

Key Terms and Definitions

Definitions of terms as used in this report are defined as follows:

* "Accessibility" is the degree to which the public is able to retrieve or obtain Government information products, either through the Federal Depository Library Program (FDLP) or directly through an electronic information service established and maintained by a Government agency, or its authorized agent or other delivery channels, in a useful format or medium and in a time frame whereby the information has utility. In the context of the FDLP, accessibility includes the degree to which Government information is accurately identified and described bibliographically, the information's availability is made known to the public, and technological, social, economic, political and physical barriers to gaining access are minimized. In the context of the Sales Program, accessibility includes the ability of the public to purchase Government information products available for sale through GPO.

* "Authentication" is the certification of a Government information product attesting to its legitimate official status; ensuring the authenticity of a product involves product design, planning and policy development, as well as technical considerations.

* "Availability" is the degree to which information is physically or electronically obtainable through the intentional or unintentional provision of Government information products to the public. In the context of the Federal Depository Library Program, availability includes the measures taken by Government agencies and the FDLP to include Government information products in the program.

* "Collection Plan" or "Collection Management Plan" refers to the policies, procedures, and systems developed to manage and ensure permanent public access initially to remotely accessible electronic Government information products maintained in the Collection.

* "Depository library" refers to a library, designated under the provisions of 44 U.S.C. Chapter 19, that maintains tangible Government information products for use by the general public, offers professional assistance in locating and using Government information, and provides local capability for the general public to access Government electronic information services.

* "Digital image" refers to an electronic version of a bit-mapped image of a document or other information format, which allows text to be searched at the character level; "digitize" means the process and accompanying technologies required to effect the conversion from bit-mapped (e.g. a fax) to searchable format.

* "Dissemination" is the act of distributing Government information products to depository libraries, or the act of making Government information products available to program libraries, or by utilizing a Government electronic information service, to make

such products accessible by the public.

* "Electronic Government information" is Government information that is organized, stored and disseminated utilizing electronic or optical mediums as opposed to paper-based or microfiche-based mediums.

* "Federal Depository Library Program (FDLP) electronic collection," or "Collection," refers to the set of remotely accessed electronic Government information products GPO holds in storage for permanent public access through the FDLP, or are held by libraries and other institutions operating in partnership with the FDLP.

* "FDLP partner" refers to a depository library or other institution that stores and maintains for permanent access segments of the Collection.

* "Federal Depository Library Program" is a nationwide, geographically-dispersed system, established under the provisions of 44 U.S.C. Chapter 19 and administered by the Superintendent of Documents, consisting of libraries acting in partnership with the United States Government for the purpose of providing the general public with free local access to Federal Government information.

* "Format," in general, refers to the manner in which data, documents, or literature are organized, structured, named and described, classified, and arranged, as, for example: full narrative text in English language sentences in the form of books or articles; abstracts of text used in reviews and summaries; indexes and catalogs; maps; photographs; drawings; sound recordings; video tapes; bibliographies; statistical and other numeric kinds of tabulations; a screen format is the layout of fields on the screen; a report format is the layout of the printed page including print columns and page headers and footers; a record format is the layout of fields within a record; a file or database format is the layout of fields and records within a data file, layout codes within a word processing document or display lists (vector) or bit maps (raster) within a graphics file; sometimes also used to refer to the way digital data is encoded or inscribed; archivists used the terms "genre" or "form of material" to cover what is meant by format in this context.

* "Government electronic information service" is the system or method by which a component of the Government, or its authorized agent, disseminates Government information products to the public such as via a network or use of CD-ROMS.

* "Government information" is a work of the United States Government, regardless of form or format, which is created or compiled by an officer or employee of the United States Government as part of that person's official duties, or at Government expense, or as required by law, except that which is required for official use only, is for strictly operational or administrative purposes having no public interest or educational value, or is classified for reasons of national security.

* "Government Information Locator System (GILS)" is a metadata tool for finding Government information products.

* "Government information product" is a Government publication or other work of the United States Government conveyed in a tangible physical medium such as a book or CD-ROM, or disseminated through an electronic Government information service established and maintained by a Government agency or its authorized agent.

* "GPO Access storage" refers to GPO's capacity to maintain electronic information products through their life cycles, from initial release as electronic Government information products through preservation for permanent access.

* "Information intermediary" refers to any person, institution or mechanism which adds value to information products so that they are more valuable and useful to information users. Intermediaries perform their work at the middle information life cycle stages-- that is, between information creation and information disposition or destruction and Federal libraries and information centers are examples of intermediaries.

* "Information life cycle" refers to the various stages through which information passes, including creation, production or collection, review and editing, organization and reorganization, packaging, storage, search and retrieval, communication, and re-communication, dissemination, disposition, archiving, and destruction.

* "Media" is a collective term referring to the means used to publish, communicate, disseminate, and distribute information, regardless of format, such as radio, television, magazines, office or home PCs, scholarly journals, videotape; not used in this document as the plural of "medium"; multi-media refers to the combination and use of several of these.

* "Medium" is the physical, chemical or biological substrate used to create, organize, store, search for, retrieve, disseminate or permanently archive data, documents or literature, including, for example, paper, microforms, fiber optic cables, photographic film, CD-ROM, floppy diskettes, magnetic storage devices, sound recordings, videotape.

* "Mediums" is the plural of medium; the word "media" is reserved to that meaning defined in this list of definitions.

* "Migration" is the transfer of an information product from one hardware type, software package, system, network, format or medium to another; for example, the transfer of an information product from a pre-electronic medium such as paper or microform to an electronic medium such as CD-ROM.

* "Permanent public access" is the indefinite, continuing accessibility of Government information products by the public including the policies, programs, formats, mediums and standards used therefore. Although data such as weather and tide information,

lists of government contractors, editions of annual reports, and statistical series is continuously updated with more current information provision must be made for retaining (making permanently accessible) the replaced information.

* "Preservation" refers to the activities associated with maintaining information products for use, either in their original form or in some other usable way. Preservation includes substitution of the original product by a conversion process, wherein the intellectual content of the original is retained.

* "Refreshing" is a technical term meaning the manner in which information mediums and technologies are periodically re-assessed and upgraded to ensure that they are not becoming obsolete, thereby risking the loss of information and the compromising of permanent public access policies; to a lesser extent the term is sometimes applied to formats and standards (not just mediums) in danger of becoming obsolete and need to be replaced or upgraded.

* "Remote site" refers to the GPO storage facility in Kentucky, as opposed to storage at GPO's Central Office, to differentiate the physical site from functional issues relevant to storage.

* "Retrieval" represents a file being transferred from one of the GPO Access databases onto a local machine, as opposed to "hit" statistics, which represent each mouse click or change of Web page.

* "Simple Wide Area Information System (SWAIS)" refers to user's ability to search ASCII text files through an Internet Telnet session or by using a modem to dial-in directly.

* "Standard" is an agreed-upon authoritative convention, whether formal or informal, whether official or unofficial, whether de facto or de jure, by which information products are created, produced, formatted, published, stored, communicated and moved through the stages of information life cycles. Standards (and the more informal concept and term "Guidelines") minimize incompatibility and interoperability problems when an information sender tries to move data, documents or literature into and out of several different formats and mediums to a receiver. Standards may be set by formal national or international standard-setting bodies, or by agencies, or by groups of users informally by common consent.

* "Storage" or "Storage facility" refers to the function associated with saving electronic information products on physical media, including magnetic, optical, or other alternative technologies.

* "Type of Data" refers to the general nature of the information content of a government information product, how it is arranged, structured and presented for ease of handling in a medium; for example, textual data, graphical data, spatial data, numerical data, and so on.

* "Wide Area Information Server (WAIS)" refers to a distributed information service which offers simple natural language input, indexed searching for fast retrieval, and a "relevance feedback" mechanism which allows the results of initial searches to influence future searches.