

The University Libraries of Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University were designated as a selective Federal depository for the Ninth Congressional District of Virginia in 1907. The libraries are one of three Government Printing Office (GPO) depositories in the district, the others being University of Virginia's College at Wise and Emory and Henry University. At present, of the items available for selection, the libraries receive about 70%. The University of Virginia receives all available documents from the GPO and is the regional depository for the state of Virginia.

The University Libraries have a strong documents collection including long runs of agency annual reports, complete sets of agricultural series, and strong collections in education, health, business, transportation, military history, and other areas. Information from the GPO and other federal agencies is accessible in all available formats including paper copy, microfiche, electronic, and the Internet. In addition, the libraries have purchased microform backup sets of the United States Congressional Serial Set, Congressional publications since 1970-1998, Census records from 1790-1970, and statistical publications after 1977. The libraries purchase commercial indexes and other means to provide access to our collections.

The goal of our collection development is to preserve our historical collections of value to our constituency for research and to select those items we consider germane to the needs of the university and the Ninth Congressional District.

Internet Accessible Documents

Internet sites provide citation information and full text of government documents. Many publications and links to indexes and agency WWW sites are available on the Federal Government Documents Resources page at

<http://www.lib.vt.edu/dsp/index.php?subject=102>

Important portal pages for government resources include:

GPO Access: <http://www.gpoaccess.gov>

FirstGov: <http://firstgov.gov>

Fed Stats: <http://www.fedstats.gov>

How to find a U.S. Document

Government Documents are received in paper copy, microfiche, CD-ROM and Internet only forms. They may be housed in the Government Documents area, Reference area, the general collection, storage or any branch library. All of these holdings are brought together by a few simple sources.

Addison, the VT online catalog: Government documents have been selectively cataloged since the early 1900's. Beginning in 1992 cataloging for each piece received was entered in the online catalog. Search by title, author, corporate or agency author (e.g. United States Dept of Energy), subject, or keyword.

Monthly Catalog of US Government Publications: Z1223 A18 Reference Room

Indexes all publications issued by the Government Printing Office. Available from the late 1800's – present.

GPO Monthly Catalog: Online database.

1976 – present. Congressional and agency publications published by the Government Printing Office.

Worldcat: Online database.

Includes books, journals, videos, etc, cataloged by libraries around the world. Many government documents are included. Search by keyword, title, author (agency) or subject.

LexisNexis Congressional: Online database.

Indexes congressional documents 1789-present. Many are available in full text.

Cumulative Title Index to United States Public Documents: 1789 – 1976. Z1223 A13 C8 Reference Room.

Cumulative Subject Index to the Monthly Catalog of United States Government Publications, 1900 – 1971: Z1223 Z7 B9 Reference Room.

Congressional Research Service Reports. Online database.

CRS is the research arm of the Library of Congress, providing analyses of issues of interest to congressional members and committees – i.e., virtually any topic.

Specialized Indexes: Indexes covering laws, regulations, Congressional publications and scientific and technical reports are available. Ask at the Reference Desk for assistance in finding the appropriate sources. Subject indexes to government documents are available online and in the reference collection on the second floor of Newman Library.

Periodicals

Several periodical indexes in the Reference Areas and electronically on the Library Home Page index the contents of government document periodicals. Please ask at the Reference Desk for assistance. In addition, two indexes specific to government periodicals are:

Location of Documents

Some documents in all formats are classified in the Library of Congress classification and shelved with the general collections by format. Government documents also have their own classification system and specialized shelving areas.

Most U.S. government documents are arranged according to the Superintendent of Documents classification, designed by the Government Printing Office. The Superintendent of Documents classified books, microfiche, and software on CD-ROM & diskette are on the 2nd floor of Newman Library. Each number indicates the issuing agency, sub-agency or office, type of document, and the number representing an individual item.

Example: I 29.9/5: 139
I = Department of the Interior
29 = National Park Service
.9/5 = Handbooks (numbered series)
139 = number of the individual circular

Because the system is based on the agencies of government, it is constantly changing as agencies are created or eliminated. When doing historical research keep in mind that some current departments grew out of others and therefore older materials might be under a different number. The Department of Education is a good example of this. The Office of Education became part of the Federal Security Agency in 1939 and materials were classified with FS. In the 1970's, it was part of the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare and materials were classified under HE. Now, as it's own department, all the Department of Education materials will start with ED.

Circulation of U.S. Documents

All U.S. government documents whether in the Library of Congress or Superintendent of Documents Classification can be checked out with the following exceptions:

- periodicals
- reference material (any item with "REF" in the call number)
- Bureau of the Census publications
- microforms

Please do not hesitate to ask librarians at the Reference Desk for help.