

Maine State Library

Digital Maine

Library Documents

Maine State Library

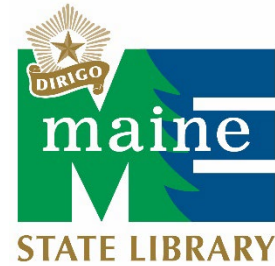
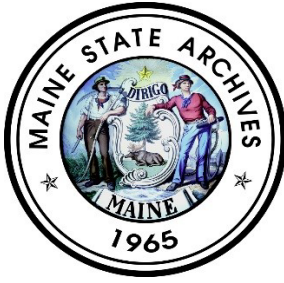
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Report to the Joint Standing Committee on State and Local Government on LD 564

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Report to the Joint Standing Committee on State and Local Government on LD 564

Senator Baldacci, Representative Matlack, and distinguished members of the Joint Standing Committee on State and Local Government,

During the 130th Legislative session, the Maine State Librarian and the Maine State Archivist were asked to study the reports issued and printed by state agencies and departments as required by law, to make recommendations for potential cost savings.

The goals of the resolve (LD 564) were set forth as follows:

- That the State Librarian and the State Archivist shall work together to study the potential cost savings that may be achieved by reducing or eliminating the requirements in laws, rules and regulations that regularly produced reports and other publications of state agencies and departments be printed and distributed.
- In conducting the study, the State Librarian and the State Archivist shall consider the goals of providing public access to the reports and publications and preserving the reports and publications for archival purposes.
- The State Librarian and the State Archivist shall identify all reports and publications regularly produced by state agencies and departments that must be distributed in print form, the number of copies required to be printed and to whom print copies must be distributed, the number of additional copies printed and to whom the additional copies are distributed, the cost to print and distribute the copies and whether the reports and publications are available on an agency's or department's publicly accessible website.

Survey and Data Gathering:

Through the summer and fall of 2021, the State Library and State Archives conducted a survey of all state agencies and departments to gather information on the following: what reports are they required by law to produce, which of those reports are printed and which are shared electronically, and what is the current cost to print such reports. Our agencies sent the survey to 40 state agencies and departments and received 35 responses. Our goal was to determine an efficient means of publishing reports while also ensuring archival preservation and public access.

Key Highlights

- Of the responding agencies and departments, 343 reports are issued annually.

- Of the 343 reports listed, agencies print 5,315 copies in total at an average cost of \$2.17 per printed copy. While some agencies spent more on printing costs than others, together agencies reported spending \$11,570 in printing costs.
- Many state entities have already embraced digital access for their reporting and often post the required report to their website, share it through email or post it online as well as printing a paper version. Only 3% of reports are printed on paper only and not available in a digital format.
- The data helped to understand how reports and publications could be archivally captured in the most efficient and preservation-worthy method possible, and be made accessible to the public. Some agencies take a hybrid approach – striking a balance between printing a few preservation copies while also sharing the reports on their website and/or distributing them electronically.

Analysis and Opportunities:


The survey responses suggest little cost savings relating to the printing of annual reports or required reports, and on the whole, there are very few reports that are printed and not made available online (3%). This suggests that agencies predominantly create and distribute digitally-native reports and publications, versus printing them, and/or produce digitally-native reports and publications that are available in both online and print formats (i.e. “hybrid” approach noted above).

The distinct roles the Maine State Archives and the Maine State Library have regarding preserving the records, reports, and publications of state agencies and to make them accessible, respectively, requires further attention, as both the Archives and the Library are best positioned to assist agencies with the preservation of their publications as well as to make them accessible.

For example, as it relates to accessing digital materials intended for the public or frequent use by state agencies, the Maine State Library maintains the Digital Maine Repository. This repository allows agencies to store and share their publications. State Agency documents and publications in the State Library’s Digital Maine Repository can be viewed here: <https://digitalmaine.com/statedocs/>

As it relates to continuing to preserve original archival quality reports for agencies based on specific retention schedules, the State Archives still captures printed/paper archival copies of legally required reports for preservation. Paper continues to serve as the longest-lasting material, but the expense and storage requirements to do so is difficult to sustain in perpetuity. If the State Archives had access to a digital preservation system, the state would be able to print less and capture more digital records in their original digitally-native format.

To truly understand the recommendations that follow, please note that there is a distinction between digital preservation systems and digital repository/access systems.

- 1) Digital Preservation Systems – such systems preserve digitally-native documents in a manner to maintain the legally required original files and file formats in accordance with State Archives retention requirements. Such a system is designed to work for Archival requirements first and foremost to ensure long-term preservation and future access. The system will always preserve the original file and format in which the record was created but will also allow continued access as formats and systems change over time. The digital preservation system will then make the digitally-native records available to the public online. 
- 2) Digital Repository/Access Systems – such systems store and allow for digital files to be accessed. These systems, while used to store a document, are primarily designed to make digital

documents and files accessible for on demand use/viewing/access – such as use by the public or by frequent use of state agencies. File formats in these systems may be updated as the digital repository/access system updates. For example, a PDF Report uploaded in the system as PDF version 1.0 file, may be updated to PDF version 2.0 file as the software of the digital repository access systems undergoes updates. The content of the file does not change (i.e. a 2001 report on traffic accidents is still a 2001 report on traffic accidents – the report data is the same), but because the PDF file format version is updated to accommodate access, the original uploaded report no longer represents the true digitally-native document, and therefore, does not represent the true legal document that might be found in a Digital Preservation System used by Archives.

While the above two components appear to highlight small, nuanced differences, they are important distinctions in effectively building systems, policies, and workflows to capture and present state agency reports and publications in a cost effective and transparent manner.

Recommendations:

The following recommendations are intended to more fully modernize the process for creating, preserving, and accessing state agency reports and publications.

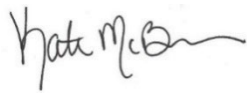
1. The Maine State Archives has requested funding of approximately \$105,000 to purchase and build a Digital Preservation System for the purposes of collecting digital-native documents for Archival retention. Supporting this budgetary request will enable the State Archives to fully implement the recommendations provided in this report.
2. Correct contradictory statutory language as it relates to the Maine State Library's role in collecting publications, reports, and state agency government documents. Specific Titles and Sections to be brought into alignment are reflected in Title 1, Section 501-A; Title 5, Section 43; and Title 27, Sections 2 and 66. The State Library can provide this Committee with further suggestions on administrative changes to the language in each title and section. The main components reflect:
 - Codifying use of the Maine State Library's Digital Maine Repository for the capture of state agency publications that are intended for public access.
 - Clarifying the numbers of copies of print copies of publications required.
3. For reports and publications that an agency creates solely for the intended purpose of printing the report/publication, 1 copy of the report or publication that is created should be sent to the Maine State Archives for retention, as applicable with retention requirements, and four (4) copies of the report/publication should be sent to the Maine State Library to be made accessible to the public.
4. For all reports/publications an agency creates for the primary purpose of online/electronic access and limited print distribution, the State Library and State Archives recommends that all state agencies and departments adopt a hybrid approach to their reporting by providing the specified number of print copies to the State Library and State Archives and uploading an electronic document to the applicable Digital Preservation and/or Digital Repository/Access System.

As part of further recommendations, we acknowledge that our agencies can work more fully with all state agencies to further streamline their collections preservation/access processes. Such recommendations, while not necessary to be codified in statutory changes, reflect suggestions on more efficient workflow and internal agency policies regarding the collection of reports and publications.

For example, and when required, the digital version of the report can also be sent to email distribution lists, versus printing. Or, through the technological capabilities of the State Library's Digital Maine Repository, a state agency publication could be stored in the digital repository but appear on the agency's specific webpage for access by the public. Suffice it to say, there are numerous opportunities to streamline the collection, preservation, and storage process, yet make access to specific reports and publications more efficient for both the public and state agencies.

Our collecting agencies are impressed with the ease with which state agencies and departments have moved to digital publication of their many reports. We thank the agencies and departments in Maine State Government for their help and assistance with this research.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kate McBrien".

Kate McBrien
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A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "JR" or "Jamie Ritter".

Jamie Ritter
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