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

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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

- 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- **Challenge:** Decision makers often have outdated views of libraries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

- “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

- 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

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.

- **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

- **Private sector thought leaders**

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

- **Academics** and think tanks

- **Journalists**

- **State-level leaders**

- **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)
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 20th 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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- Alan S. Inouye, ainouye@alawash.org
- www.alala.org/oitp; 202-628-8410
- National Policy Agenda for Libraries:
- District Dispatch, www.districtdispatch.org