Color the Stress Away!

You may have noticed a recent rise in the popularity of adult coloring books. What began as a form of art therapy and stress relief with coloring books such as Zentangle, adult coloring has spread to popular culture, with the recent publication of A Game of Thrones Coloring Book and even coloring pages celebrating Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg. Coloring pages have also spread to academic libraries, museums, and archives across the country as a vehicle for promoting collections, materials, and exhibits.

If you’re curious to see some of these collections, just search #ColorOurCollections on Twitter! In fact, the National Archives has even released a coloring book of historical patents that features inventions such as eye protectors for chickens from 1903 and a water-to-land equipment carrier in 1944, which led to the invention of the troop lander used during World War II.

Our own Alkek Library Learning Commons has offered coloring pages for the last two semesters during finals, among other activities geared toward giving students a much needed study break to refresh and recharge. Government Information participated for the first time during fall finals 2015, providing coloring and activity pages from NASA and Texas Parks & Wildlife, and we even created our own limited edition coloring book. Government agencies have released coloring pages and books in the past for educational and outreach purposes and continue to do so.

In total students used over 500 coloring pages in the library during finals week in fall 2015, double the number from the previous spring when Alkek first introduced coloring as part of finals week activities. Look for coloring pages on the second floor Learning Commons and on the fourth floor in Government Information during finals this spring!

by Megan Ballengee, Head Specialized Collections Assistant

Texas Online Research Data Repository

Are you a researcher interested in finding an online home for your data that is publicly accessible for sharing? Currently, all major US governmental granting agencies are requiring researchers who apply for and receive publicly funded grants to have a data management plan that makes their research data and any published articles publicly accessible. For data, this means an online research data repository.

For the past year, staff at Alkek Library have been working with other academic libraries throughout Texas to develop such a repository. The Texas Digital Library (TDL) consortium is coordinating this initiative, while Texas State staff have served on both development and implementation groups.

The repository has been created and is beginning an initial piloting stage. The pilot will occur between May and July. Following this, a state repository will be launched hopefully this fall for faculty researchers and upper level graduate students on both university and state levels.

The online Texas Research Data Repository will use Dataverse, an open source Harvard University application that is used globally by universities to share, preserve, cite, and analyze research data. Dataverse allows easy workflows for researchers to upload their research data. Discipline-specific metadata or descriptions may also be added to datasets for interoperability and sharing. Dataverse contains wider collaboration tools and options for public viewing and downloading of datasets. Notably, researchers will be able to cite their data via online data citations (DOI’s). This citation and direct access to research data allows verification and confirmation by other researchers. Sharing data also opens global collaboration among researchers. Hopefully, the larger state data repository will drive further research and possibilities for synthesis forward.

More information regarding the Texas Research Data Repository will be made available this fall.

by Ray Uzwyshyn, Director, Collections & Digital Services