t forget the lessons we learned during this shutdown.

It wasn’t our first shutdown, and it probably won’t be the last...
THANK YOU!

Sonnet Ireland
Head of Government Information, Microforms, and Analog Media Business Librarian
sebrown3@uno.edu

@sonnetireland
@feddocs