



OPTIMIZING DIGITAL COLLECTION NAVIGATION

The U.S. Code and Statutes at Large

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Focus Area: Metadata,
Knowledge Organization,
Information Behavior, and
Information Architecture

This project consists of a review of digital collections on the Library of Congress Law Library website, focusing on increasing findability and accessibility. The specific collections covered by this project are the Statutes at Large and the U.S. Code. Though the two collections carry much of the same information, the accessibility needs are different. I have made a series of recommendations based on user-centered design to update the research guide and other supplemental materials, increase efficacy of metadata, and redesign existing organization of the collections. I have also included suggestions for outreach programs to expand the collections' use.

PROJECT OVERVIEW

THE COLLECTIONS

Statutes at Large

- The Statutes at Large is a vast collection, containing every US law ever enacted as well as treaties, international agreements, amendments, and founding documents like the Declaration of Independence, Constitution, and Articles of Confederation. The first volume of the collection covers 1789 to 1799 and the most recent available on the website currently, Volume 64, covers 1950-1951. The collection consists of 82 items.

United States Code

- The U.S. Code is the codification of statutes and legislation separated into 53 titles/subjects. The Code is published every six years by the Office of the Law Revision Counsel of the House of Representatives with updates made annually as needed. The collection currently hosts the first edition, published in 1925, through the 11th edition, published in 1988. The collection consists of 55,147 items.

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RESEARCH PROCESS

- The first part of the process was to become familiar with the collection, its current organization and advanced search and supplemental materials.
- I then made comparisons between my findings of the current collections and the features of other host sites.

Host sites and Supplemental Guides Compared

- GovInfo
- HeinOnline
- OLRC
- Senate
- I also compared it to other Law Library collections, such as the Code of Federal Regulations.
- Once I had seen what was effectively used elsewhere, I was able to create my own recommendations for the improvement of the collections.

RESEARCH GUIDE RECOMMENDATIONS

These collections share a Library of Congress research guide titled, “Federal Statutes: A Beginner’s Guide.” Updates to this guide may increase accessibility, especially for users who may be less familiar with legal terminology and the Library of Congress’s specific uses of it.

- The Federal Depository Library Program, created to give the public access to governmental publications, should be considered an additional print source for the U.S. Code. A link should be provided to the Federal Depository Library Directory so that users can find their nearest Federal Depository Library.
- The U.S. Code tab should also include either an explanation of or links to the Office of the Law Revision Counsel (OLRC) sites’ explanation of positive law codification and the subjects associated with U.S. Code Titles
- A new tab should be created, entitled “Related Blog Posts.” This tab would use assigned metadata from the Library of Congress blog and populate with posts that are connected to federal statutes, the U.S. Code, or the Statutes at Large collections.



[HeinOnline](#) / [LibGuides](#) / [U.S. Code](#) / [Related HeinOnline](#)

U.S. Code

This database includes complete coverage of the U.S. Code. It represents the most complete collection of federal statutes available online.

[Overview](#)

[Browse Content](#)

[Searching](#)

[eTOC Alerts](#)

[Additional Resources](#)

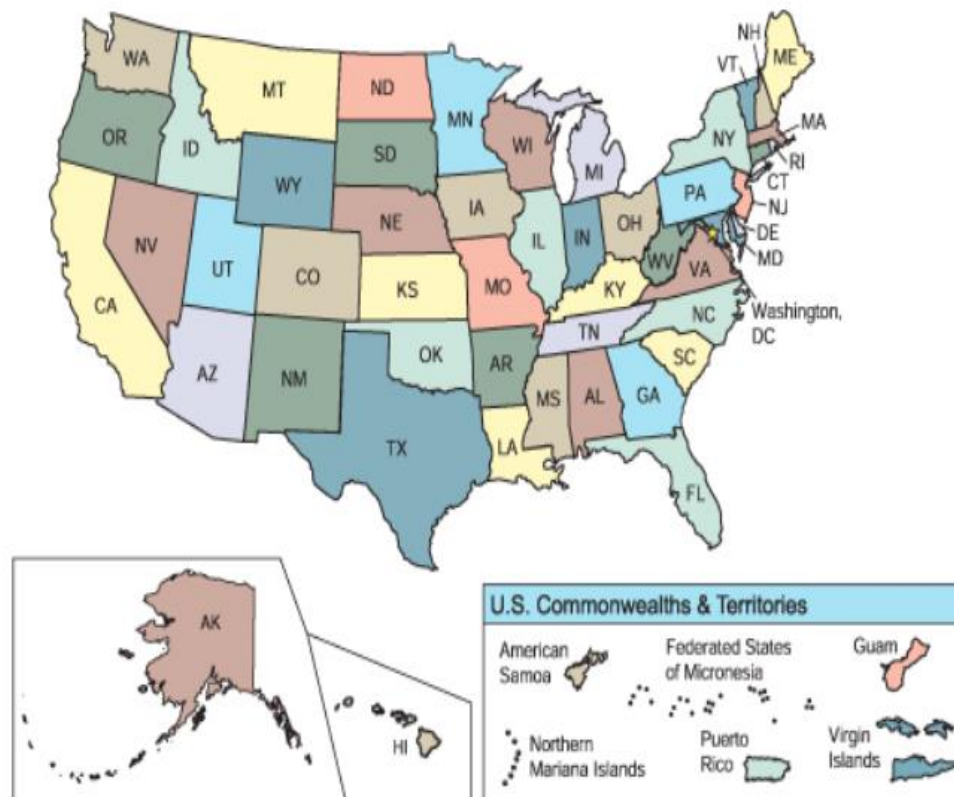
[Related HeinOnline Blog Posts](#)

[Help Resources](#)

Welcome to the Federal Depository Library Directory (FDLD)



CLICKABLE MAP OF FEDERAL DEPOSITORY LIBRARIES



HeinOnline's LibGuide includes a Related Blog Posts tab to give users wider context and additional information.

The FDLP has both a search function and a clickable map to lead users to their nearest FDL.

OTHER SUPPLEMENTAL MATERIALS RECOMMENDATIONS

About this Collection

The United States Statutes at Large is the collection of every law, public and private, ever enacted by the Congress, published in order of the date of its passage. These laws are codified every six years in the United States Code, but the Statutes at Large remains the official source of legislation. Until 1948, all treaties and international agreements approved by the Senate were also published in the set. In addition, the Statutes at Large includes the text of the Declaration of Independence, Articles of Confederation, the Constitution, amendments to the Constitution, treaties with Indians and foreign nations, and presidential proclamations.

Volume	Congress	Dates
Volume 1	1st Congress	1789-1791
Volume 1	2nd Congress	1791-1793
Volume 1	3rd Congress	1794-1795
Volume 1	4th Congress	1796-1797
Volume 1	5th Congress	1797-1799
Volume 2	6th Congress	1799-1801
Volume 2	7th Congress	1802-1803
Volume 2	8th Congress	1803-1805

- Updates and improvements can be made to landing pages for both the Code and Statutes at Large.
 - As seen on the right, the Statutes at Large collection’s landing page includes a table that needs a heading
 - The landing page for the U.S. Code includes typos, uncapitalized proper nouns, and references “[t]he list below” with no indication of which link the list could be found within.
- The Articles and Essays tab would benefit from a more accurate name.
 - While Articles and Essays is a useful description of what much of the Library uses it for, the Law Library might benefit from a new term for its collections’ supplemental material.

METADATA RECOMMENDATIONS

- Create a thesaurus for treaties and other documents associated with Native American tribes or nations.
 - The search function currently will only give results for tribes and nations exactly how they are printed within the documents. These names can be outdated or inaccurate. A thesaurus would be a way to alleviate some of the biased language and increase findability of Native American documents and legislation.
- Create a metadata field that connects an item in the U.S. Code to its corresponding section in the Statutes at Large.
 - As the Code is broken up into significantly more items than the Statutes, it is easier to link each Code item to its Statutes counterpart within the metadata. Because the Statutes at Large are considered the more accurate form of legislation, it is more important that the Code should link to the Statutes than the other way around. Links will likely consist of the jump links currently in production under the Statutes at Large's Articles and Essays.
- The suggested citations on each item should include Bluebook Citations along with MLA, ALA, and Chicago.
- Change the way that subject information is displayed with collection information.

Subject

Armed Forces
Bills and Resolutions
Congress
Enacted Law
Government
Government Documents
Law
Law Library
Legislative Bodies
Navy
Periodical
Ships and Boats
Statutes and Legislation
U.S. Code
United States

Subject is currently mixed in with collections and format, in part because they are currently organized alphabetically. It may increase clarity to separate the subject headings from other filterable links. Even if they were to all remain under the Subject heading, it may be useful to place subject first and collections and formats after.

HeinOnline allows users to browse by “Indian Treaties” but it also illustrates how ineffective the feature is while it lacks a functional thesaurus.

Arapahoe Indians

Treaty with the Arapahoe and Cheyenne Indians. Treaty between the United States of America and the Arapahoe and Cheyenne Indians of the Upper Arkansas River	Feb. 18, 1861	12 Stat. 1163
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Arapahoes

Treaty between the United States of America and the Cheyenne and Arapahoe Tribes of Indians	Oct. 28, 1867	15 Stat. 593
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Treaty between the United States of America and the Northern Cheyenne and Northern Arapahoe Tribes of Indians	May 10, 1868	15 Stat. 655
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Arrapahoe Indians

Treaty between the United States of America and the Apache, Cheyenne, and Arrapahoe tribes of Indians	Oct. 17, 1865	14 Stat. 713
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Arrapahoes

Treaty between the United States of America and the Cheyenne and Arrapahoe tribes of Indians	Oct. 14, 1865	14 Stat. 703
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- Continue current project to create jump links within items in the Statutes at Large collection.
 - This work is currently housed in the Articles and Essays section and compensates for the size of the items and how difficult it currently is to move from section to section.
- Create a new Part Of metadata field within the U.S. Code for front matter, tables of content, indices, and other preliminary material.
 - This field should be able to be filtered to increase browsability of the collection.
- Suppress redundant and unnecessary information within search results and browsing.
- Create a feature similar to what GovInfo calls the Document in Context feature for the U.S. Code.
 - Document in Context is a tab connected to individual items within the Details of the document. It places the selected item within its title, chapter, and section and gives wider context to the document as a whole.

ORGANIZATION RECOMMENDATIONS

DOCUMENT IN CONTEXT

3 U.S.C. 301 - General authorization to delegate functions; publication of delegations

CHAPTER 2 - OFFICE AND COMPENSATION OF PRESIDENT (Sections 101 - 115)

PDF TEXT DETAILS SHARE

CHAPTER 3 - REPEALED (Sections 201 - 209)

PDF TEXT DETAILS SHARE

CHAPTER 4 - DELEGATION OF FUNCTIONS (Sections 301 - 303)

PDF TEXT DETAILS SHARE

Table Of Contents

PDF TEXT DETAILS SHARE

Front Matter

PDF TEXT DETAILS SHARE

Sec. 301 - General authorization to delegate functions; publication of delegations

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Sec. 302 - Scope of delegation of functions

PDF TEXT DETAILS SHARE

Sec. 303 - Definitions

PDF TEXT DETAILS SHARE

Document in Context

Publications, or issues of publications, in some collections are broken down into smaller pieces (granules) to improve access to relevant information. The Federal Register, for example, consists of several documents, each of which can be accessed separately. The Document in Context section allows you to access other documents issued within the same publication.

The Document in Context feature, as it currently exists on GovInfo, is a useful tool in collections like the U.S. Code with many thousands of items. It places a specific item within the wider document and gives users more access to the edition they are currently viewing. With the Library hosting eleven editions of the Code, moving from Section 301 to Section 302 and remaining within the same edition may be confusing to users. This tool may alleviate that confusion.

Preliminary and Index Material, Tables and Finding Aids (all years)

Preliminary Material

- Preliminary Material
- Delegations of Authority
- Related Presidential Documents

Indices

- Index
- General Index
- Supplementary Index

Miscellaneous

- List of Sections Affected
- Redesignation Tables
- Finding Aids
- Tables of Documents Published in the Federal Register

The Code of Federal Regulations collection includes a Part Of field for preliminary and index material, which allows for users to filter out miscellaneous documentation. The CFR and U.S. Code are both large granular collections, which shows the utility of this feature within the Code.

ORGANIZATION RECOMMENDATIONS



In collections where the contributor is the same, collections could suppress the users view of this redundant information.

OUTREACH AND EDUCATION

In order to increase traffic to these collections, connections can be made to other Library of Congress initiatives, especially those involving education. Though the material is dense, educators can scaffold their students' understanding of the collections.

Many states require 4th graders to complete one or more social studies-history projects on their state or region to meet standards. To facilitate their projects, the U.S. Code could:

- Create PartOf metadata for collection items that deal with statehood statutes and the creation of national parks
- Improve the Indian Treaties thesaurus to facilitate research and limit the exposure young users have to biased terms.

California: A Changing State

Students learn the story of their home state, unique in American history in terms of its vast and varied geography, its many waves of immigration beginning with pre-Columbian societies, its continuous diversity, economic energy, and rapid growth. In addition to the specific treatment of milestones in California history, students examine the state in the context of the rest of the nation, with an emphasis on the U.S. Constitution and the relationship between state and federal government.

Social studies standards for 4th graders in California and Texas.

(1) In Grade 4, students examine the history of Texas from the early beginnings to the present within the context of influences of North America. Historical content focuses on Texas history, including the Texas Revolution, establishment of the Republic of Texas, and subsequent annexation to the United States. Students discuss important issues, events, and individuals of the 19th, 20th, and 21st centuries. Students conduct a thorough study of regions in Texas and North America resulting from human activity and from physical features. The location, distribution, and patterns of economic activities and settlement in Texas further enhance the concept of regions. Students describe how early American Indians in Texas and North America met their basic economic needs.

THANK YOU

