

Government Information in Indiana: The Founding INDIGO

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Many states have a statewide library organization that is organized and run like the American Library Association Government Documents Round Table (GODORT), with its committees and strictures on operation. Others have state library associations with government documents groups attached. But Indiana's state documents organization, INDIGO, is unique (<http://www.lib.purdue.edu/govdocs/indigoinfo.html>). The Indiana Networking for Documents and Information of Government Organizations, (INDIGO), is an independent network of people interested in the promotion and use of government information in the state of Indiana. INDIGO members are librarians, professionals, and library staff from all types of libraries who are committed to providing expertise, training, advocacy for, and public access to government information for the citizens of Indiana. While most of our members are affiliated with a federal depository library, our interest is not limited to U.S. government documents; we also work with state, local, international, and foreign national government information in the service to the public and our library users.

INDIGO Prehistory 1982–1991

The foundation for INDIGO was laid when the Chief Officers of State Library Agencies (COSLA) initiated the idea of a state plan for library services in the early 1980s. The Federal Depository Library Council, which acts in an advisory role to the Public Printer of the United States on the Federal Depository Library Program, promoted state plans for the government document depository libraries at about the same time. Since the Indiana State Library is the state's regional depository library for federal documents, it partnered with the Indiana Library Association's Government Documents Discussion Group (now defunct) to form a task force to create a state plan for

depository library services for federal and state depository libraries in Indiana. This task force produced "The Indiana Plan for Depository Library Services" in 1984 (Conrads, 2001).

Building on the work of this joint partnership, the Indiana State Library Advisory Council (ISLAC) developed a subcommittee of its Network Coordinating Group (named the Government Documents and Information Subcommittee) to focus on government documents and information. This subcommittee's membership consisted of librarians from around the state and its purpose was the "implementation, review, and revision of the state/federal documents state plan" (Conrads, 2001). A state plan for 1990–1995 was developed and published, as well as a draft of a plan for 1991–1996.

The subcommittee members were active in many other projects besides producing the state planning documents. In 1987, one of the group's priorities was to communicate with members of Congress about the distribution of digital government information and a workshop was sponsored for Indiana documents librarians and staff on this topic. In subsequent years, a traveling display and a brochure of Indiana documents were drafted. Workshops were sponsored every year in partnership with the subcommittee by Gail Winsmore and Doug Conrads, librarians from the Indiana State Library.

ISLAC's Government Documents and Information Subcommittee was dissolved in 1992, but the work of promoting the access of state and federal documents was carried on by many of librarian members of the subcommittee (Leonard, Holterhoff, Violette, 2007).

The Founding of INDIGO, 1991–93

Talk of forming an independent group for government information professionals began

in 1991 when members from the ISLAC subcommittee worked together to form an organizing committee. Of prime concern was the development of a supportive group for the Indiana documents community which would be open to all interested librarians and staff without the prerequisite of membership in ALA or the Indiana Library Federation. By making the new group independent, the cost of membership could be kept low so that it would be affordable for librarians and interested staff (Leonard, Holterhoff, Violette, 2007).

In March, 1992, the Ad Hoc Organizing Committee, comprised of Sally Holterhoff (Valparaiso University Law School Library), Stephen Hays (University of Notre Dame), and Judie Violette (Indiana University-Purdue University Fort Wayne), met to develop a new networking group for Indiana documents. Suggested names of the organization included Indiana Depositories Group (InDeps) and Indiana Documents Group (INDOCS). But an inspiration from Sally Holterhoff produced INDIGO: Indiana Networking for Documents and Information of Government Organizations. The committee finalized bylaws, organized an election of officers, and recruited twenty-six charter members who paid dues of five dollars per year (Holterhoff, 2007). The structure of the new organization was patterned after GODORT and had committees for Federal Depository Representatives and State Depository Representatives. The officers for the new group were Andrea Singer of Indiana University as chair, Tim Sutherland of Indiana University Northwest as vice chair/chair-elect, and Marianne Mason of Indiana University School of Law as secretary/treasurer. INDIGO's first print newsletter, entitled *INDIGO Newsletter*, was published in September, 1992, due to the efforts of Andrea Singer, Marianne Mason, and Gail Winsmore. Now called *INDIGO News*, most past biennial issues are archived on INDIGO's website, www.lib.purdue.edu/govdocs/news.html. It includes news concerning the organization, agendas and announcements, but it also includes discussions of government information issues useful for non-document librarians and resource reviews.

INDIGO's purposes were set out in the by-laws and remain currently in-force:

- To provide a forum for discussion of problems and concerns, and for an exchange of ideas by Indiana librarians working with government information.
- To provide a force for initiating and supporting programs to increase the availability, use, and bibliographic control of government information.
- To increase communication between government information librarians and other librarians.
- To contribute to the extension and improvement of education and training of government information librarians.
- To speak for federal and state depositories concerning government information issues.

Before INDIGO gathered for its first meeting, the fledgling group joined with GODORT of Ohio and Michigan GODORT for a tri-state meeting in October of 1992 which featured a speaker from the Government Printing Office (GPO) and the general editor of the forthcoming *Federal Depository Library Manual*. Then continuing the effective work of the State Library staff and the ISLAC Government Documents and Information Subcommittee, INDIGO held its first annual workshop on November 13, 1992 at the Indiana State Library (C. Truesdell, personal communication, July 11, 2009). Topics included a panel discussion on CD-ROM issues, a Depository Library Council update, and a speaker from the U.S. Department of Commerce presenting on the CD-ROM searchable reference database, the National Trade Data Bank, which was established to provide information to facilitate governmental trade policy (U.S. Department of Commerce, STAT-USA, 2010).

Over the years, INDIGO's one-day workshops, conferences, meetings, and programs have provided members with twice yearly hands-on learning experiences, discussion of current issues, and nationally recognized speakers. Topics and presenters have been fairly evenly divided between national (including the U.S. Census Bureau, the Superintendent of Documents, and OMB Watch) and state interests (Indiana Homeland Security, Indiana Memory digital collections, and state parks). At times, INDIGO meets with other government

documents groups, such as in October 1992 and again in 2001, when it held a joint fall conference with GODORT of Ohio and Michigan, the 2001 Tri-State Conference, Bowling Green State University, Bowling Green, Ohio. INDIGO members presented at these conferences.

INDIGO has also hosted special one-day conferences over the years with national speakers and stands ready to partner with other organizations on government information issues. On May 23, 2002, INDIGO and the Indiana University Librarians' Association (InULA) partnered to present 'Survivor or Victim: Library Access Following 9/11' at the Indiana University School of Law, IUPUI. Speakers included Sean Moulton, Senior Policy Analyst, OMB Watch, Patrice McDermott, Assistant Director, ALA Office of Government Relations, and Doug Archer, Chair, Indiana Library Federation Intellectual Freedom Committee. In 2004, INDIGO invited Judy Russell, Superintendent of Documents, to discuss the GPO changes in providing access to online government information (archiving, authentication, etc.) and the changes in the Federal Depository Library Program to make more electronic information available to the public. Organizations interested in working with INDIGO on a program should contact the current chair.

INDIGO meetings are open and non-documents librarians and staff working with government information are welcome to attend; agendas are posted in *INDIGO News* online. Programs frequently emphasize a hands-on interactive learning experience or relevant topic. For example, in May 2009, a U.S. Census Bureau administrator spoke about the preparations for the 2010 U.S. Census — which affects every resident and library in Indiana.

Important Goals Accomplished

From the beginning of the organization, INDIGO concerned itself with the issues of access to government information on all levels and has devoted many hours to projects large and small. From its inception the group nominated Indiana documents to be recognized in GODORT's annual list of notable government documents published in *Library Journal*, a nationally recognized resource for reference and documents librarians. In other areas, INDIGO

led efforts to promote documents and public access issues to members of Congress and to state legislators, providing sample letters and talking points to INDIGO members. INDIGO members also present regularly at the Indiana Library Federation annual conference to promote government information resources. In addition, INDIGO has sponsored two special government documents issues of *Indiana Libraries* including this one.

As the World Wide Web was developed, INDIGO charter member Bert Chapman, Purdue University, was the first Indiana federal depository library to promote electronic use of GPO Access on the Web in 1995 by providing free assisted searching access for library users. Ten simultaneous users could dial up and explore the vast amount of government information supplied by GPO (Purdue Provides GPO Access, 1995). As GPO Access grew, many INDIGO members have trained in searching GPO Access databases in order to provide assistance to library patrons.

Another project to promote government information and to help educate librarians in non-depository institutions about government sources was the Indiana GovDocs Tour. The concept of a GovDocs Tour was first developed as an educational and training tool by the Arizona Depository Library Council as a service to the Arizona public libraries (A. M. Morrison, personal communication, September 21, 2009). The GovDocs Tour was a one-day program which featured documents librarians in programs on various aspects of government information. Andrea Morrison, chair of the Federal Depository Representative Committee, corresponded with Sean Evans of Northern Arizona University and then proposed the idea of a GovDocs Tour at a 1998 INDIGO meeting. Morrison chaired a special committee called the Gov Docs Tour Task Force to develop an Indiana Gov Docs Tour training program, resulting in INDIGO's first one-day Docs Tour conference at the Allen County Public Library, August 13, 1999. The program featured sessions on basic documents reference sources, GPO Access, Access Indiana, and instruction on a few specific government databases. Presenters included Andrea Morrison, Bert Chapman, Doug Conrads, Cheryl Truesdell, Penny Kyker, and Sylvia Andrews. Sue Mungovan with the assistance of Allen County Public Library staff handled the logistics and hosted

the conference. The Docs Tour was publicized throughout Indiana as outreach education open to non-documents librarians. Based on the success of this first conference, a later half day Gov Docs Tour training session was offered, and the Task Force continuing to work on training.

Because INDIGO promotes government information across the state of Indiana, around the time of the Docs Tour in the late 1990s, members Judy Violette and Cheryl Truesdell created INDIGO-I electronic communication list, hosted by IPFW. Via INDIGO-I members share both INDIGO and government information news widely. Then in 2003, INDIGO developed an Indiana government information portal. Cheryl Truesdell, IPFW, suggested an INDIGO Virtual Government Web Gateway Project and began work on the project by convening meetings of the Gov Docs Tour Task Force in August 2002. Members developed Web content for links to Indiana and federal government information, and other significant online government resources and portals. In 2003/2004, Indiana Links to Government Information, a guide to local, state, federal, and international government information became live, www.inlinksgov.org/. This portal was used for training and instruction in libraries until recently, at which time currently updated library websites and government resources replaced it.

Another significant contribution to the Federal Depository community by INDIGO is the virtual light archive of federal publications, currently still in development (Indiana Light Archive, n.d.). INDIGO and the Academic Libraries of Indiana (ALI) are providing strong leadership in establishing an archive whose goal is to preserve a comprehensive collection of federal documents in partnership with the U.S. Government Printing Office which will be housed in a secure facility at Indiana University, Bloomington. Until a legal agreement can be established with GPO, the partnership of the Indiana State Library, Indiana University, Purdue University, and the University of Notre Dame, brings together the four largest federal depository libraries in Indiana in a virtual light archive for all federal government documents published since 1976. These libraries divided responsibilities for federal agency publications between them

to establish collection responsibilities so that no one library must maintain the entire collection alone. Through an agreement with the Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office, Indiana depository libraries have been given permission to keep only those government documents necessary to uphold their collection development policies. The rules regarding disposal of documents printed since 1976 have been relaxed for Indiana depository libraries because of the virtual light archive which will maintain access to the documents by electronic means. If any Indiana library needs a document held in the light archive, it will be loaned if possible or scanned and sent to the library electronically.

Although INDIGO has passed its fifteenth anniversary, the organization is committed to maintaining its relevance and vitality by focusing on new members. As a tribute to one of the original Ad Hoc Organizing Committee members, the Judie Violette Participation Grant was developed under the auspices of former INDIGO Chair Kirsten Leonard. The grant offers travel assistance and a one-year membership to persons who are not INDIGO members but are Indiana library employees, library students, or library volunteers who work with or are interested in government documents.

Conclusion

As the government information landscape continues to evolve in a digital environment, INDIGO stands ready to serve libraries across the state by promotion, education, and training for online government resources. The restrictions of physical space and an obscure classification system, the Superintendent of Documents classification (SuDocs), no longer impede libraries from becoming depository libraries and providing their users with documents. Information from all levels of government is increasingly born-digital, a fact that makes all libraries virtual depository libraries. The benefits of all public and academic library staffs in Indiana being connected with a group of government information professionals far exceed the nominal membership fee. INDIGO conferences and workshops about government information are locally presented and easily accessible; this added bonus makes INDIGO a bargain too good to pass up.

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About the Author

Rebecca Byrum served as Chair of INDIGO from 2000–2001 and 2008–2009. She was the Government Information Services Librarian at Valparaiso University from 1998–2010.