Electronic Information Invading Depository Libraries
by JIM NOEL
LSU - Middleton Library

You probably already knew that didn't you? After all, we've been hearing for some time about GPO's plans to release Census information and the Congressional Record on CD-ROM. Patent depositories have been receiving patent and trademark information from PTO on CD-ROM for over a year now, after dialling up to CASSIS for a few years. Other sources appearing for our edification and consternation include the Economic Bulletin Board (see other article this page), the TOXNET databases (both online and as a CD-ROM), and LEAP, the Louisiana Electronic Assistance Program computer bulletin board. For those of you with access to BITNET, there's even a discussion group online called GOVDOC-L, and PROJECT HERMES, a set of files containing Supreme Court decisions.

I used the word consternation earlier because, while these new methods of distributing government data can provide such advantages as improved timeliness and greater ease of data manipulation, each new source brings with it a whole new set of protocols to learn and problems to work out.

In the earlier issues of LA DOCS we have described for you the CD-ROMs we have here at Middleton have received from the Patent and Trademark Office. In the spring issue you also read about the TOXNET databases Middleton was searching online. One of these, the 1987 Toxics Release Inventory database, was released as a CD-ROM product late in the spring. The information contained on the disc primarily contains reports of releases of toxic materials, but it also has some information about the toxic effects of some chemicals. Having used the online version a few times, I was expecting to be able to manipulate the data to some extent, say, calculate the total releases of toluene in Louisiana, or at least East Baton Rouge. That really isn't an option, however, which may be a blessing in disguise. It takes long enough to do a search as it is, at least on a PC XT. Calculations online can take a good many minutes; requesting one on the PC with the CD-ROM might tie the machine up for hours.

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State Library Chosen for Economic Bulletin Board

The Louisiana State Library was recently chosen as a site for a pilot project offering 100 government documents depository libraries access to the Economic Bulletin Board (EBB) sponsored by the U.S. Department of Commerce, for a period of six months. The purpose of the pilot project which includes state and public libraries is to make EBB information more accessible to the general public.

The Economic Bulletin Board was established in 1985 to provide timely access to statistics and other economic news. It contains data published by the Department of Commerce and other sources including the International Trade Administration, Bureau of Economic Analysis, Census Bureau, Bureau of Labor Statistics, Federal Reserve Board and the Treasury Department. Users can access the Consumer Price Index, the Gross National Product, employment statistics and Daily Trade Opportunities for Exporters.

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A Message From the GODORT Chair

by Stephen Henson
Louisiana Tech - Prescott Library

Where did the summer go? I have asked myself that question several times over the past few days. You may have done the same. Back at the beginning of June I had grand plans to read several new books, re-read some old favorites, work on a couple of articles, and other scholarly and professional endeavors. Now as I sit staring at the September page in the calendar, where did the time go? I wish I knew. What did I accomplish this summer? Not nearly enough. Oh well, maybe next summer...

Thanks for your support of the 1990 LLA conference in Monroe. The CIS/GODORT breakfast featured Frank Beatty from USGS’s Applications Assistance Facility at the Stennis Space Center. Mr. Beatty discussed geographic literacy and the need for improved geographic education. Several individuals, GODORT members and otherwise, commented favorably on Beatty’s presentation and his engaging style. Others were impressed with the conviction and sincerity which he showed. I believe that everyone who attended came away with a new appreciation for the importance of geographic literacy. Beatty and his wife Betty, who is originally from north Louisiana, seemed impressed with our conference.

While it may seem a long time until the 1991 LLA conference, your GODORT officers are already planning for that event. On Tuesday, March 12th, we are planning a pre-conference workshop on state documents. Morning hours will be devoted to sessions on the administration and operation of a Louisiana depository library. During the afternoon we plan to broaden the approach by discussing the reference and information uses of Louisiana documents. While the morning’s discussions will apply to the documents librarian and archivist, the afternoon sessions should appeal to these as well as the reference librarian. Sissie Mayeaux, GODORT Chair-elect, is working hard on the plans for our traditional breakfast program. I hope she will soon have exciting news about our program speaker.

Finally, an appeal to you: encourage your friends and colleagues to join GODORT. The price is very reasonable, the programs top-notch, the fellowship excellent, the professionalism first-rate. Please help us expand our membership so we can financially afford to do more in terms of programs.

SELA Conference in Nashville

by GRACE MOORE
Louisiana State Library

Christmas in September? Not really. But think about Christmas in Opryland. The 1990 SELA/TLA conference will be held on December 4-8 at the Opryland Hotel in Nashville, Tennessee.

There will be three programs of special interest to documents librarians and their friends and colleagues. Pat Langelier, Institute of Governmental Library, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, will speak on the North Carolina experience in obtaining a state depository law, "The Future is Now: State Documents Depository Legislation." Gary Cornwall, University of Florida and Smittle Bolner, LSU, will conduct a workshop, "Government Documents in the Online Catalog: a Primer for Technical Services and Systems Librarians." Maureen Harris, Clemson University, will moderate a panel on federal documents, "Regional and Selective Depository Libraries in the Southeast: Are We Singing the Same Song?" Panelists include: Betty Tims, Marie Clark, Liz McBride, Walter Newsome, Larry Romans, Jay McNamara, Sandra McAninch, Gary Cornwall, and Smittle Bolner. This will give us an overview of what is going on in the southeastern federal depositories; the responsibilities of the regional depositories, how regionals assist the selective depositories, the effect of State Plans and other topics of mutual interest.

Our friends in Tennessee are working on arrangements for a get together for SELA/GODORT which will give us a chance to visit, so mark your calendars and start making plans to be in Opryland in December.
Electronic Information
(continued from page 1)

The CD-ROM version of the 1988 County City Data Book arrived early this year, along with a virus-infected software disk. Now that that's been replaced I've had a little time to look at it. The CD came with two programs for use with it. The Census Bureau software, which wasn't infected, works easily in a menu-driven fashion, allowing one to call up the information for particular areas easily and print them out in neat tables. Unfortunately, this doesn't take advantage of the processing possibilities of the computer. If that's desired, one can turn to the second software disk. It is also menu-driven, but a little confusing, as you often get the feeling that you are going around in circles with the menus. The same is true of the 1987 Economic Censuses on CD-ROM, another recent arrival. The problem, I think, is that there is one main menu that offers all of your basic choices. When it comes time to combine one set of parameters with another you're back at the same menu again, wondering if what you've done has been undone, when what you need to do is move on to the new criteria or the display commands. This would be less confusing if the menus presented to the user were context-dependent, removing options that were no longer valid. Perhaps we'll take a closer look at these CDs when they've been in use a while.

For statistics on Louisiana in particular, LEAP is available. It is a computer bulletin board with a message option, but of most interest is the database of Louisiana information, consisting mostly of economic and demographic information. While relatively easy to use (and cheap, since you dial up to an 800 number), it can be frustrating and confusing at first. That's mostly because you are often presented with choices that are a bit unclear to a newcomer. To find out more about LEAP (Louisiana Electronic Assistance Program), contact Dr. Jerry Wall, Director of the Center for Business and Economic Research at Northeast Louisiana University, or Mr. Rajiv Gupte, System Administrator for LEAP, at (318) 342-2123.

Fast access to Supreme Court opinions is available through Project Hermes. As soon as the opinions are released they are available through the Internet from Case Western Reserve University. I have only played with these files a little, but I'll probably look at them more eventually. Availability via BITNET is expected soon.

Those of you with access to BITNET might be interested in a discussion list called GOVDOC-L. For those of you who haven't yet encountered it, it amounts to a multi-party exchange of messages about government documents issues. Subscribers receive all messages posted to the list and any messages they send to the list are distributed to all other subscribers. To subscribe, send a message to LISTSERV@PSUVM. The text should be just one line: subscribe govdoc-l firstname lastname. "Firstname lastname," of course, should be your name. You will get a response describing the operation of the list and some of the commands available to you, followed soon thereafter by any mail the list generates. It can be pretty interesting.

What do all of these things have in common? They are all examples of the ever-growing trend toward electronic dissemination of information, and in every case there is a whole new set of instructions to learn and understand, as the publishers and producers of these products each choose to do things in completely different ways. In order to make these sorts of materials available to potential users you will have to take some time out to play with them a bit. You may not want to learn all the ins and outs of each system, but at least being able to retrieve basic information will allow you to show people how to get started if they should want to.

If you have some experience with any of these sources of information and have any questions, helpful hints, or suggestions about using them, let me know. I'd like to know how people are putting these sorts of things into use, and you may be able to demystify a problem for someone.
People

Want to keep up with documents librarians throughout the state? Send us your news--Jim Noel, LA DOCS Editor, Louisiana State University, Troy H. Middleton Library, Business/Documents Department, Baton Rouge, LA 70803, or call in the item: (504) 388-2570; FAX (504) 388-6992.

Comings and goings at Middleton Library:

Mary Gale joined BA/Docs last spring from Collection Development, replacing Anita Gros, who has joined her husband in California.

Susan Hocker joined us late in the spring, replacing David Gay, who has moved to New Orleans. Susan comes to us from the reference department.

Wilson Plunkett joined the department in July, replacing Lorrie Knight, whose husband has joined the faculty at the University of Connecticut. Wilson recently completed his MLS at the University of North Texas in Denton.

The latest addition to BA/Docs is Theresa Blount, another recent library school graduate, but no stranger to Middleton Library. She will be tackling our United Nations documents collection.

Helen Nelson, Library Associate at the Paul M. Hebert Law Center at LSU, retired after 28 1/2 years of service. Helen was responsible for the documents collections, both state and federal, and her expertise will be missed.

Helen is sharing her recipe for the cookies she made for the Louisiana Federal Depository Library Council spring celebration. They were delicious!

Kitty's Cookies

1/3 box of Keebler's Club crackers
1 cup chopped pecans
2 sticks butter or margarine
1/2 cup sugar

Melt butter, add sugar, and bring to a boil. Boil for three minutes. Cover a cookie sheet with foil. Spread crackers on foil. Add pecans. Pour sugar mixture over crackers. Bake 10 minutes in a 350 degree oven.

Note: If overcooked, they will get too dark and caramelize.

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Archives Display in Nachtoches

Earlier this year the Watson Memorial Library at Northwestern State University hosted a month-long exhibit of 12 posters illustrating historic cases at the trial and appeals court levels in commemoration of the 200th anniversary of the federal court system. The poster exhibit is one of several nationwide activities produced and sponsored by the National Archives in Washington, D.C. to mark the anniversary. Sissie Mayeaux, documents librarian at Watson Library, coordinated the poster display with a display of significant materials from the government documents collection at Watson. The cases chosen for the exhibit cover topics as different as protection of trademarks, naturalization proceedings for new citizens, and guarantees of civil rights. All are meant to demonstrate the role of the federal judiciary in protecting Americans' freedoms. Ms. Mayeaux says the exhibit generated a lot of activity at the library, and was helped by radio and newspaper coverage.

Eighth Volume of Official Publications Issued

The quinquennial publication, Official Publications. List of Public Documents of Louisiana, 1985-1989, has been issued by the Recorder of Documents, according to Tom Jacques, State Librarian. It is volume eight of the series which provides one hundred eighty six years of bibliographic coverage for Louisiana documents. Official Publications is the cumulation of Public Documents, Nos. 72-80, and shipping lists July-December 1989. Official Publications supersedes Public Documents. It is distributed to all state documents depositories, Louisiana parish libraries, and other state libraries. To obtain a copy, contact:

Recorder of Documents
Louisiana State Library
P.O. Box 131
Baton Rouge, LA 70821
(504) 342-4929
(504) 342-3547 (fax)
Friends of Documents Fund
Reestablished

Would you like to participate in GPO pilot projects but need funding in order to do so? A reestablished GODORT Friends of Documents Fund may be able to help you.

Jeanne Isacco, recipient of the 1987 CIS/GODORT/ALA "Documents to the People" Award, has designated that the $2000 award stipend donated by Congressional Information Service Inc. be made available for this fund. The fund will make money available to members or affiliates of GODORT who wish to participate in the pilot projects finally getting underway by GPO. The original Friends of Documents Fund was created by Jaia Barrett, the 1984 recipient of the award, to support activities that simultaneously promote government documents and establish alliances with key individuals or organizations outside the library profession.

Members with questions and/or requests for funding should contact Jeanne Isacco, Chair of the Friends of Documents Committee. There is no application form deadline. The committee will allocate funds based on the members' judgment on appropriateness to the goal of the fund.

Get your requests in now!
Contact any of the following committee members for more information:

Jeanne Isacco, Chair
5620 Guida Drive
Greensboro, NC 27410
(919) 852-1177

Ridley Kessler
BA/SS Documents Dept.
Davis Library
CB# 3912
University of North Carolina
Chapel Hill, NC 27599
(919) 962-1151

Marie Clark
Documents/Maps Dept.
Perkins Library
Duke University
Durham, NC 27706
(919) 684-2380

LA DOCS
LLA/GODORT
BA/Docs Dept.
Middleton Library
Louisianana State University
Baton Rouge, LA 70803

Ms. Charlene C. Cain
1155 Stuart Avenue
Baton Rouge, LA 70808 -8725