







CWU Library Guide to Government Information

Government Documents Collections


-  **GOVERNMENT DOCUMENTS** contain information compiled and published by government agencies.
- ▶ Libraries legally designated as **depository libraries** accept responsibility for receiving, maintaining and providing access to government information.
 - ▶ **CWU Library** has been a depository for **United States** government publications since **1962** and for **Washington State** government publications since **1965**. (Many materials published prior to these dates have been received as gifts).


-  **SUBJECTS** covered by government information include almost every topic imaginable.
- ▶ **Popular subjects** such as consumer information, statistics, recreation guides, space exploration, photographs, education issues and health care guides are the focus of many government publications.
 - ▶ **Technical and specialized materials** including Department of Energy and NASA reports, and environmental impact statements are distributed to depository libraries.
 - ▶ **Official publications** containing laws, regulations and legislative materials are sent to all depository libraries, ensuring that this information will be available to the public.

-  **FORMATS** for government information are highly variable.
- ▶ Documents range in size from 1-page pamphlets to large sets of Compact Disks, and can be a book, periodical, index, map, leaflet, photograph or poster.
 - ▶ Government information is published on paper, microfiche, disk, CD-ROM, video and the Internet.

-  **LOCATIONS IN CWU LIBRARY** for government publications are primarily on the **3rd floor**.
- ▶ The document collections are open for browsing.
 - ▶ Separate rooms with maps and microforms contain appropriate furniture and equipment for viewing and copying.
 - ▶ Workstations with Internet access, GIS applications and CD-ROM players are available.
 - ▶ The more heavily used government books and periodicals are located in other areas of the library, primarily in Serials and the main stacks. (These locations are listed in CATTRAX).

- # CALL NUMBERS** for publications in the government documents collections arrange materials by the publishing agency (not by subject).
- ▶ U.S. document call numbers are referred to as **SuDoc Numbers**. In this system the first letter, or letters, stands for the main government department responsible for the publication (A for Agriculture Dept., ED for Education Dept., S for State Dept., etc.) and the numbers following the period [,] are whole numbers, **not decimal** numbers.
 - ▶ Washington State document call numbers begin with **WA**, followed by letters and numbers representing the publishing agency.


-  **CIRCULATION** of government documents or maps is usually for 2 weeks. Items are first entered into CATTRAX at the Documents Reference Desk (on the 3rd floor), and then checked out and returned through the Circulation Desk (on the 1st floor). A few documents, such as rare or fragile publications, reference works and microforms must be used in the building.

-  **REFERENCE ASSISTANCE** is available at the Documents desk on the 3rd floor. Services are available until 10 P.M. Sunday through Thursday. The telephone number is (509) 963-1541.


INDEXES


Finding Government Publications by **SUBJECT** may require looking in more than one index or online catalog.


Most of the **current indexing** for government information is in **electronic format**. Frequently, the electronic indexes duplicate indexes received in paper format.


 [CATTRAX](#) contains records for a **small number of the federal and most of the Washington state documents** in CWU's collection, searchable by subject, author, title, keyword, agency, etc. These entries may appear to be books, but DOCUMENTS will be listed as the location.


ELECTRONIC DATABASES available through CWU Library include access to government information. **Many** electronic databases contain the **fulltext** of documents and subject searches are performed by locating key words in the text.


 [GPO Monthly Catalog](#) and [MARCIVE](#) both contain **indexing** for documents published by the **U.S. Government from 1976 to present**. The SuDoc numbers given in these indexes lead to the documents in the CWU collection. MARCIVE also provides links to government documents published on the WWW.

 [GeoRef](#) is an **index and abstract** for literature in the geosciences. and it includes many documents published by **U.S. and state** government agencies.

 [GPO Access](#) is the United States' government's official, **fulltest** database for legislative, administrative, and other federal information that is heavily used and needs to be accessible immediately after release.


 [Congressional Universe](#) is a **fulltext** database containing **current U.S.** legislative publications, federal laws and regulations, and information about members of Congress. **Indexes** and **abstracts** to legislative materials published from **1970+** are also available and will guide users to documents in CWU's collection.

 [STAT-USA](#) is a government database containing **fulltext** information on economics, business, international trade, and foreign countries. Data is loaded immediately after it is tabulated.

 [Lexis-Nexus Academic Universe](#) database contains the **fulltext** of **U.S. and state** laws and court cases. Searching can be performed by keyword or legal citation.

PAPER INDEXES for government documents are on tables or shelves located on the 3rd floor. The following indexes use SuDoc numbers, providing access to documents in our collection.

 **Monthly Catalog of United States Government Publications (1941-present).**
The U.S. Government Printing Office's (GPO) official monthly index to publications.

 **CIS Index to Publications of the U.S. Congress (1970-present).**
Annual index to major publications of congressional committees, published by Congressional Information Service. Includes hearings, reports, and documents. ([Congressional Universe](#) database is the electronic version of this index).

 **ASI (American Statistics Index) (1973-present).** Indexes and abstracts **statistics** produced by **federal** agencies. (Statistics are included in MOST government publications.)

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