Government Documents

What are Government Publications?

• Any information produced by a government agency: city, county, state, federal, or international level

• Issued in paper, microfiche, video, CD-ROM, floppy disk, or published on the Internet
The types of government information resulting from the government can generally be divided into two kinds:

• Information *about* governing and government: Congressional debates and votes, the resulting laws, court decisions, agency activities, and presidential actions.

• Reports *from* government-funded research: the government spends millions of dollars on research on physical diseases, mental health, space physics, farming, aquaculture, toxic chemicals, humanities, life sciences, aviation, business, and population statistics.
Why Use Government Publications?

• For academic research: Governments support and publish research and statistics on aeronautics, agriculture, business, the economy, diseases, energy, engineering, human relations, nutrition, manufacturing, space, weather, and most other subjects.

• To inform yourself as a responsible citizen: Governments publish the laws and regulations we live by, the activities of the President, Congress, Governors and Legislatures, the decisions of the Courts, and the activities of departments and agencies of government.

• To inform yourself as a consumer: Governments inform and protect consumers with publications on financial aid to students, national and state parks, health, personal finance and credit, the cost of living, marketing scams, Social Security and Medicare rights, employee rights, veterans benefits, grant programs, patent, trademark, and copyright registrations, and many other areas.
About the Federal Depository Library Program

• The Federal Depository Library Program (FDLP) was established by Congress to ensure that the American public has access to its government's information.

• For more than 130 years, depository libraries have safeguarded the public's right to know by collecting, organizing, maintaining, preserving, and assisting users with information from the federal government.

• The Government Printing Office (GPO) provides government information at no cost to designated depository libraries throughout the country. These depository libraries, in turn, provide local, no-fee access to government information in all formats in an impartial environment with professional assistance.

• As institutions committed to equity of access and dedicated to free and unrestricted public use, the nation's more than 1,250 depository libraries serve as one of the vital links between "We the people" and our government.

• Any member of the public can visit these depository libraries and use the federal depository collections.
Florida Tech was appointed as a depository in 1963 and has received documents almost daily since then, housing over 200,000 on the third floor of the library.

As a selective depository, Florida Tech chooses to receive approximately 40% of government publications available through FDLP, concentrating on those supporting the academic curricula as well as those needed by the general public. Strengths of the collection are in NASA, EPA, NOAA, FAA, USGS, ERIC, Census, Patent and Trademark documents, and laws, regulations, and court decisions.

The University of Florida, which serves as Florida's regional depository, receives all documents and retains them permanently as an archive for the state's citizens. These documents are available through interlibrary loan.
How to Find Government Information at Evans Library

• **Online catalog**: Approximately 90% of the documents available at Florida Tech may be found in the catalog in the same way as books, by searching keyword, author, title, or subject. Those documents not available in the library may be available through interlibrary loan. An increasing number of government documents are available on the World Wide Web.

• **Paper indexes**: Citations to documents offered to depository libraries from all agencies, whether in Florida Tech's collection or not, may be found in the Monthly Catalog of United States Government Publications on third floor index tables (1899-1996). Many older NASA documents held by the library are not cataloged but may be located through NASA's STAR index in the first floor index collection.

• **Online indexes**: Citations to depository documents from 1976 to present may be found in the online version of the Monthly Catalog (FirstSearch's GPO database).
Third floor organization

- Depository documents in all formats are located on the third floor of Evans Library. Paper documents occupy the center stacks.
- Microfiche documents are in gold-colored cabinets along the west wall, with a microfiche reader/printer on the first floor for making copies.
- CD-ROMs are in the Government Documents Office.
Arrangement of documents by call number:

• Government publications are arranged by their own unique system of call numbering, the Superintendent of Documents (SuDocs) system.

• The beginning letter(s) in each call number stands for the federal issuing agency such as D for Defense Department and J for Justice Department. Consequently the documents are arranged on the floor by agency rather than by subject.

• The numbers, which follow the letters, are all whole numbers, not decimals as in the rest of the library. Thus D 1.2: would shelve before D 1.10: because 2 is a smaller whole number than 10.

• Document call numbers may be distinguished from books in the general collection by the colon ( : ) located in each.
Depository Location:
• Location: Third floor of Evans Library.

Policies:
• Free access to the collection: Everyone is welcome to use the documents collection within the library. You do not have to be a Florida Tech student, faculty, or staff member.
• Circulation of materials: You may check out most documents with an Evans Library card just as you would a book. Exceptions are reference documents and periodicals, all of which are labeled "Reference" or "For Library Use Only." Non-university patrons may purchase a community card from the first floor Service Desk if they wish to check out documents, or may have their public library borrow a document through its interlibrary loan system.
How to Find Government Information on the Internet

• **Government Resources** assembles links to Web pages with the government information most frequently requested by Evans Library patrons. Select Federal, State and Local, or International and Foreign links.

• From the library website Resources menu, choose Government Information. Select Government Internet Sites and then Federal and then Access Government Information. **FDSys** and **USA.gov** can be used to find government documents.
Government Internet Sites

Government Information

Search the U.S. Government's official web portal

Search Evans Library's government resources

- Catalog
- Government Information Research Guide
- Government Internet Sites

Get help finding government information

- Ask a librarian at Evans Library
- Ask a federal government information specialist (1-800-FED-INFO or email)

Contact your elected officials

- Federal and State
- Brevard County
• **FDSys**: Provides free online access to official publications from all three branches of the Federal Government.

• **USA.gov**: Designed as a citizen-oriented site, this official portal to government information allows users to search millions of informational and service related federal and state government Web pages. Search by topic or select a general or advanced search.