

I first joined GODORT in 2013 when I was a baby librarian. Having earned my MLIS from Wayne State University in 2011, my experience was limited to a single role as an Assistant Copyright Librarian before embarking on my government information journey. The ALA behemoth was intimidating, yet I was eager to find my place. While I had been active in the New Members Round Table, I yearned for a true professional home—and I found it in GODORT.

When I went to my first GODORT meeting in Chicago at ALA Annual 2013, I was nervous. My knowledge of government documents was minimal, since I had only been in the government information role for less than two months, and I feared being excluded and treated as an outsider. Instead, I was met with warmth and inclusion. The GODORT community embraced me, making me feel valued and connected. At its core, GODORT is its people—dedicated members united in our mission to ensure free access to government information, regardless of jurisdiction or format.

This year has posed unprecedented challenges for government information in the United States. While we've always grappled with helping people find and access information, while preserving it for the future (as is evidenced by the existence of GODORT's Rare and Endangered Government Publications Committee), this year has been especially challenging. The transition to a new Presidential Administration in January 2025 brought alarming removals of government websites and datasets, threatening our collective history. Yet, in the face of these challenges, our community has shown remarkable resilience. From preserving access to advocating for the future, we've leaned on each other to safeguard what matters most.

While government information professionals have always excelled at collaboration, this year has highlighted our strength in unity. Through partnerships like the End of Term Archive with the Internet Archive, grassroots initiatives like the Data Rescue Movement, and even unconventional efforts on platforms like the Data Hoarders subreddit, we've utilized every available network. We've worked our networks, and searched for more partners to help us, any way we could. While not all of us have the technical expertise or resources to preserve data and information ourselves, we've used our collective voice to raise awareness and rally support for protecting critical government information.

This collaborative spirit not only strengthens the resilience of our documentary heritage but also reinforces the vital role of information professionals in upholding democratic accountability. We won't sit idly by watching the erasure of history and knowledge. Though challenges may arise, and things may seem bleak, our united GODORT community stands strong, committed to protecting, preserving, and ensuring free access to government information at every level. This is a pivotal moment in history, and GODORT continues to play a vital role. I'm looking forward to my role as GODORT Chair and guiding us through what lies ahead.

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