

Remarks of Superintendent of Documents Judith C. Russell

Depository Library Conference Washington, DC October 18, 2004

I want to join Bill [Turri, Deputy Public Printer] and John [Phillips, Chair of the Depository Library Council] in welcoming you to Washington, DC, for this meeting of the Depository Library Council. It is a pleasure to be with you again and to continue our discussions on the future of the Government Printing Office (GPO) and the Federal Depository Library Program (FDLP).

I am delighted that so many of you have made the effort to be here. As of Friday, there were over 700 people registered for this meeting. That is an increase of over 200 registrants from last fall's meeting -- and the largest registration we have ever had for a depository meeting.

Many of you were with us last night for the reception honoring the Federal Depository Library of the Year. For those of you that were not there, I would like to announce that Southern Oregon University was chosen for this honor. I know you will join me in congratulating SOU for their outstanding efforts on behalf of the Federal Depository Library Program. I urge you to visit the SOU website [<http://www.sou.edu/>] to learn more about their programs and services. Please take time to speak to Deb Hollens from SOU, who is attending the conference, to offer her your congratulations. [The press release is available at <http://www.gpoaccess.gov/pr/media/2004/04news25.pdf>.]

I am also conscious that many of our colleagues were not able to be here with us. I urge you to take home all that you learn from this conference and share it with others in your institution and in your community. Encourage them to review the documents that we are discussing and submit their comments to GPO. It is important that we include the entire library community – not just the depository libraries – in these discussions and provide them with an opportunity to participate and make their views known.

Most of you were here yesterday afternoon for the presentation by the Public Printer and GPO's Chief Technology Officer on the future digital system for managing official Government content. I think that you can see from that presentation that GPO is poised to move forward to establish a world class system that will help us obtain, manage, deliver and preserve digital content. [The presentation is available at http://www.gpo.gov/news/2004/04_10_18_dlc_presentation.pdf.]

In keeping with that presentation, the overall theme of the meeting is planning for the digital future – and many of reports and initiatives that we will discuss over the next few days will help us set priorities and keep our forward momentum, even as we continue work on the design of the next generation system and the preparation of GPO's strategic plan, which will be presented to Congress by December 1st. I look forward to some lively

discussions with Council and expect to go back to the office with lots of good ideas that can be incorporated into the next versions of our planning documents.

EMBRACE THE CHURN

A few days ago, I was at a meeting with David Seaman of the Digital Library Federation. He spoke of the fact that we are still in the early stages of our efforts to create digital libraries, saying that we are still at the “bug-eyed creatures in the primordial swamp” stage, where “seismic events are routine and continuing.” He used a quotation from Clifford Stoll’s book, *Silicon Snake Oil*, that I would like to share with you because I feel it is equally appropriate to the state of change in the Federal Depository Library Program:

“Fear, nostalgia, dizziness: they tempt us to attitudes of rigidity and polemic – dangerous at a time better suited to exploration and to an exciting and empowering uncertainty.”

Let me repeat that – this is a time for “exploration and an exciting and empowering uncertainty.” I don’t think most of us think of uncertainty as empowering, but in fact, it creates an opportunity to reinvent ourselves and our environment, to establish new skill sets and new work habits.

David encouraged his audience to “embrace the churn” and to “take comfort in the enduring value of library and publishing core skills,” which are the things that we turn to over and over again to help us validate the decisions we are making and the paths we are taking. I encourage you to do the same -- to approach this meeting as an opportunity to explore the changes that are already occurring as a result of our increasingly digital environment and to “embrace the churn” of the “exciting and empowering uncertainty” of other changes that will surely come.

In 1996, when GPO published the report entitled “*Study to Identify Measures Necessary for a Successful Transition to a More Electronic Federal Depository Library Program*,” only about 5% of the titles that GPO distributed were electronic – mostly on floppy diskettes or CD-ROMs. At that time we “guesstimated” – that is word used frequently in my family) and that is really what it was, a guess, not a prediction, estimate or a goal – we “guesstimated” that the FDLP distribution would be 95% electronic by 2005.

Most of you see the monthly reports that we issue on distribution of depository titles. This week I received the analysis for FY 2004, which just ended on September 30th.

For fiscal year 2004, 11,932 online titles and 9,141 links to agency titles were added to *GPO Access*, for a total of 21,073 new online titles. During the same period, GPO distributed 11,275 tangible titles. The tangible titles consisted of 6,232 paper titles, 3,613 microfiche titles, 252 CD-ROM/DVDs, and 1,178 USGS maps. Thus, the total number of titles added to the Federal Depository Library Program was 32,348 of which 65% were made available online.

Let me also note that these additions bring the total number of titles on *GPO Access* to 165,280 and the total number of titles linked from *GPO Access* to 110,690 for a grand total of 275,970 titles available through GPO Access as of September 2004. I think David would be pleased to hear these numbers. That is a decent sized digital library.

However, there is an interesting thing about the way these numbers have been compiled through the years. For the *Congressional Record*, *Federal Register*, *Code of Federal Regulations* and a number of other titles, GPO has the full text on line on *GPO Access* and also offers depository libraries the choice of paper or microfiche. Consequently, these titles are counted three times in our distribution statistics, once for each format. Since there are two tangible copies of each issue (title) and only one electronic copy, we are putting our thumb on the scale (so to speak) and weighting the numbers more heavily toward the tangible collection.

I asked the staff to compile an additional set of statistics, identifying the tangible items that are distributed for which there is no electronic counterpart. Our progress toward the 1996 “guesstimate” looks very different when analyzed this way.

Through August of FY 2004, the total number of online titles added was 18,958 (about 1,000 titles short of the 21,073 new online titles reported for the full fiscal year). The total number of tangible items distributed in the same 11 months for which there was no electronic distribution was only 3,117 (not even close to the 11,275 reported for the full fiscal year using the traditional method of reporting).

Through August, only 14% of the new tangible titles were available to the FDLP only in tangible form. The FDLP distribution is already 86% electronic. 95% by 2005 is looking amazingly accurate for a guess made 8 years ago.

What does this mean for the FDLP as a whole and for each of your libraries? It clearly means that we have been successful beyond our wildest dreams. We have vastly improved public access to U.S. government information. We can all be enormously proud of that accomplishment.

It also means that -- whether we like it or not -- whether we are experiencing “fear, nostalgia, dizziness” as a result of this rapid transformation or finding this a time of “exciting and empowering uncertainty” -- the ground has shifted and a seismic change has occurred. Every selective depository library could be an 86% selective without accepting a single tangible item. Every library in the country (and for that matter in the world) could be an 86% selective without becoming an officially designated Federal Depository Library.

We are no longer exclusive with respect to content entering the program. But we are exclusive with one particular and invaluable resource – the skills of each and everyone of you and of your colleagues, who are dedicated and professional documents librarians.

We need to continue our joint efforts to redefine the characteristics and roles of depository libraries and to identify the services that GPO should provide to depository

libraries in the future to ensure that invaluable resource remains vital. Participation in this conference is an important part of professional development through the educational sessions that are being offered and of planning for the future that will occur in the Council sessions.

As you can see, we have an agenda that is filled to overflowing. Your packets include the traditional "GPO Update" which provides some quick facts or status reports on some items of general interest. I want to mention a few other things here that are not covered in the update and will not be topics at any of the sessions.

DISASTER RECOVERY

Several years ago, in the wake of the September 11th attacks, GPO was provided with funds to develop a disaster recovery site to ensure our electronic data is protected and remains accessible. The original plan was for a backup/mirror site in Pueblo, Colorado. When GPO's CIO came on board last year, he quickly recognized that the Pueblo facility was not the best place for our disaster recovery operation, primarily due to the lack of local technical support and the investment necessary to replicate our existing hardware, software and data storage at that site, and he began an effort to identify alternatives.

The alternative has been identified and GPO is moving forward on the implementation of a disaster recovery plan. This will ensure that an offsite backup system will continue to offer all of GPO's Web services to users in event of an unforeseen system failure or catastrophe. It will also maintain an archival copy of GPO data for redundant, off-site backup. A statement of work for disaster recovery hosting services was sent to several companies offering such services back in September and a procurement has been completed for the EdgeSuite service from Akamai Technologies, Inc. Work on an expedited implementation will begin later this month, with the full capability scheduled to launch in February/March of 2005.

The Akamai disaster recovery service makes use of a globally distributed and highly scalable content caching and delivery network that is comprised of over 14,000 servers deployed in over 1,100 networks across more than 65 countries. The Akamai system identifies and deploys the most efficient routes for data throughout the Internet, based on the individual user needs and application and content demands. By pushing GPO's data to the edge of the Internet through Akamai's distributed, secure network, we will ensure the reliability and stability of the *GPO Access* services in the event of an internal system failure at GPO or an external catastrophe that prevents GPO from delivering its services directly to users.

Akamai is probably most familiar to you as the means by which GPO "akamaizes" high demand files to distribute the load and make sure that it is possible for many users to rapidly access a popular document, such as the 9/11 Commission report. GPO could not have handled over 1.2 million downloads in the first few weeks after the report was released without using the Akamai service. EdgeSuite is a different service from the same company.

NEW GPO ACCESS DATABASES

When GPO completed the survey to prioritize titles for digitization, the most requested title was the bound *Congressional Record*. It is one of three major publications produced by GPO that have never been made available as a *GPO Access* database – until now.

Most of the 1999 volumes of the bound *Record* have been converted from typesetting files to a WAIS database. The web interface and documentation have been completed, and the database functionality has been tested. The bound *Record* database will be demonstrated at the *GPO Access* open forum at 3:30 p.m. this afternoon and launched shortly after the conclusion of the conference. We will continue to update the database as additional volumes of the bound *Record* are published.

We are also working on a database for the *Statutes at Large*. The Office of the Federal Register (OFR) will finish proofreading the *Statutes at Large* of the first session of the 108th Congress shortly. Once that is done, and the files are corrected, it will take GPO a month or two to create the database, develop and test the web interface, and prepare the documentation. We estimate release of this database in December or January. As with the bound *Record*, we will continue to update the database as additional volumes of the *Statutes at Large* are published.

The third new database will be the *U.S. Reports*. It is in the queue behind the bound *Record* and the *Statutes at Large*, and we will report on a likely release date when we have more information.

DEPOSITORY SERVICES CONSULTANTS

As you know, GPO is transforming the depository inspection program into one of consultation, education, and training with GPO employees physically located in the field.

The depository services consultants will facilitate communication with GPO, assess depository operations in a consultative spirit, and serve as training assets in the field for depository libraries. Regional libraries are expected to be closely involved with the activities of any consultant placed in their region, although it is not a requirement that a regional library serve as the host institution.

On Friday I signed the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Library of Michigan that will let us place the first depository services consultant out into the community to provide training and work directly with local depository libraries. We have several other proposals in-house or promised, and we are eager to move forward to fill the positions that we have allocated for this purpose. We have prepared our FY 2005 budget based on the funding and staffing approved by the Senate Appropriations Committee. Under that scenario, we can hire 6 consultants this fiscal year. If the House appropriations provisions prevail in the conference, we will be able to hire 12 consultants this year.

These will be GPO employees, and their salaries, benefits and travel expenses will be paid by GPO, but we are hoping that each consultant will have a sponsoring depository that will provide office space and other support, as the Library of Michigan is doing.

The MOU with the Library of Michigan will be posted after the conference, along with other information on the plans for creating additional consultant positions. Although there may be variations depending on the circumstances and requirements of other hosting institutions, this MOU will serve as a template. You can share the MOU with your general counsel or others in your institutions who are reviewing hosting issues.

If you are interested in serving as a consultant or offering to host a consultant, or just need more information, please talk to Kevin [O'Toole, Director, Library and Customer Relations] or Larry [Blevins, Director of Education and Development] during the meeting or contact them after it is over.

GPO ACCESS 10TH ANNIVERSARY

As you know, the roots of the Federal Depository Library Program go back to 1813. GPO has been working to “Keep America Informed” since the program was transferred here in 1895. In 1993, GPO was authorized to begin online distribution of U.S. Government information and GPO Access was launched in June of 1994. So *GPO Access* has now passed the 10 year mark for “Keeping American Informed”.

Since its inception, users have retrieved more than 2 billion documents from *GPO Access*. Usage has increased from an average of 20,000 retrievals a month in 1994 to an average of 34 million a month in 2004. Users have also downloaded a total of 195 terabytes of information from *GPO Access*, which is equivalent to more than 98 billion typewritten pages.

COUNCIL AGENDA

Finally, let me remind you that Council has a very full plate at this meeting, focused on a variety of important policy issues and planning documents. There has already been an excellent session on the future digital system for managing official Government content. Later today there will be sessions on managing the FDLP electronic collection and the initiative to digitize the legacy collection of U.S. government documents.

Tomorrow morning we will begin with breakout sessions by library type to discuss two important topics, the priorities for digitization and incentives to remain in the FDLP, including an allowance for print on demand publications. Council will then discuss the Collection of Last Resort – which the regional documents librarians recommended renaming the National Collection of U.S. Government Publications. This would make its name parallel and complimentary to the National Bibliography of U.S. Government Publications, which the Council will also discuss.

On Wednesday, Council will listen to a panel presentation on issues related to version control of U.S. government publications, and then discuss this important issue. You may recall that Bruce identified three major technological challenges for GPO to address: authentication, preservation and version control. We have made significant progress on digital signatures as a means of authentication (which will be discussed more fully during the GPO Access open forum) and preservation. The sessions on Wednesday will help us focus on the challenges of version control.

CONCLUSION

We have an exciting meeting ahead of us. This meeting will help GPO prepare for the work of the coming year. We will expand our efforts to plan for -- and obtain materials from the community for -- the National Collection of U.S. Government Publications. GPO will work with you to begin the digitization of the legacy documents collection for both preservation and public access. We will begin cataloging of the retrospective (pre-1976) materials by conversion of our shelf list and other means, and we will pursue other initiatives to help you better manage the retrospective materials and make them more accessible to users in and outside of your libraries.

Simultaneously, we will continue working with you on an orderly, but accelerated, transition to a digital FDLP, which will continue to cause depository librarians to change from managers of collections into managers of electronic services, a trend in libraries that is not limited to government documents. This transformation will change the ways that GPO acquires, preserves and provides access to electronic files. It will also require GPO to offer different services to depository libraries, including increased training and other support. We are eager to learn about services that you would like to have from GPO in the future.

Finally, the impact of the transition to a digital FDLP is already substantial and will become more substantial with the passage of time. So we have an urgent need to plan for the future of the Federal Depository Library Program and of GPO in order to ensure public access to authentic government information, now and in the future. I have said it before -- and I will say it again now -- we must "get out of the box" and take a fresh look at the mission we share and determine the best means to accomplish it. This meeting is an opportunity to explore options and begin to shape the future. I am looking forward to our discussions.