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Subject RE: EPA Libraries ...what will happen in  
2007?(Document link: William Glenn)

The dispersal process in most closing libraries has been underway for some time....a freeze would likely be futile at this point.

We are where we are. So perhaps the big question--whether the \$2M budget cut is restored or not--is this: will we continue to manage the EPA libraries as in the past with a heavy emphasis on building/maintaining physical collections? Or is it time to re-evaluate the need for large, often duplicative collections in light of new technologies/electronic products and a workforce that often works from the field and from home? With the building of the NEPIS electronic archive of Agency publications and the establishment of 3 repositories to serve as paper archives of Agency publications as well as backup science/technology

collections, individual libraries may need to maintain only core collections tailored to their specific users. Library staff could spend more time on reference/research-- which to me is the library core function.

As gut-wrenching as the budget cuts and collection dispersals have been, there may be a silver lining in forcing the EPA library network to examine priorities. If the \$2M is restored, is replacing dispersed collections the best use of the funds? Or would rehiring staff and/or purchasing additional electronic licenses be more effective? (The librarians have been asking for specific electronic products such as ASTM standards and state environmental regulations for years only to be told there is no money.)

To be effective, libraries must have knowledgeable staff with access to a mix of resources carefully selected to meet user needs. Could that be our goal?