

### Council of State Governments Practicum

For the spring of 2015, I was the Library Science Graduate Fellow at the Council of State Governments. I was given the project of designing and implementing a database for the suggested state legislation (SSL) that is published every year. These are state laws passed that CSG feels are important for all states to be aware of.

The first phase of this project was to do an inventory of the physical and electronic SSL volumes to see what exactly CSG had, and how they differed from each other. The range of SSL volumes is from 1941-2015. I discovered that CSG only had 1988-2015 on PDF's, and the physical copies would have to be scanned in order to put them online. My boss, Jennifer Horne, and I decided that I would be responsible for Phase I of the project, setting up the database and getting the 1988-2015 volumes online.

In order to do my project, I went in planned out steps. The first step was to design what I wanted the database to look like. I had a meeting with Ms. Horne, the IT department head, and a co-worker who had previously designed a database for CSG. We designed a layout for how we wanted the database to look, and what metadata I would need to gather for the database.

I came up with a group of taxonomy keywords for the database, and each piece of SSL legislation had to be put into a group. I classified the SSL pieces of legislation by whether it was a bill or a statement, then by the volume year, the SSL year, the state it was passed in, the docket number, the bill title, the bill number, the summary, and the policy area. I then gave the IT

department all of the bills individually in PDF format. I did this for twenty-years of SSL legislation, from 2015-1988.

I worked with one of CSG's graphic designers in order to make an image for the front page, and with Ms. Horne for the text on the front page. I worked with the IT department throughout the project to determine what was possible for the database, and what could be left out. We did rough drafts of the database first to see what would work. We discussed fonts and colors for the database, and what would look best.

Ms. Horne and I also had to discuss information theory and how members would be searching for bills. I designed a search box with multiple categories for searching, including title, year, volume, keyword, category, and state.

I did have a minor bump when it came to PDF's from 2000-1988. Many of them were in old PDF format and had to be changed into a modern one for me to work with. Ms. Horne allowed me to use adobe software on her laptop to change the PDF's over.

Throughout my project I was in charge of how thorough the database could be, and getting it started was not an easy task. However I completed phase one of my project, and any SSL legislation that was in electronic form is now in the database.

CSG receives numerous phone calls from members asking for pieces of SSL legislation. Being able to have this database means that clients can search on their own without having to

wait days for a response. It will be extremely helpful for state governments to have access to the database during session when bills are being drafted and voted on.

My practicum gave me valuable tools to take with me into the professional world. Being able to help with designing a database was a challenge, but my classes from LIS in cataloging and technology courses helped aid me in my task. I am grateful for the experience, and now have a database for my professional portfolio to show potential employers.

Database Link

<http://apps.csg.org/SSL/>