

Information policy: We're from Washington  
and yes, here to help you!



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**Office for Information Technology Policy (OITP)**

**Presentation at the 2015 Association of Rural & Small Libraries  
(ARSL) Conference, Little Rock, Arkansas – October 1, 2015**

# Introduction

- Marijke and Alan
- Role of the ALA Washington Office vs. the rest of ALA
- Purpose of today's session



# Outline of today's session

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- A focus on “national public policy and initiatives”
- Challenges and strategies
- Advocacy and engagement
- Some concreteness: A case study (E-rate)
- Looking ahead
- Questions and answers

# National public policy and initiatives

- What the heck is this?
  - ▣ Audience ideas
- Some organization of this material
  - ▣ Focus on technology, digital and analog objects and funding
  - ▣ Focus on library services
  - ▣ Focus on values

# A challenge and a strategy

- Challenge: Decision makers often have outdated views of libraries
  - ▣ Fondness and nostalgia
  - ▣ Little or no understanding of the value of modern libraries
- Strategy: Bolster and target communications
  - ▣ Build on strengths
  - ▣ Need compelling case studies, evidence for how modern libraries contribute to communities
  - ▣ Need library community convergence in messaging

# Messaging

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- “Opportunity and progress”
- The E’s of Libraries®: Education, employment, entrepreneurship, empowerment, engagement, everyone benefits...
- Libraries transform

# Another challenge and strategy

- Challenge: Decision makers too often do not involve or include libraries in their decisions and programs
- Strategy: Be more proactive in policy advocacy
  - Across broad spectrum of interests, organizations—orientation is how libraries can further the missions of decision makers and ***their goals, not library goals***
  - Libraries represent a critical national infrastructure—good leverage, ROI for other efforts
  - Need to focus efforts—can't be proactive in all possible arenas

# Some particular goals

- ❑ Veterans and military families
- ❑ Entrepreneurship and small business
- ❑ Rural areas
- ❑ Youth and technology





# Current opportunities / possibilities

- E-rate (will discuss later)
- Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act
- New leadership at IMLS and the Library of Congress (and more)
- Ebooks
- Elementary and Secondary Education Act reauthorization

# Other policy issues

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- Copyright
- Telecommunications, such as net neutrality
- Privacy
- Information access for people with disabilities
- ... and much more—we can discuss specific topics during Q & A

# Advocacy and engagement: Making things happen

- Depends on who's at the party and where we're sitting
  - ▣ We work with a variety of stakeholders
- We create a lot of stuff
  - ▣ Official filings with agencies (FCC comments, amicus briefs)
  - ▣ Policy documents and short advocacy pieces
  - ▣ Press statements, articles, blog posts, coalition letters, webinars...
- And... we talk a lot (and listen too)
  - ▣ Meetings, calls, and more meetings

# Audiences: Who we talk to and who we should be talking to

Members of **Congress and congressional staff**; with focus on specific committees depending on issue, for example: Senate HELP Committee or Commerce Committee, House Education and Workforce Committee

Individuals within the **judicial and executive branches**, including **Federal agency executives** and **regulators**; with focus on individuals within specific agencies depending on issue, for example: Federal Communications Commission, Department of Education

**Private sector, thought leaders**; with a focus on companies that can determine policy and/or lead policy change (e.g., publishers determining whether or not libraries may license and lend e-books)

**Private sector**  
thought leaders

**Coalitions, associations, foundations**  
and other  
industry or  
issue-based  
groups

**Academics**  
and think tanks

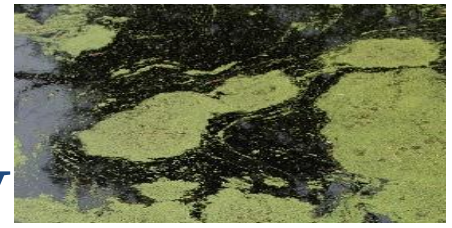
**Journalists**

**State-level  
leaders**

Our audience is made up of two distinct groups:

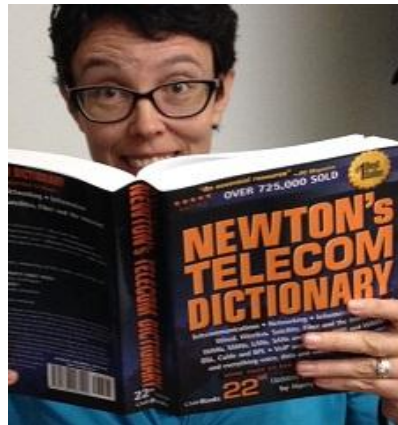
- 1) An inner circle of decision makers who create laws and policies, as well as determine how they are implemented and enforced.
- 2) An outer circle of influential groups and individuals who provide decision makers with facts and guidance.

# Primeval policy soup: Turning opportunity into policy



- Let me tell you a story about how a relatively small player (ALA) navigated a large and complex federal proceeding (E-rate Modernization at the FCC)

**Suspense! Drama! Heartbreak! Happy Ending!**



# Chapter 1: Opportunity knocks

- In the beginning (2013) the FCC said it was time to update the rules for a program that started in 1996 (so 20<sup>th</sup> century)
- FCC initiates a formal proceeding—a rulemaking which was to last 18 months—to ask stakeholders what they should do
- And we started thinking hard and amassing resources and talking to friends and...

# Chapter 2: Finding our way

- ❑ The FCC set the stage with a
  - ❑ Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (NPRM)
- ❑ But didn't stop there!
  - ❑ Public Notice
  - ❑ Order
  - ❑ Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking
  - ❑ Second Order

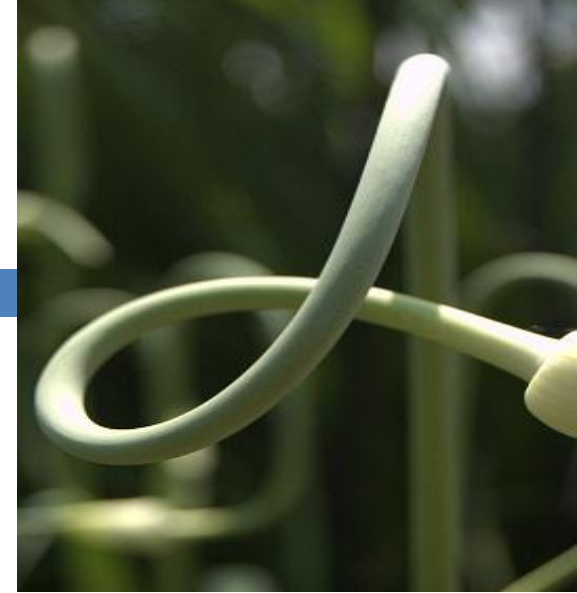


What on earth is all that you ask?

- ❑ What would success look like for libraries?
  - ❑ And what will it take to get there?
  - ❑ This is where the meetings (ex parte) and calls and more meetings come in

# Chapter 3: Twists and turns

- ALA identified goals and built a strategy
- But we do not operate in a vacuum
  - The E-rate Modernization brought out long-time stakeholders and a whole host of new entrants—each with an agenda
  - There's libraryland and non-library players
  - We identified allies and those not so allied
- There's the FCC but there's also Congress
- And the press





# Chapter 4: Staking a claim

- As the proceeding wore on we jettisoned some plans and reworked others
- Inklings of making an impact?
  - Tricks that say, “we’re doing ok”
  - Name dropping, invitations to parties, FCC on speed dial, he returns my calls!
- It takes a lot of work
  - 1.53 GB, 76 folders, 2,044 files
  - (And a little bit of faith)



# Chapter 5: A happy ending and an epilogue



But we're not done yet...

The implementation phase is underway

# The party



# Looking ahead



- Upcoming elections
- ALA strategy and plans
- How the ARSL community can engage
- At this conference

(Image from [Tom Jutte](#))

# Shameless sales

- ❑ Need more of the E-rate story?
- ❑ ARSL has a session for you

## **E-rate Get Your Share!**

Friday, 1:45-2:45

Room: Harris Brake

## **Broadband 101**

Friday, 3:00-4:00

Room: Grampas

# Contact information and resources

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- [www.ala.org/oitp](http://www.ala.org/oitp); 202-628-8410
- National Policy Agenda for Libraries:
  - <http://www.ala.org/news/press-releases/2015/06/ala-releases-national-policy-agenda-libraries>
- District Dispatch, [www.districtdispatch.org](http://www.districtdispatch.org)
- Libraries Transform, [www.librariestransform.org](http://www.librariestransform.org)