

# Creating a 21st Century State Publications Depository

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## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

*The New Jersey State Library has managed a successful print depository program for the last 55 years. In the mid-1990s, many state government agencies began putting digital versions of their print publications on their Websites. Initially, the agencies continued to send print copies to the State Library, but by 1998, more and more agencies were using their Websites as the primary venue for their publications. State Library staff initially responded to this change by creating a Web page with a browsable list of links to publications. Technological changes resulted in more state government publications being produced in electronic formats and the list of Web page links became unsustainable. This chapter discusses the State Library's efforts to transition a successful 20<sup>th</sup> century print depository program into an equally viable electronic documents depository using very limited staff and no additional funding.*

## **ORGANIZATION BACKGROUND**

The New Jersey State Library (NJSL) is located in Trenton, NJ and with a staff of about 98 people, provides a full range of library-related services to the citizens of the state. The services offered by the State Library fall into three broad categories: services for public libraries, services for state government, and services for the public. Services for public libraries include *JerseyConnect*, which provides broadband

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connectivity and related services; *JerseyCat*, a statewide interlibrary loan system; and training for new public library directors and for public library trustees. The State Library also administers New Jersey library laws and the per capita state aid program for libraries. Services for state government include access to on-site research collections, extensive law, government documents, and genealogy collections, and comprehensive reference and research support. This encompasses access to over 100 databases, interlibrary loan services, and a collection of more than one million books, documents, and journals. Services for the general public include on-site access to all of the collections; borrowing privileges from the circulating collections; and services to people with print disabilities through the Talking Book and Braille Center. In July 1996, the New Jersey State Library became an affiliate of Thomas Edison State College. Under this arrangement, the College provides administrative oversight to the State Library, but the State Library's operations are primarily funded by the New Jersey State Legislature. In FY 2013, the direct funding for the State Library was maintained at \$5.194 million (Christie & Guadagno, 2012, p. B-159). The State Library's stated focus is "empowering people, organizations and government by providing access to information and libraries", and it continues to search for proactive and innovative approaches to "guide libraries and provide information to foster a literate, productive and competitive New Jersey" (The New Jersey State Library, 2010, para. 1).

The New Jersey State Library is one of the oldest state library agencies in the United States. "The library community in New Jersey recognizes March 18, 1796, as the State Library's founding date" (Shaw, 2012, p. 1). On this date, a resolution was issued assigning responsibility for management of the Legislature's collection of law books to the Assembly Clerk, Maskell Ewing, and authorizing the purchase of a case to hold these volumes. Many of these eighteenth century materials are still available in the collections of the New Jersey State Library and the New Jersey State Archives. Its start as the keeper of documents for the New Jersey state government remains a core part of the mission of the State Library. Beginning in 1957, with amendments in 1967 and 2011, the New Jersey state statutes have codified the State Library's role as a depository of state government publications. The New Jersey State Library is the primary depository for official publications of the state government that are intended for public distribution. These publications are variously referred to as New Jersey documents, state government publications, state publications and/or state documents, and include departmental annual reports, statistical reports, transcripts of legislative hearings, and special studies from the early part of the nineteenth century to the present. They are defined as public documents produced by New Jersey state government agencies, and are produced in many forms including reports, directories, statistical compendiums, bibliographies, newsletters, bulletins, state plans, brochures, periodicals, committee minutes, transcripts of public

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