

**Remarks of Superintendent of Documents Judith C. Russell  
Depository Library Council  
Washington, DC  
October 16, 2005**

**[Delivered by Ric Davis, Acting Director, Library Services and Content Management;  
Judy Russell was unavailable do to a family medical emergency.]**

**I want to join Barbie [Selby, Chair of the Depository Library Council] in welcoming you to Washington, for this meeting of the Depository Library Council and the Federal Depository Library Conference.**

**I am delighted that so many of you have made the effort to be here. As of Friday, there were over 550 people registered for this meeting, so we have an excellent turn out. I am, am always, 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.**

**We have arranged to web-cast the Wednesday morning session, when the Council meets with the Public Printer. It will not be a live web cast, but we have been assured by the contractor that it will be posted within two weeks of the meeting. The contractor will keep it online for 12 months, and then transfer it to GPO for permanent public access. In addition, there are a number of unofficial bloggers who will be reporting on many of the Council and Conference sessions. They will also help to ensure that others who cannot participate in person are informed about the meeting.**

**As usual, we have a lot of ground to cover in the few short days that we will be together here in Washington. I look forward to participating in some discussions with Council and some good exchanges with the audience, and I welcome the opportunity to listen to your dialog with the Council. I expect to go back to the office with lots of good ideas that GPO can incorporate into its strategic planning.**

## **COUNCIL VISION**

**As you know, this meeting will be a little different than other recent Council meetings. Shortly after the meeting in Albuquerque last April, the Council members expressed an interest in leading a discussion within the depository library community on the government information environment of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The Council members worked very hard to prepare an outline, and then a more complete vision statement and action plan, describing their vision of Federal depository libraries in this new environment<sup>1</sup> with the expectation that this would serve as a catalyst for the community. Most of this meeting will be devoted to your discussion of the new opportunities and challenges of this environment. The results of these discussions will be presented to Bruce [James, the Public Printer] and me on**

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<sup>1</sup> These documents can be found at [http://www.access.gpo.gov/su\\_docs/fdlp/council/index.html](http://www.access.gpo.gov/su_docs/fdlp/council/index.html).

Wednesday morning and are likely to become the basis for future Council sessions and other follow-on activities.

Before we begin that part of the program, I want to take a few minutes to update you on a few of the key initiatives and activities that have been underway at GPO during the past few months. You each received a copy of the Depository Library Council Meeting Update<sup>2</sup> in your registration packet, and I encourage you to read it when you have time. It provides far more information than my time, or your patience, permit us to cover in this session.

## **WEB DISCOVERY AND HARVESTING**

In Albuquerque, I reported that we had selected two vendors for the web discovery and harvesting contract and would be seeking JCP [Joint Committee on Printing, U.S. Congress] approval and then issuing the contracts. Late last week we were advised by the GPO procurement staff that too much time had elapsed between the submission of bids and execution of the contracts, and it was recommend that we repeat the bid process. Simultaneously, Mike Wash [GPO's Chief Technology Officer] advised me that progress in the work on the Future Digital System<sup>3</sup> would enable us to make minor adjustments to the Statement of Work and improve the efficacy of the project. As a result, we will be canceling the initial procurement and issuing new Request for Proposals (RFP) with a slightly modified Statement of Work (SOW) later this week. We expect a contract award within 60 days, so the project will probably begin in January.

## **AUTHENTICATION OF U. S. GOVERNMENT PUBLICATIONS**

In Albuquerque, I explained that GPO was about to select the design for the visible seal that would be used in conjunction with the digital signatures on authenticated electronic documents and also on print publications. That decision was made and the seal has been used in the sample documents that we posted to accompany the draft White Paper on authentication that was issued for public review and comment this summer.<sup>4</sup> It also appears in the briefing paper on authentication that you received in your registration packets.

The comment period on the draft authentication White Paper closed in mid-September, and we have recently posted the final version, which includes a summary of the comments that GPO received. I want to take a moment to acknowledge one specific comment, so we can avoid (as best we can) any linguistic confusion in the discussion of authentication during this meeting and as we move forward.

The authentication White Paper includes a key assumption that reads as follows:

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<sup>2</sup> The Update is available at [http://www.access.gpo.gov/su\\_docs/fdlp/pubs/proceedings/05fall/gpo\\_update\\_fall05.pdf](http://www.access.gpo.gov/su_docs/fdlp/pubs/proceedings/05fall/gpo_update_fall05.pdf).

<sup>3</sup> The web site for the Future Digital System is available at <http://www.gpo.gov/projects/fdsys.htm>.

<sup>4</sup> The web site for the authentication initiative is at <http://www.gpo.gov/projects/fdsys.htm>.

Documents residing on *GPO Access* are official, and retrospective authentication will be used to add integrity marks that reinforce this status.

This assumption is now accompanied by a footnote that says:

All *GPO Access* documents are official in the sense that they are published by the Federal Government, at Government expense, or as required by law. GPO recognizes that there are connotations of the term “Official”, especially in the legal community, that differ from this definition. GPO is currently working on language to address this discrepancy.

The response to comments at the end of the document provides this example:

The Administrative Committee of the Federal Register has stated that both the online and print versions of the *Code of Federal Regulations* and *Federal Register* are “Official,” [in quotation marks; with a capital O] while the Supreme Court and the Law Revision Counsel of the U.S. House of Representatives have stated that the online versions of Supreme Court Slip Opinions and the *U.S. Code*, respectively, are not “Official” for purposes of legal citation. Nevertheless, all of these online titles are official [with a small o] Federal Government information in the sense that term is used in this document. GPO is currently working on language to address this discrepancy.

For purposes of authentication and ingest of content into the Future Digital System (and into *GPO Access* and our current Electronic Collection, for that matter), GPO uses the word official [with a small o] as it is defined in the White Paper. When making a choice of formats for distribution of publications to depository libraries, especially law libraries, GPO takes into account this additional connotation of the word “Official” [with a capital O]. However, that use of the term “Official” [with a capital O] relates to the appropriate use of the document, not to its authenticity or its origin as an official, real, genuine (pick your favorite synonym) U.S. Government document. We will continue working on language to make this distinction clear to others, but in the meantime, we don’t want discussions on authentication of official documents to get bogged down in a discussion of whether these document can be cited according *The Bluebook*.<sup>5</sup>

## **NO-FEE PUBLIC ACCESS THROUGH THE FEDERAL DEPOSITORY LIBRARY PROGRAM**

There is another issue I would like to address this morning and that is the free (or more accurately, no fee) public access to *GPO Access* through the Federal Depository Library Program.

In September I posted a notice on GOVDOC-L in response to some expressed anxiety about GPO’s commitment to free public access. It said, in part:

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<sup>5</sup> *The Bluebook: A Uniform System of Citation* is the definitive source of rules for citation in legal documents and law journals. The official [with a small o] web site for *The Bluebook* is <http://www.legalbluebook.com/>.

**GPO's governing statutes, policies and practices for no-fee public access to U.S. government information through the FDLP are firmly in place and well documented. They will not change without significant public discussion and the approval (or direction) of our authorizing and appropriations committees.**

**GPO is strongly committed to permanent public access to government information and considers this one of its most important, if not the most important, roles and responsibilities now and for the future. The Strategic Vision and the various white papers and planning documents that GPO has issued over the past few years have been broadly disseminated and discussed. They reinforce this commitment and show how GPO is approaching a variety of issues, including the development of the Future Digital System as a flexible platform to support our information gathering, management, dissemination and preservation.**

**This did not seem sufficient to reassure some of you. So, I am going to try once more to make a clear, unequivocal statement about GPO's position. First, GPO's authority and funding to provide free public access are through the Federal Depository Library Program, so you will continue to see and hear statements from GPO about free public access through the FDLP. That does not mean that GPO expects to restrict free public access to depository libraries.**

**As most of you know, GPO is issuing an RFP seeking to establish a public-private partnership for the marketing and distribution of GPO sales titles on a revenue sharing basis. There is information on this procurement in the Update. The draft Statement of Objectives (SOO) should be released next week and will include the following statement:**

**GPO's commitment to provide the public with no-fee access to government information through the FDLP, including *GPO Access*, remains the same. GPO will continue to distribute tangible Government publications that fall within the scope of the FDLP for no-fee public access through its depository partners. Furthermore, GPO will not allow access to items available through *GPO Access* to be restricted or otherwise diminished. The public will continue to be able to print and download this information without restriction.**

**When I shared this statement with Council, I was asked to add to this a clear explanation of the scope of *GPO Access*, so we will be adding a footnote to the SOO that says:**

**As used in this document, *GPO Access* is an umbrella term for electronic Government information products that are in scope for the FDLP and made accessible by GPO including:**

- 1. Access files and databases available on *GPO Access* and other GPO or GPO contractual managed servers;**
- 2. Other remotely accessible products managed by either GPO or by other institutions with which GPO has established formal agreements; and**

3. **Remotely accessible electronic Government information products that GPO identifies, describes, and links to, but which remain under the control of the originating agencies.**

**This is a modified definition from the 1998 document "Managing the FDLP Electronic Collection".<sup>6</sup> This document needs revision, so we did not use item 1 as originally stated, but modified it to address the fact that we now have content on Akamai servers and the ILS and OPAC databases are on servers managed by contractors.**

**I hope this clear, unequivocal and provides sufficient reassurance to those who have been concerned about the future of free public access from GPO through the FDLP.**

**One final thought and then I will turn the microphone over to Mike Wash, so he can provide a status report on the Future Digital System.**

## **LOCAL STORAGE OF ELECTRONIC DOCUMENTS BY DEPOSITORY LIBRARIES**

**GPO currently makes its publicly accessible electronic files available to depository libraries through downloading from *GPO Access* databases and providing links to persistent URLs in its cataloging records. As reported in the Update, we are continuing the affirmative dissemination of electronic e-journals through the LOCKSS pilot project. We are also developing services as part of Phase II of the ILS that will enable us to push cataloging records and New Electronic Title notifications to depository libraries based on profiles that each library can establish. The plans for the legacy digitization project call for the creation of access derivatives that will be made available for downloading through *GPO Access* and its successor systems.**

**Obviously, more efficient means of bulk transfer of such files will be necessary for depository libraries that wish to obtain large quantities of electronic files from GPO for local storage. We will be using the results of the LOCKSS pilot project and information from other sources to develop a capability for more efficient bulk transfer as part of the Future Digital System. We will keep the community informed as we develop additional information about the options that GPO may pursue.**

## **CONCLUSION**

**This meeting is a wonderful opportunity to explore options together and begin to shape the future. The work Council has done to prepare for this meeting provides a wonderful starting point for our discussions. Thank you all for being here and thank you, in advance, for your active participation in the process.**

**Mike...**

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<sup>6</sup> The 1998 version of "Managing the FDLP Electronic Collection" is available at [http://www.access.gpo.gov/su\\_docs/fdlp/pubs/ecplan.html](http://www.access.gpo.gov/su_docs/fdlp/pubs/ecplan.html).