
The North Carolina Depository System and William Madison Randall Library ... One Year Later

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On August 12, 1987, the North Carolina General Assembly enacted legislation, effective October 1, 1987, which established a depository system for North Carolina government publications.¹ The purpose of the legislation is to make publications of state agencies readily accessible to citizens throughout the state. The need for a state depository system and the process of developing and ratifying the legislation have been discussed in detail by Patricia Langelier.² The purpose of this article is to discuss the impact of the depository system on William Madison Randall Library of UNC Wilmington after its first year as a full North Carolina depository library. The treatment and processing of North Carolina documents in the library will also be described.

The law contains several provisions that provide for a systematic distribution of North Carolina government publications. The legislation designates the State Library as the official depository for all state publications while other libraries throughout the state serve as full or selective depositories. The legislation also established the North Carolina State Publications Clearinghouse within the State Library to administer the system and to catalog and distribute depository documents. Another provision of the legislation requires state agencies to appoint publications officers who are responsible for forwarding an adequate number of their agency's publications to the Clearinghouse within ten days of publication, and for providing a semiannual list of their publications to the Clearinghouse. An optional provision of the law permits the State Librarian to appoint a board to advise the Clearinghouse and review its activities. The current North Carolina State Depository System Advisory Board is composed of one representative of the Documents Section of the North Carolina Library Association, three publications officers, and four depository librarians.

The Clearinghouse Coordinator and the State Librarian serve as ex officio members.

A final provision of the legislation requires the Department of Cultural Resources to report annually to the Joint Legislative Commission on Governmental Operations and the Fiscal Research Division of the Legislative Services Office concerning the operation of the depository system. Two annual reports have been published. The first one describes the development of policies and procedures for the system,³ and the second report provides statistics on the number of depository libraries and the number of paper and microfiche documents cataloged and distributed.⁴ Both reports contain information on the financial requirements for the system and the minutes of the Depository System Advisory Board.

Randall Library was one of seven libraries designated to participate in the Pilot Phase of the depository system in 1988, and when the Pilot Phase ended in 1989, thirteen depository libraries were added to the system. At the end of 1989, eight of the twenty libraries were full depositories, twelve were selective depositories, and ten of the eleven state congressional districts contained at least one depository library.⁵

Randall Library provides library services to 394 faculty, 527 staff, 352 graduate students, 6,651 undergraduate students, and many citizens of southeastern North Carolina. It is a partial United States depository library, selecting sixty-two percent of the items available from the Government Printing Office, and it is also the Nuclear Regulatory Commission's Local Public Document Room for the Brunswick Steam Electric Plant. The Government Documents Collection is a division of the Reference Department. One professional librarian has responsibility for the collection in addition to other reference duties. One library assistant works full time in the collection, and there are normally two part time student assistants who work ten hours a week in the collection. Documents reference service is provided at the

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reference desk.

Prior to 1984, North Carolina documents were part of the General Collection, cataloged and classified with Library of Congress call numbers. However, there was no systematic effort to acquire a wide variety of state publications. In 1984, the North Carolina Documents Collection was established. The collection was not cataloged and was located in the documents stacks classified according to the *Classification Scheme for North Carolina State Publications*.⁶ A special effort was made to acquire North Carolina documents using the *Checklist of Official North Carolina State Publications* as a selection tool (hereafter referred to as the *Checklist*). This bimonthly publication published by the State Library lists cataloging records of North Carolina publications deposited at the State Library. The *Checklist* was also used to provide subject access to the collection, and a shelflist was maintained to provide access by agency.

Since 1973, UNC-Wilmington has been eligible to request two copies of state publications directly from the issuing agency.⁷ A few agencies added the library to their mailing lists, and many documents were received that were never listed in the *Checklist*. Subject access to the collection became increasingly difficult as the collection grew. Some North Carolina documents continued to be cataloged and classified with Library of Congress call numbers for the reference collection.

In 1987, Randall Library began using the LS/2000 fully integrated automated systems. A terminal, printer, and barcode reader were installed in the documents office. Brief records which included title, classification number, publication date, and items records were input for all documents in the North Carolina Documents Collection. This provided title, title key word, and classification number access to each document in the collection. The documents library assistant and the reference documents librarian entered these brief records over a three month period, and since LS/2000 provides the capability of searching by document classification number, the shelflist was discontinued. There were approximately two thousand documents in the collection when the first shipment of North Carolina depository documents was received in October 1988.

The library receives most depository documents on microfiche which is produced by a contractor for the State Library. During the pilot phase, libraries were allowed to select a combination of paper and microfiche items; however, libraries are now required to choose only one format, preferably microfiche, due to shortages of

paper copies available from state agencies. Randall Library currently receives ninety-five percent of the items from the "Item Selection List"⁸ on microfiche and five percent on paper. If the State Library does not receive enough paper copies of a title for distribution, microfiche is sent. Titles from the "Core Collection of North Carolina State Documents"⁹ list are distributed in paper, but some core titles are considered non-depository and must be purchased by depository libraries. Non-depository publications are those titles offered for sale by state agencies and copyrighted publications for which the agency has not released the copyright to allow for reproduction on microfiche.

The Clearinghouse requires that depository libraries who are members of OCLC add their holding symbol to OCLC records for depository documents. The Clearinghouse catalogs all depository documents on OCLC before distribution, and provides the OCLC number for each document on the shipping lists. Since library staff have to retrieve the record on OCLC to add the library's holding symbol to the record, it seemed logical to download the record into the LS/2000 database at the same time. A decision was made to begin cataloging depository documents and to begin retrospective cataloging of non-depository documents when additional disk space was available in July 1989. Thus, the biggest impact of the depository system has been its influence on the decision to catalog the collection. Since August 1989, all depository documents have been cataloged upon receipt, and at the end of 1989 all microfiche titles in the collection and more than half of the paper titles in the collection were cataloged.

The Documents Division of the Reference Department receives biweekly depository shipments from the Clearinghouse. The documents library assistant spends approximately four hours processing each shipment. First, documents in each shipment are checked to be sure everything listed on the shipping list has been received. If titles are missing, a claim is processed immediately. Then documents are counted, stamped with the date received, and classification numbers are recorded on each item. These numbers are listed on the shipping list and are already printed on the microfiche headers. Numbers are recorded on microfiche envelopes because each envelope is barcoded. This makes it easier to determine what belongs in an envelope if it is separated from the microfiche.

Next, the library assistant searches each item in the LS/2000 database. If a document is a serial

that has already been cataloged, it is barcoded and an item record for the document is added to the LS/2000 database. At this point the document is ready to be shelved. The monographs and the serial titles which have not been cataloged are forwarded to the Catalog Department with a copy of the shipping list. A library technical assistant in the Catalog Department spends approximately four hours processing each shipment, downloading records from OCLC into the LS/2000 database. The availability of the OCLC number on the shipping list streamlines the cataloging process. Documents are usually available for public use within one week of receipt.

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Unfortunately, Randall Library did not have holding libraries established for the Government Documents Collection in OCLC. The holding library field in the OCLC record represents the location of an item within the library's collection. As a result, the correct location and call number did not appear in the item record after a title was downloaded from OCLC to the LS/2000 database. Once the government documents holding libraries were created in OCLC, there was a long delay in establishing the new holding libraries as part of the LS/2000 profile. Until January 1990 the documents library assistant spent approximately two hours editing records after each depository shipment was cataloged, adding the correct location and class number to each item record. Now that the profile change has been made, the only item records which have to be edited are serial records which require information that does not appear in the call number field of the OCLC record such as volume and issue numbers.

Ephemeral titles, which include items such as pamphlets, calendars, and program announcements, are often included as non-depository items in shipments, but they are not cataloged or classified by the Clearinghouse. The documents library assistant forwards these titles to the reference/documents librarian who assigns a classification number for those that are appropriate for the collection. Original cataloging is usually required for these titles, and a library technical assistant II in the Catalog Department has cataloged seven-

teen ephemeral items which have been added to the collection. The library technical assistant II also performs the retrospective cataloging of the paper collection as time permits.

One noticeable impact of the depository system is that the size of the collection has increased tremendously. Between October 1988 and December 1989 the library received 306 paper pieces and 2,231 microfiche pieces through the depository system. The microfiche fill one drawer of a microfiche cabinet; shelf space required for paper items is minimal. During the same time period, 491 non-depository paper pieces received directly from state agencies were also added to the collection. Duplicates of many of these non-depository items were later received from the Clearinghouse. Since there is approximately a three month time lag associated with the production and distribution of microfiche, some documents are received in a more timely manner directly from the agency. Also, many of the non-depository items added were copyrighted titles not available through the Clearinghouse.

Another impact of the depository system is that the library is receiving a wide variety of publications not previously available in the collection. Reference librarians report that North Carolina documents are retrieved in the LS/2000 retrieval subsystem more often since the depository system and the cataloging project began. The number of reference questions involving the use of North Carolina documents during the fall semester in 1988 was 133, and 166 during fall semester in 1989, a twenty-five percent increase. During the 1988/89 fiscal year, 103 items from the North Carolina Documents Collection circulated, and from July 1989 to December 1989, 164 North Carolina documents circulated, a fifty-nine percent increase over the entire previous fiscal year. As of December 1989, the interlibrary loan staff had not filled any incoming requests for state documents since the beginning of the depository system.

Cataloging staff report that they have benefited from working with the collection. They have increased their knowledge of the content of the collection and have enjoyed learning new functions associated with cataloging documents in OCLC and LS/2000. Reference and documents staff have also benefited from an increased knowledge of state publications available for research. The reference/documents librarian has been relieved of time previously spent requesting documents from agencies. Also, staff in the Curriculum Materials Center are pleased with the increased availability of titles in the collection from the

North Carolina Department of Public Instruction. These titles are available in the ERIC Collection, but their arrangement within the North Carolina Classification Scheme enables users to find useful information by browsing in the collection.

There have been some additional expenditures as a result of becoming a full depository library, and the library administration has been very supportive of the system. Funding has been provided for increased cataloging costs and for new serial subscriptions to three non-depository core collection titles. Travel funds have also been available for the reference/documents librarian to attend quarterly meetings of the North Carolina Depository System Advisory Board. Additional equipment was not necessary during the first year because microfiche cabinets, shelf space, microfiche readers and printers, and an LS/2000 workstation were already available in the Government Documents Collection.

To summarize, the impact of the depository system has been very positive for Randall Library. The Clearinghouse has operated very efficiently in cataloging and distributing a large number of titles, and their cataloging has enabled library staff to process the documents quickly. The workload for the Catalog Department staff and the documents library assistant has increased as a result of the depository system, but additional staff have not been required because the library is fortunate to have efficient, dedicated staff that have been able to handle the additional workload. Increases in reference transactions and circulation statistics reflect an increase in the use of North Carolina documents, a direct result of making documents more accessible with full cataloging records in the LS/2000 database. As the collection continues to grow and when the retrospective cataloging is completed, the North Carolina Documents Collection will be an increasingly important source of information.

The purpose of the legislation, "to facilitate public access to publications issued by State agencies,"¹⁰ is being achieved. State agencies publish information on a wide variety of topics of interest to business people, consumers, and researchers. The legislation has enabled the State Library to obtain and preserve a more complete collection of these North Carolina government publications. Citizens from southeastern North Carolina and other areas of the state who live considerable distances from the capital now have access to sizable collections of information about North Carolina state government.

References

1. North Carolina General Statutes 125-11.5 (1987).
2. Patricia A. Langelier, "Putting the Public Into State Publications: the North Carolina Saga," *Government Publications Review* 16 (September/October 1989):447-462.
3. *Annual Report to the Joint Legislative Commission on Governmental Operations and the Fiscal Research Division of the Legislative Services Office North Carolina General Assembly*. (Raleigh, NC: North Carolina State Publications Clearinghouse, Division of State Library, 1988).
4. *Ibid.*, 1989.
5. The following depository libraries are listed by North Carolina congressional districts; (F) indicates full depository and (S) indicates selective depository: 1st-Joyner Library, East Carolina University (F); 2nd - Perkins Library, Duke University (F); Hackney Library, Atlantic Christian College (S); 4th - State Library (F); Wilson Library, UNC Chapel Hill (F); 5th - Forsyth County Public Library (S); Reynolds Library, Wake Forest University (F); 6th - McEwen Library, Elon College (F); Bluford Library, N.C. A&T University (S); Jackson Library, UNC Greensboro (F); 7th - Livermore Library, Pembroke State University (S); Randall Library, UNC Wilmington (F); Robeson County Public Library (S); 8th - Smith Library, Wingate College (S); 9th - Atkins Library, UNC Charlotte (F); Charlotte Public Library (F); 10th - Belk Library, Appalachian State University (F); Catawba County Public Library (S); 11th - Hunter Library, Western Carolina University (S); Ramsey Library, UNC Asheville (S).
6. *Classification Scheme for North Carolina State Publications*. (Raleigh, NC: Division of State Library, 1988).
7. North Carolina General Statutes 147-50 (1973, c. 598).
8. *North Carolina State Documents Depository System Handbook for Depository Libraries*. (Raleigh, NC: North Carolina State Publications Clearinghouse, Division of State Library, 1989), A46-A90.
9. *Ibid.*, A38-A42.
10. North Carolina General Statutes 125-11.5 (1987).

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