

Depository Library Conference

October 20, 2003

Welcome. I am delighted to have you here with us to continue the dialog on the future of the Federal Depository Library Program (FDLP) that we began at the Depository Library Council meeting in Reno in April.

Many things have happened in the six short months since we gathered in Reno. I want to share a few of them with you before we begin our discussions.

ACCELERATING TRANSITION TO AN ELECTRONIC PROGRAM

At the Reno meeting, Bruce James estimated that in 5 years, or less, distribution of publications to the Federal Depository Library Program (FDLP) will be 95% electronic. That may be conservative.

His estimate was based in part on GPO's projection that 60% the new documents added to the FDLP during the year that just ended would be electronic online titles, available through *GPO Access* or by links to electronic publications on agency or other websites.

In fact, preliminary numbers for fiscal year 2003 show that 68% of the new titles were electronic online titles.

Over 24,000 new electronic titles were added, bringing the total number of titles on GPO Access to over 150,000 and the total number of titles linked from GPO Access to over 100,000, so there are now over 250,000 titles in the FDLP electronic collection.

At the same time that print is declining, publishing agencies and GPO are moving to replace microfiche copies of publications for inclusion in the program with electronic copies. (Microfiche represented approximately 1/3 of tangible products distributed last year.)

We are planning to phase out GPO microfiche contracts as they come up for renewal. Increasingly we can find electronic counterparts for documents that GPO has traditionally converted to microfiche. Where we cannot find an electronic equivalent, GPO will digitize documents to create searchable electronic files for access and preservation.

The trend is clear and the speed of our transformation is accelerating.

SALES PROGRAM

At the same time, we have begun to address the reality of a GPO Sales Program with rapidly declining sales volume and revenue. In part as a result of increased access through the Internet, the overall volume of sales has dropped dramatically, from 24.3 million copies sold in FY 1993 to 4.4 million copies sold in FY 2002. Ten or 15 years ago we sold 35,000 subscriptions to the Federal Register; today we sell 2,500. At the same time, we are now downloading over 4 million Federal Register documents each month from GPO Access. Revenue has plummeted as a result of these changes, while costs have dropped less rapidly, resulting in losses that must be stopped.

This spring we made the painful decision to close all of the GPO bookstores, other than the main bookstore in Washington. It was not an easy decision, but it was the right decision. The walk-in traffic in the bookstores has dwindled to a trickle. The public has already embraced online ordering of publications, as shown by the enormous popularity of Amazon.com. We project that 85% of our sales orders will come through the online bookstore by 2005. We will continue to offer Federal Express and other means to deliver urgently needed publications to remote customers overnight, but we will no longer rely on bricks and mortar bookstores to provide service to our sales customers.

REORGANIZATION

We have also planned, and begun to implement, a reorganization of the GPO staff. GPO now has, for the first time, a Chief Information Officer and a Chief Human Capital Officer, as well as a new Chief Financial Officer. I also have a new title, Managing Director of Information Dissemination, in addition to the traditional and legally established title of Superintendent of Documents.

(My children have popular map for tourists that has the GPO building labeled as Superintendent of Documents. That is no doubt intended to help people find the bookstore, but they find it very amusing that I am on the map and proudly show it to every visitor that we take sightseeing!)

As you know, we have also begun to reorganize the Supt. of Documents staff to create an organization that organized by function, not by source of funding. This is reduce redundant operations and increase our efficiency and responsiveness. For example, we now create bibliographic records in the Sales Program and also in the Library Programs Service. In the new organization, we will create one bibliographic record and use it for multiple purposes.

We have posted the four senior positions in the new organization: the directors of program development (which will handle new initiatives like digital signatures until they are ready to be handed off to an operational area), program planning and coordination (which will plan for the FDLP, the national bibliography and for our cost recovery programs), library and customer relations (which will include or contact center,

marketing and training staff), and collections management (which will handle acquisitions, bibliographic services, and preservation, as well as storage and distribution). We hope to begin interviewing candidates next week and announce the appointments by mid-November (if not sooner).

We have nearly completed the job descriptions for the ten positions that report to these four directors and hope to post those shortly. Other positions will follow as quickly as we can get the position descriptions approved. We will post notices to a variety of list serves as the positions are opened and we hope that some of you will consider coming to GPO to help us with our transformation.

NEW INITIATIVES

I could spend hours talking with you about all of the initiatives that we are pursuing as we re-examine the mission of the Federal Depository Library Program and seek to ensure that there is a viable program for the next hundred years that acknowledges and utilizes new technologies to support democracy and inform our users. Since we don't have time for a monologue of that length, I will highlight a few that I think will be of particular interest. Others will no doubt come up over the course of the meeting.

INTEGRATED LIBRARY SYSTEM

I know that many of you are interested in our progress on acquisition of the Integrated Library System (ILS). This project was started about two years ago, focused on meeting the needs of the FDLP and the Cataloging and Indexing Program, both managed by the Library Programs Service. I asked the ILS team to reexamine our requirements to make sure the ILS could meet the bibliographic requirements of the Sales Program and also potentially serve the metadata requirements of the rest of GPO, since the plant and printing procurement now expect to keep electronic print files for customer agencies and will need metadata to manage those files.

During this time, the new CIO organization was established. As a major software and hardware investment, the ILS is now a joint initiative with the CIO, who will acquire and operate the system on our behalf. We have now made our recommendation to the CIO and are waiting for him to initiate the procurement.

UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA PILOT PROJECT

The University of Arizona has completed the first full year of its pilot project to become the first all electronic depository library program. They will present the details of their project at 2:00 p.m. this afternoon, but I wanted to commend them on the success of the project and to let you know that GPO and the University of Arizona are continuing with the effort to systematically identify electronic equivalents of tangible items in the university's profile. For the first time ever, GPO has hired two graduate students as "co-op students" who will work part time on this project while they earn their MLS degrees at

the University of Arizona. They are here with us today and I would like them to stand so you can see who they are. We are delighted that they are helping with this important project.

CONSULTANTS

We are also moving forward with our plans to hire “consultants” to work out in the community — to provide training and other services to depository libraries in a specific geographic area. We have three preliminary proposals, which we hope to make final shortly. They are in Michigan, Minnesota and one shared position, based in South Carolina, but serving North Carolina and Georgia as well. We have allocated 12 positions in the new organization for “consultants” and hope to fill them over the course of the year as additional proposals come in and are accepted. I encourage you to talk to others in your geographic area and to GPO staff if you are interested in having one of these positions established in your area. In keeping with my theme of “one size does not fit all,” we are encouraging proposals from the community so that these positions can be tailored to the needs of the geographic area that they will serve.

LEGACY COLLECTIONS

One of the most encouraging things that has happened since April is the progress that has been made on the issue of managing our legacy collections. There are three related initiatives that I would like to share with you.

One is the decision by GPO to establish a collection of last resort. We spent some time at the regional librarians meeting this weekend discussing how this collection should be utilized, but at a minimum this will become, overtime, a comprehensive collection of tangible and electronic titles that will backstop the regional collections.

The second is a movement toward shared repositories or shared housing agreements that would allow two or more libraries to eliminate some of the redundancy between or among their collections. These initiatives, which are still in the early stages, will help us move toward a smaller number of comprehensive sets that can be more readily preserved. We are not going to preserve 1280 sets of government documents. We are not going to preserve 53 sets. But we do need to decide as a community how many sets of tangible documents should be preserved and take the necessary steps to establish consolidated collections that are as comprehensive as possible, so we can actively preserve the materials.

Third, and essential to the other two, is the decision by the Association of Research Libraries to collaborate with GPO, and ultimately with the entire library community, on a national digitization plan, so that we can coordinate our efforts to digitize a complete legacy collection of U.S. government documents and make sure that the documents are available, in the public domain, for permanent public access. Libraries would digitize materials, based on established priorities or local needs. GPO’s roles would be to

coordinate the effort, assist in the establishment and coordination of standards, serve as a trusted repository for preservation and access (in addition to any other places that the materials might be held), certify and authenticate the electronic files, and ensure that there is appropriate cataloging and metadata for the items in the collection.

GPO will seek funding in FY 2005 to perform OCR on digitized files and output XML tagged data that can be used for access and for print-on-demand. Thus, whatever OCR scanning is done by individual libraries, we can ensure that the preservation and access collection maintained by GPO is consistently tagged, making it a true collection, not just a random assortment of electronic files.

This is an extremely shorthand description of a complex set of actions which together will help us preserve a reasonable number of copies of the tangible artifacts as well as to create and maintain a comprehensive, digital, public domain collection for preservation and access. The availability of these tangible and electronic collections will allow all depository libraries, including regional libraries, to manage their collections more effectively, substituting electronic copies for tangible copies — if they wish to do so.

BREAKOUT GROUPS

Later this morning you will meet in breakout groups by library size and type. I urge you to use the breakout sessions for a couple of specific purposes — as well as for discussion of any other topics that may be of interest to you.

First, we have just completed a survey to determine if there are additional “essential” titles that should be made available in print, not for the whole community, but for specific sizes or types of libraries. The survey results will be shared with you during the breakout session. We have already agreed to make the Supreme Court slip opinions available to law libraries in paper and are seeking to determine if there are other titles that should also be made available on a similar basis.

This is part of our effort to make the program more responsive to the needs of specific needs of various types of libraries. How many of you were aware of the survey? How many of you recommended titles? The breakout sessions are your opportunity to participate if you have not done so already and to discuss your recommendations with other libraries if you have already submitted some.

Second, as I already noted, we will shortly begin an organized and systematic effort to digitize our legacy collections. You need to consider the sets of material that have the highest priority for libraries of your size and type. Once we have input from a variety of sources, we can compare and consolidate the lists. Then we can seek partners for the initial digitization projects.

Finally, I ask you to consider the services that GPO can offer to libraries of your size and type that have the greatest value to you – the “carrots” that we need to offer to you to

make it desirable to remain in the program. Along with that I ask you to look at the “barnacles” that we should remove to make it easier to be a depository library. Which regulations or procedures are most cumbersome or burdensome? If you could change one thing, what would you change? Recognizing that we have to live within the law and within our resources, we will try to address the services that you need most and to reduce the burdens that are heaviest.

CONCLUSION

Before I hand the microphone to TC, let me conclude by saying GPO is not going to redesign the Federal Depository Library Program here in Washington and impose a new structure on the depository library community. GPO administers the program on behalf of the participating libraries and the public we jointly serve. That community – with help from each of you – must drive the decisions about what the program should be in the future. We cannot do it without you – and, even if we could, we do not want to, or intend to, do it without you.

To do this well, we must be like the two-headed Roman god Janus. We must look both forward and backwards. 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. We should not limit ourselves to incremental changes to the current system, but seek a new vision, which respects the foundation of the current program, but is not constrained by it, and that takes optimum advantage of the enormous volume electronic resources that are, and will become, available.

At the same time, we must find creative ways to reduce the burdens of the large historical collections on our regional depository libraries and other large selective libraries, without losing the value of having a distributed system that protects these assets and ensures permanent public access. One of the strengths of the current system is that no single natural or man-made disaster can wipe out the collective record of our democracy because it is housed in hundreds of libraries throughout the nation.

GPO will work with the library community to encourage and facilitate setting up shared facilities into which collections can be de-duplicated. GPO will also work with you on expanded digitization, preservation, cataloging, and other services to better manage the retrospective materials and make them more accessible to users in and outside of your libraries.

We already have many partnerships with depository libraries to facilitate public access to government information. The CyberCemetery at North Texas and DOSFAM, the State Dept. collection at the University of Illinois, Chicago, are two outstanding examples of the contributions that individual depository libraries continue to make to our common mission. Our new initiatives will create many new opportunities for libraries both large and small to participate and to work with GPO improve public access to government information.

I also want to encourage each of you to work with one another and with GPO to determine the mix of services that GPO must offer in the future to make it worthwhile for libraries to participate in the FDLP. We need your participation. We need the your best ideas. We need your constructive criticism of the current program.

It is particularly important to identify new services that can be offered exclusively to depository libraries, so there are some substantial, tangible benefits to participation when all or virtually all of the material can be obtained free from the Internet without the obligations of being a depository library.

Library directors are challenged daily to accomplish more with fewer resources. We must make sure that the value of the FDLP is worth what it cost to participate and that it provides services that are of substantial value to library directors, as well as to depository staff and patrons.

Bruce frequently says that he did not come to Washington to run a printing plant. He came to address the challenges of public access to government information. He sees GPO's primary mission as information management and dissemination, with printing as one way to accomplish that mission, but by no means the only way. I am truly delighted to be back at GPO, working with him and the management team that he has assembled – and with you – on these important issues.

Together we can redefine the FDLP and strengthen it so that it continues to serve the American people for the next 100 years as well as it has for nearly 200 years. I look forward to working with you to accomplish that.

With that, I will turn the meeting over to TC. After he speaks, you will have the opportunity to ask questions of both of us and other GPO staff.