

Northern Michigan University

From the Selected Works of Bruce Sarjeant

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Michigan Regionals in transition: timeline and perspectives

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Slides: <http://prezi.com/hwp-so5xbqdd/the-federal-depository-library-program-in-michigan/>

Timeline of Events

July 13 2009: [Executive Order 2009-36](#) from Michigan Governor, Jennifer Granholm, abolishes the Dept of History, Art & Libraries and transfers the Library of Michigan to the Department of Education.

- Includes “Eliminating or transferring to other suitable institutions the Federal Documents Depository”.

August 26, 2009: [Executive Directive 2009-5](#) from Michigan Governor, Jennifer Granholm, specifies that the collections at the Library of Michigan remain open but encourages collection transfers.

September 9 2009: [Executive Order 2009-43](#) from Michigan Governor, Jennifer Granholm, authorizes the Michigan Center for Innovation and Reinvention Board to examine repurposing the Library of Michigan building.

2010: [Library of Michigan’s 150th anniversary as a Federal Depository Library.](#)

February 12, 2010: [Announcement from the Library of Michigan](#) that collections will be downsized but services will continue. Effectively eliminates the Library of Michigan as a Regional Depository in the future.

- “The Library and the Department are committed to ensuring the stewardship and on-going support of the Regional Federal Depository Program and Federal Documents Collection by working with the Michigan Center for Innovation and Reinvention Board, and other stakeholders, ...to identify agencies or organizations within Michigan but outside of state government to manage and administer the collection and program in a location other than the Michigan Library and Historical Center.”

May 2010: Four in-state regional focus groups with GPO, Library of Michigan, Michigan depository directors and coordinators “to identify alternative stewardship for the Regional Federal Depository Collection and possibly the state-level coordination and oversight work performed by the Regional Federal Depository Librarian.”

June 25, 2010: [Michigan Center for Innovation and Reinvention Board report](#) recommends “that the Michigan Library and Historical Center remain what it was created to be—the people’s building.” No specific mention of regional federal depository library services.

July 26, 2010: Nancy Robertson (State Librarian) asks selectives to indicate if they are willing to house part of the regional collection.

October 12, 2010: Message from Nancy Robertson. Only 5 libraries were willing to take the equivalent of 10% of the regional collection. Library of Michigan pursues discussions with 2 other regional depositories interested in providing regional services to Michigan.

November 17, 2010: Nancy Robertson announces the Library of Michigan is in discussion with the University of Minnesota to serve as Michigan's Regional.

January 11, 2011: Nancy Robertson calls for volunteers for a working group to recommend services desired by Michigan selectives and how selectives will contribute to any regional group.

January 28, 2011: Working group is given agenda and discussion points for February 4th meeting at the Library of Michigan with the University of Minnesota. These include needs from a regional; prioritization of most needed programs or services; and how individually or collectively Michigan selectives will contribute to the work of the entire regional group.

February 4th, 2011: [Meeting of the working group](#) at the Library of Michigan; includes Kirsten Clark, the University of Minnesota regional librarian.

March 10, 2011: Nancy Robertson solicits workable in-state alternatives to Minnesota proposal by April 14, 2011 at the request of GPO.

May 20, 2011: Online poll presents selectives 2 options. Results not shared.

- a) The Library of Michigan becomes a selective depository and Minnesota's regional serves Michigan.
- b) The Library of Michigan becomes a selective depository. No regional federal depository service will be available to the Michigan selectives... for the foreseeable future.

July 27, 2011: [Announcement](#) that on October 1st, Regional operations at the Library of Michigan will cease and the University of Minnesota will become Michigan's Regional Library.

September 15, 2011: GPO rejects proposal for UMN to become the Michigan regional. [GPO Letter to State Library of Michigan Regarding FDLP Change \(Sept. 15, '11\)](#)

September 28, 2011: [State Library of Michigan Letter to GPO Regarding FDLP Change](#)
[University of Minnesota Letter to GPO Regarding FDLP Change](#)

September 29, 2011: [Multi-Regional Letter to GPO Regarding FDLP Change](#)

October 1, 2011: Library of Michigan ceases to be the regional federal depository library.

Perspectives

In preparation for the Oct 17 presentation at Depository Library Council, in September 2011 we asked for comments from other Michigan selective depository coordinators on three questions. This was an informal email survey. We received 8-10 responses. Their views do occasionally diverge but are we think representative of the range of opinion in Michigan.

Opinions of the MI-MN Proposal

- “short-sighted solution”
 - Concern about long-term impact on Michigan citizens
 - Loss of nationally respected leadership of the Library of Michigan as a regional library and of Ann Sanders in particular
 - Hopeful but "not optimistic that we can ever build the same kind of quality organization" as with two in-state regionals (Detroit Public Library and Library of Michigan)
 - I don't think having Minnesota as our regional is the best thing for Michigan libraries. I mean no disrespect to the great program and staff of the University of Minnesota. Their commitment to the FDLP program is commendable and their track record is excellent.
 - Keeping in-state regionals helps build stronger networks of selectives and better knowledge of collections.
 - What happens when regionals supporting multiple states want or need to get out of the program or change their status?
- "I am in favor of Minnesota becoming our regional, because no one else stepped up to the plate here in Michigan!"
 - Prefer an in-state shared regional given the positive experience with the Library of Michigan and Ann Sanders or a regional in a state more closely located to Michigan.
 - Grateful to the University of Minnesota for taking on the role.
 - Need to be able to weed collections to keep them current.

Comments on the processes used to reach the agreement

- "Should have been a done deal by now"
 - Frustration at the length of the process
- "No real input into the actual decision making"
 - End result had been pre-determined and process was more about "educating" selectives than real impact on decisions.
 - Never felt a shared regional within Michigan was an option from the start; the idea of one was quickly dismissed and was not investigated in any way.
- Communication

- Lacking at particular points in the process. Examples include after the decision to pursue an agreement with UMn there was no information on the process and time frame for approval of the agreement and after GPO rejected the agreement.
- Lacking from specific parties. For example GPO should have taken a leadership role in the communication process. More information about the proposal from the Library of Michigan and University of Minnesota would have generated more support.
- "In retrospect, I wish Ms. (Nancy) Robertson and Ms. Lougee had shared with the MI depository community more information about the steps University of MN Libraries was taking to prepare to take on regional responsibilities for Michigan. Had I known more, earlier on, I'd have felt more supportive of the idea."
- "Helpful if FDLC/GPO came up with some guidelines to help selectives see the possibilities of developing shared regionals - especially if they are going to turn down interstate regionals."
- "Ample opportunity to provide input"
 - Community had good representation at the Lansing meeting. That meeting with the State Librarian, MI and MN Regional Librarians and volunteer working group from selectives was particularly useful.
 - Process was as good as possible. The Library of Michigan tried to find an alternative. "The selectives are in no position to talk at that administrative level."

Advice for selectives in other states

- "Speak up early and often"
 - Be engaged in the process, stay informed, keep colleagues and administrators informed and communicate what your library needs and wants to GPO, the regional and others.
 - Let your opinions be known to GPO. Some MI libraries wanted to try to find an in-state alternative. The process was paused and they were given the time to do so because they communicated this to GPO.
 - Advocate for investigating/brainstorming all possible options, with or without the help of GPO or regionals, so that you do not get in this situation. Having no regional support is not good for Michigan, the FLDP, or the communities we serve.
 - Collections
 - Review your collections and work with nearby selectives to see what their collection strengths are so you can select what best fits your patrons' needs. Deselect items if necessary. Ann Sanders' workshop on collection development was very helpful for preparing for the loss of the regional.
 - Keep up with weeding. "If Michigan is the canary in the coal mine and additional regional libraries opt out of the program, it is important to reduce the size of your collection while you can."
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Unedited Responses

1. Opinions about the agreement with Minnesota
 - “short-sighted solution that will have long-term ramifications for the citizens of the State of Michigan. Especially disturbing is that the Library of Michigan's leadership as a Regional Depository Library was highly regarded by the entire govdocs community.”
 - “I am in favor of Minnesota becoming our regional, because no one else stepped up to the plate here in Michigan! We need a regional to withdraw, and I need to keep my collection current.”
 - Would be nice if an adjacent state was the Regional--Indiana, Ohio, or Wisconsin.
 - Although I'd prefer to have a regional in the State of MI because we've had such a positive experience with Ann Sanders and LOM, we'd be grateful to have Minn. step in to serve as a regional. We routinely weed and being able to submit disposal lists is important to us. If the agreement had been approved, obviously the disposal guidelines would have changed. We assumed this would have required some workflow adjustments on our end, but were willing to do so long as we had somewhere to send disposal lists out for processing.
 - At first, I didn't want the Universities of Minnesota Libraries to be Michigan's regional library. I much preferred the idea of there being a shared agreement, where a few Michigan selectives would share regional responsibility. However, given that that potential didn't materialize, I would prefer for Univ. of MN Libraries to be the regional, than for MI not to have a regional library.
 - Keeping the regional status and collections within each state is an idea that has merit and deserves to be researched, in my opinion. It could have the added benefit of developing stronger relationships and networks of selectives within each state, stronger knowledge and familiarity of our collections, and therefore help us serve our communities better. Michigan is not the only state with economic issues. What are we going to do when regionals supporting multiple states want or need to get out of the program or change their status?
2. Perspective on the processes used to come to this agreement
 - “felt that much of that process was simply an "education" for us and that we had no real input into the actual decision making. I'm hopeful that this agreement will work out for all parties concerned but I'm not optimistic that we can ever build the same kind of quality organization with a regional in another state as we had with our two fine regionals - The Detroit Public Library and the Library of Michigan.”
 - I think the Michigan community was given ample opportunity to provide input, and that we had a good representation. The Meeting in Lansing was great, however since then, the communication is sadly lacking,...we have been left in the dark. (Intentionally??)
 - Concur with lack of communication from GPO during process and post-decision to move ahead with UMN regional, and of course in light of GPO's rejection of the proposal.

- As good as any. The Library of Michigan tried to find an alternative. The selectives are in no position to talk at that administrative level.
- Never felt a shared Regional within Michigan was an option from the start; had the feeling that the decision was made before the process began.
- I've only recently become aware of how well prepared the Univ. of MN Libraries is to take on the additional 43 selective depositories of Michigan, when I read the letter to GPO from the University of Minnesota Libraries' Wendy Pradt Lougee. This letter was not openly shared with the selective depositories of Michigan through any official means, but was published in an ARL online article, and then Bruce Sargeant passed that along electronically to the rest of us. After reading that letter, I am now convinced that the U. of MN Libraries not only is prepared to expand its regional library services to include Michigan, but that they really want to. In retrospect, I wish Ms. (Nancy) Robertson and Ms. Lougee had shared with the MI depository community more information about the steps Univ. of MN Libraries was taking to prepare to take on regional responsibilities for Michigan. Had I known more, earlier on, I'd have felt more supportive of the idea.
- "Opportunities for input from the selectives, and much more communication during the process. I thought that GPO should have taken the leadership role here and they sat on their hands, when not wringing them. GPO's lack of leadership is what I see is holding back the whole process....but what do I know out here in the boonies with no communication? This whole thing should have been a done deal by now."
- When the focus group met in my area in 2010, there was great concern from those present of the wisdom of contracting out of state for our regional services. Perhaps there was a stronger voice in other focus groups that this WAS the best idea. From my perspective, the idea of forming some kind of shared regional was quickly dismissed and did not appear to be investigated in any way. I think this idea should have been investigated more fully. Without any kind of investigation into what a shared regional plan would look like, it is an idea that is easy to dismiss. Perhaps some selectives even dismissed it, without having any idea what this kind of arrangement would look like or what kind of work it would entail.
- From my perspective, it did not seem like both ideas got researched equally, which did the idea of a shared regional injustice. How can you say "no" to a shared regional plan, without having any real, concrete idea of what kind of time and staff investment would be involved? With 43 libraries, divide the regional's job into 43 parts. That doesn't seem like a lot of work to me, but who knows? In my opinion, an equal amount of time should have been spent researching both ideas, so that we could say definitively "this would not work" if that turned out to be the case. That did not happen. Instead, the burden was placed on the selectives to "come up with another plan."
- Unless there is going to be a complete restructuring of regionals into multi-state operations, I think it would help tremendously if FDLP/GPO came up with some guidelines/ideas to help selectives see the possibilities of developing shared regionals -especially if they are going to turn down interstate regionals. It may even have to involve an overhaul in how the system is managed now to make it work.

3. Advice for selectives in other states
- “speak up early and often”
 - If Michigan is the canary in the coal mine and additional regional libraries opt out of the program, it is important to reduce the size of your collection while you can. This is especially true with hearings if you subscribe to ProQuest Congressional.
 - Work with other selectives in your state to see what their collection strengths are. Compare those strengths to your institution’s profile to see where you overlap. Review your collection for those overlapping sections and determine whether your collection is underused. If so, give special consideration to the idea of deselecting those items from your profile. Ann had a special workshop for us doing just this and I found it to be very helpful in preparing for the loss of our regional. Lastly, stay on top of weeding your physical collections!!! While the recent outcome was not what we expected or hoped for, we did gain some space on our shelves so at least for now, we have space to accommodate newly received materials.
 - Let your opinions be known to GPO. They really appeared to listen to our concerns. At least a few MI selective libraries sent comments to GPO, and GPO responded by pausing the process, so that some selectives could work on developing a shared regional plan, to keep the regional responsibilities in the state of MI.

Other

Does having a regional really matter in the electronic age for access to current publications? For older publications, having no ILL access to historical publications at the former regional may be more problematic.

Certainly the material in our stacks will continue to age and become less and less useful to our institutions and patrons. If we can’t weed, is our only option to put this material in storage? I envision shrink wrapped pallets of documents that we can’t throw away.

We did not have to list microfiche on disposal lists before. Can we still weed microfiche? Who is to say when we discarded any microfiche? It could have been done while we had a regional.

How does a library leave the program without a regional to oversee the disposal of the selective’s collection?

With GPO under budgetary attack themselves, how will they be able to enforce the rules.

How much of the collection at the Library of Michigan was earmarked for the Hathi Trust?

Keeping the regional status and collections within each state is an idea that has merit and deserves to be researched, in my opinion. It could have the added benefit of developing stronger relationships and networks of selectives within each state, stronger knowledge and familiarity of our collections, and therefore help us serve our communities better. Michigan is not the only state with economic issues. What are we going to do when regionals supporting multiple states want or need to get out of the program or change their status?