

PUBLIC ACCESS TO GOVERNMENT PUBLICATIONS
IN THE ENGLISH-SPEAKING CARIBBEAN

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Cherry Ann Smart
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Department of Library and Information Studies
Faculty of Humanities and Education
University of the West Indies
Mona Campus

ABSTRACT

Public Access to Government Publications in the English-Speaking Caribbean

Cherry Ann Smart

In the English-Speaking Caribbean, access to government information has at times proven to be a daunting task. Yet government publications, which fall within the annals of grey literature, contain information for the holistic well-being of all citizens throughout their daily lives and for research. While progress has been made in the areas of indexing and bibliographic control, albeit with the assistance of legislation and policies, much of the responsibility for access is placed at the doorways of documentation centres, libraries, and information centres.

This study seeks to assess how Caribbean libraries facilitate access to government information, both print and electronic, to the public. A survey of academic and public libraries in six English-Speaking Caribbean territories was done over a three-month period. The research findings indicate that while access to the respective government collections was available, there is evidence that libraries need to do more to promote the use of government information in keeping with their purpose.

Keywords: Cherry Ann Smart, information professionals, libraries, English-Speaking Caribbean, government information, government publication, Barbados, Belize, Commonwealth of Dominica, Jamaica, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Trinidad and Tobago.