

E-COMPETENCIES for Federal Depository Libraries & Librarians

<http://www.library.ucsb.edu/ala/gitco/ecomps.html>

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Introduction

These "E-competencies" represent a GODORT effort to describe the technical skills and knowledge that depository librarians need to possess in order to provide effective service with electronic products.

This document is a work in progress. In addition to simply listing components, we will, when appropriate, provide materials to aid the depository librarian in acquiring the skills described herein.

These documents outline recommended competencies. Each depository is different, however, and must be aware of what it requires to serve the best interests of its patrons. Please send comments, suggestions, additions, etc., to Eric Forte, GITCO Chair.

Preliminaries

In most institutions, the ability to use many of the competencies listed here are influenced by forces outside the depository itself. For instance, administrative decisions, whether policy or budget, can determine how well a depository delivers electronic services. Likewise, the policies, procedures, and personnel of a library's systems or IT department can have a great effect on e-competencies.

The effective depository librarian will have knowledge of the local personnel and policies related to information technology. They should cultivate positive relationships with administration and systems staff, in order to insure excellent service for electronic government information. They should have knowledge of, and input into, technology-related policies affecting the depository. When necessary, they should seek out training opportunities. They should also take advantage of expertise throughout the government documents community to aid in meeting the e-competencies noted here. One can ask one's regional, nearby depositories, or the community at large via GOVDOC-L.

In summary, depository libraries should be proactive in acquiring e-competencies and providing services to electronic materials.

Tier I: Must Skills, or E-Competencies that every Depository Librarian should have.

1. Computers 101
2. An understanding of GPO's Minimum Technical Guidelines.
3. Competency with Windows operating system.
4. Competency with web browsers and file formats.
5. Competency with e-mail.
6. Competency with electronic catalogs.
7. Competency with web URLs.
8. Awareness of user ability and experience.

1. Computers 101: Have a *basic* knowledge of the following terms:

hardware
software
the 'Web'
CPU
monitor
peripherals (drives: 3.5 floppy, legacy 5.25 floppy, CD-ROM, DVD, Zip)
keyboard
mouse or other mouse-like device
printer
electrical surge protection

2. An understanding of the rationale behind (and function of) GPO's Minimum Technical Guidelines and an ability to communicate this to one's local Systems Office or administration (have a basic knowledge of these terms from the latest Minimum Technical Guidelines Public Access Workstations in Federal Depository Libraries):

Processor	Keyboard and Pointing Device
Memory (RAM)	Internet Connectivity
Ports	Operating System
I/O bus	Communications
Video	Software
Audio	Web Browser
Hard Disk Drive	Database
Removable/External Storage	Spreadsheet
DVD Drive	Word Processor
Monitor	Mapping Software
Printer	.pdf file viewer

3. Competency with Windows operating system

Understanding of Windows directory structures, file formats, and basic operations such as finding programs, printing, rebooting a computer, etc.

4. Competency with web browsers and common web file formats

Ability to navigate web pages; competency with Adobe Acrobat software (files in .pdf format, such as tax forms) and TIFF (tagged image file format); competency in recognizing and dealing with other common file types, including spreadsheet/excel, images (.gif, .jpg, .tif), etc. Awareness of the various ways in which documents can be placed on the web and what the differences will mean (e.g., .pdf will take longer to load).

5. Competency with e-mail

Ability to send, receive, forward mail and attachments.

6. Competency with electronic catalogs

Ability to use the Catalog of United States Government Publications and the databases of GPO Access; and other catalogs, public or private, which may be helpful for government information, such as the Library of Congress Catalog, OCLC Worldcat, or commercially enhanced products featuring GPO Cataloging.

7. Competency with web URLs

Ability to readily find an agency home page. Competency with web search engine strategies, especially those relating to Government information (ability to search Firstgov, Google and Google Uncle Sam, Searchgov, etc.)

8. Awareness of user ability and experience

Many off-campus users have limited access to or experience with computer resources. Depository library professionals must be prepared to assist users with navigation and software troubleshooting by phone, e-mail, or personal contact.

Tier II: Skills which at least one staff member/librarian at Depository Library must have.

1. Ability to use above knowledge to install and troubleshoot software

Includes ability to recognize file formats common in software installation (find a setup or install executable file; find and open a readme file). Competency with utilities such as FTP and file decompression/compression utilities (ability to unzip files)

2. Basic skills with word processing and spreadsheet software

Ability to format, print, and download documents in these formats.

3. DOS commands, to support a number of older (CD and floppy) electronic products

Tier III: Skills that are very helpful to have, especially in a depository library serving clientele performing research.

1. Competency with database software, such as MS Access, FilemakerPro, etc.

Much government data is compatible with (and desirable to use in) a database format. In addition, managing item selections, etc., can greatly be aided by an ability to use databases.

2. Basic UNIX commands

3. Competency with statistical software, such as SPSS and/or SAS

4. Ability to do all of the pc skills above with Mac, too

5. Web authoring skills:

Html, knowledge of web authoring software products, knowledge of web authoring principles.

6. Competency with GIS applications and data

Other GODORT projects related to e-competencies

See **GODORT-Created Resources** (<http://sunsite.berkeley.edu/GODORT/created.html>), which include:

Cataloging Committee

GPO PURL Alert

Toolbox for Processing and Cataloging Federal Government Documents

Education Committee

GODORT Handout Exchange

Government Information and Depository Management Clearinghouse

Federal Documents Task Force

Frequently Used Sites Related to U.S. Federal Government Information

Government Information Technology Committee

CD-ROM Doc: GODORT CD-ROM Documentation Service

Government Information Web Page Template

How to Find Information about Government CD-ROM Products

This document is a work in progress. Please send comments, suggestions, additions, etc., to Eric Forte, GITCO Chair. <<mailto:forte@library.ucsb.edu>>

See also the original e-competencies document, discussed at the Fall 2001 FDLP Conference.

<http://sunsite.berkeley.edu/GODORT/GODORT_ecompt.rtf>