

# “According to Our Records...”

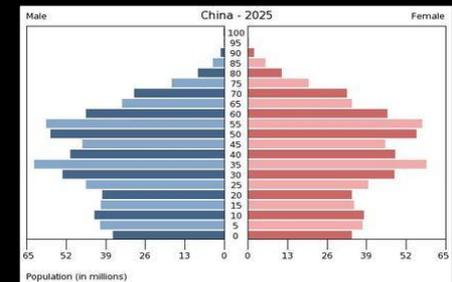
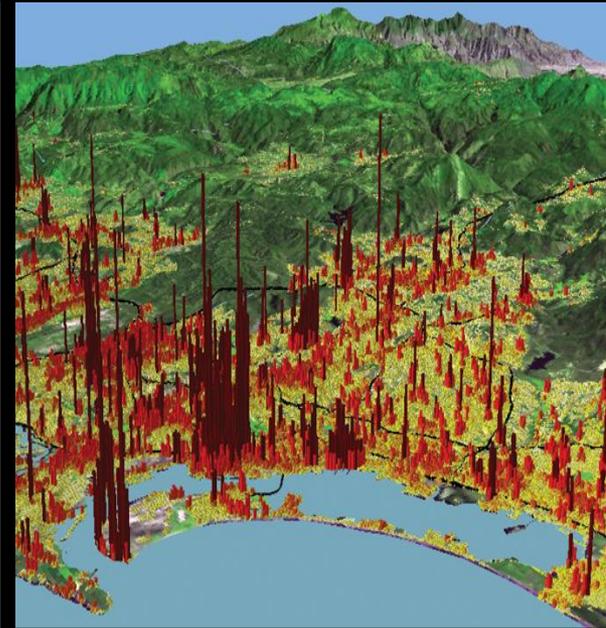


## CRL Preconference:

### From LexisNexis to WikiLeaks: The New Marketplace for Government Information

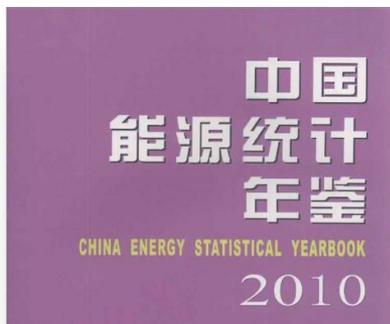
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# “Government Data”

- For today's discussion: a broad definition. Official government output, intended for publication. But also:
  - Declassified materials, incl. primary source archives
  - Mapping and GIS
  - Ephemera
  - (By contrast: censored or restricted materials, 内部)
- War booty, secret diaries of Gulag prisoners, previously classified Soviet documents (formerly published the complete archive of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union), police records of the Habsburg Empire, etc.
- Current East View projects:
  - Russia/CIS elections ephemera
  - Oak Ridge National Laboratory “LandScan” data
  - China Census, Statistical Yearbooks, dissident journals



# Challenges



Great variety of hurdles:

- political
- logistical
- financial

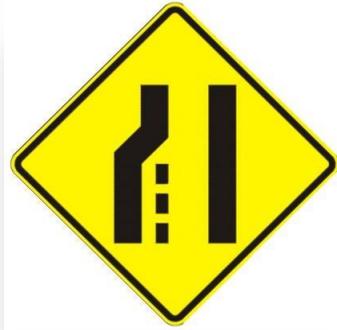
# Challenges



...which means:

- (Un)availability of information  
(.... Veracity of information)
- Physical supply
- Library community support

# Common Problems



Yet: many common patterns and problems.

- 1990's: In recently dissolved USSR - unclear legalities. State institutions (incl. libraries, archives, museums) “not allowed to engage in commercial activity” or to “cooperate with foreign entities.”
- 2013: negotiating with North Korea: “not allowed to engage in commercial activity” or “cooperate with foreign entities.” [Solutions found in all cases!]

# Common Problems



- China: *“Red Guard Archive? What Red Guard Archive?”*

Don't even ask. We'll empirically know the results of Global Warming sooner than we are likely able to publish primary source documentation on China's 20<sup>th</sup> century for objective study. Right?

But: 25 years ago we could have said the same about the Stalin archive!

# Impact of New Media



More immediacy!

A screenshot of the National Archives website homepage. The header features the National Archives logo and the text "NATIONAL ARCHIVES". To the right of the logo is a search bar with the text "Search Archives.gov" and a "GO" button. Below the header is a navigation menu with five items: "Research Our Records", "Veterans' Service Records", "Teachers' Resources", "Our Locations", and "Shop Online". Each item has a right-pointing arrow. Below the navigation menu are five columns of content, each with a title, a brief description, and a representative image. The first column is "Research Our Records" with a description "Explore our nation's history through our documents, photos, and records." and an image of a document with the words "We the People". The second column is "Veterans' Service Records" with a description "Request military records and learn about other services for yourself or a family member." and an image of a soldier. The third column is "Teachers' Resources" with a description "Engage students with lesson plans and other classroom materials." and an image of a classroom. The fourth column is "Our Locations" with a description "Plan a trip to a facility near you or learn about our national network of locations and services." and an image of a building. The fifth column is "Shop Online" with a description "Order books, gift items, photographic prints, and document reproductions online." and an image of a shop. At the bottom of the page is a "Recent News" section with a blue button and a text box containing the message "All National Archives research rooms will be closed on November 11 for Veterans Day."



# Impact of New Media



Funding may be focused on narrower types, depth of output.



# Three Cases



Contrasting scenarios – 3 governments:

- Russia
- China
- Egypt

# Three Cases: Russia



- EVIS content published before final gov't reports.
- Offer complementary data.
- *Re*classification.
- Russian legal landscape constantly changes.

# Three Cases: China



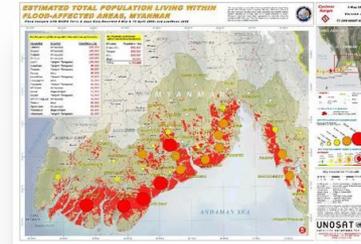
- Too much data! Too fast!
- (Yet still much that isn't/can't be published.)
- High degree of organization. (Not necessarily matched by same degree of veracity, consistency, or quality. But the volume is breathtaking!)

# Three Cases: Egypt



- Huge leap in foreign-friendly, English publishing of reports. Move to digital publishing.
- Regularity less than optimal. This has not improved with digital. (And huge impact in recent years' upheavals on access to all content types from Egypt.)
- Irreplaceable government records destroyed in recent upheavals.

# (USA)



- LandScan
- Big Data projects
- (Kissinger Archives)
- (FBIS Daily Report/WNC)
- (Snowden)
- (Gov't Shutdown)



# Synergies:

## Governments, Libraries, and Private-Sector Publishing



- Public Data – Commercial Procurement, Processing
- Homogeneity
  - of supply
  - of format
- Enhancement tools
  - (de facto enhancement through digitization, deep chronological accumulation, neutral-party archiving)

# Synergies:

## Governments, Libraries, and Private-Sector Publishing



- Dividends include:
  - Discovery
  - Dissemination
  - Increase usability and use
  - Normalization
  - Preservation

# For Consideration

'Free' content is wonderful and should be embraced.

- ✓ However, that does not necessarily mean *one* thing. And does not preclude a revenue model.
- ✓ Free does not equal 'efficient,' 'enhanced,' or persistent. Particularly in times of political or financial unrest.

Born-digital content can be wonderful.

- ✓ But we can't forgot about print. And we can and should create supply/demand synergies for making analog content digital.

# For Consideration

## Library/Publishing Best Practices Enhance Usability:

- ✓ IP access
- ✓ Ability to generate usage statistics;
- ✓ Ability to support multiple simultaneous users
- ✓ Privacy considerations
- ✓ Bibliographic tools
- ✓ Consistent tools across datasets
- ✓ Mitigating language-accessibility issues
- ✓ Preservation

