

This is What the Future Looks Like

Remarks by Gil Baldwin
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Depository Library Council Meeting
Mobile, AL
April 22, 2002

Good morning! It's a pleasure to see you here today, and especially so many new faces in a Council meeting. Your presence demonstrates the reason we hold these meetings around the country--so depository librarians can come who might be unable to attend a distant meeting.

Many of you know I like to have a theme for my presentation; I feel it establishes a foundation for what you will hear. Today my topic is "This what the future looks like," but since I was an undergraduate history major, we are going to start with a bit of program history.

Seven years ago (not fourscore and seven, just plain old seven), GPO was required by the Legislative Branch Appropriations Act for Fiscal Year 1996 to perform a study. The outcome of that broadly participatory effort was our report to the Congress, the "Study To Identify Measures Necessary For A Successful Transition To A More Electronic Federal Depository Library Program."

Embedded in this tome was a timetable for the transition. The input we had received from publishing agencies and depository libraries indicated a five to seven year transition would be realistic since it would allow GPO to migrate to the use of electronic information at the same pace as publishing agencies that produce it. More importantly, the five to seven year plan gave depository libraries and the public a reasonable time to adapt. Consequently, the report proposed, and Congress accepted, a transition period extending through FY 2001.

By that reckoning we must be done now, so just as Washington Redskins' Hall of Fame football coach George Allen once said, "the future is now." So the FDLP of the future looks like this -- a work in progress and all about access.

It's about access to online information, provided through resource discovery, bibliographic control, and cataloging. It's about permanent public access provided through an interlocking set of procedures and partnerships. It's about access to libraries and their public computer workstations. And most recently it's been about the tension between unfettered access to information and the need to secure some information that could be disastrous in the wrong hands.

But sometimes it's not all about us. The FDLP is also affected by the larger environment. In recent months the most obvious example is the withdrawal of some previously public information in the

aftermath of the September 11 attacks. And while the information security issue has received a great deal of publicity, it is by no means the only external factor operating on the program. In recent months we have heard that the funding pinch at the state level is hurting libraries, and this has become a contributing factor to libraries leaving the program.

The FDLP is also a work in progress. We all know the transition to a more electronic program isn't finished, and that there is still more work to be done to improve our cataloging efforts, to protect free public access, and to enhance the infrastructure that provides reliable and secure permanent access.

Biennial Survey Highlights

The 2001 Biennial Survey of Depository Libraries was conducted beginning last November. As required by law, the Biennial Survey gathers data every 2 years to report on conditions in the depository libraries. Your responses supplement the more in-depth site visits and self-studies that are performed every 6 or 7 years.

As we have done for several years, the complete Biennial Survey data set will be posted on the Federal Bulletin Board. But in the meantime, I wanted to mention some Survey highlights from the 1294 responses tallied so far. By the way, that's a pretty good response rate, much better than prior years.

We always ask "Do you want to remain in the Federal Depository Library Program?" This time, 1,286 said "yes" and only 6 said "no." We hope this is an accurate reflection of intent to stay in the Program, because as you may know, a very significant number of libraries have already given up depository status, and we hate to lose any more. Unfortunately, four of the six have already advised us that they are dropping depository status, and recently two more libraries relinquished status out of the blue.

Many of our questions relate to issues about access. For example, 903 libraries have a written access policy for the depository collection. Developing such policies helps articulate the value of the depository library collection to your community, and while a 70% positive response is pretty good, it could be better. We encourage you to develop a written access policy if you do not have one.

Furthermore, access policies need to reflect the electronic environment. Just under half (642 of 1,294) of the respondents report having a written policy regarding public services for Government information in electronic formats. There is no question that developing such policies is hard work, and we commend those libraries that have a policy for electronic FDLP services in place.

This time we asked specifically if the library provides access to the World Wide Web, and 1,282 said they did. The ubiquitous level of service is very encouraging, and demonstrates the overall ability of depository libraries to function in the electronic arena. Overall, depository libraries are playing a role in bridging the digital divide. As for the 12 libraries that do not offer the public access to the Internet, you are missing out on the bulk of what is in today's FDLP.

We also asked if your library uses filtering or blocking software on the public access workstations, and

181 replied yes. We only hope that, consistent with the FDLP Internet Use Policy Guidelines [http://www.access.gpo.gov/su_docs/fdlp/mgt/iupolicy.html] policy, you can disable the filtering if a user searching FDLP information so requests.

Integrated Library System

In the fiscal year 2002 appropriation, GPO received general approval from Congress for systems modernization. LPS intends to acquire a commercial off-the-shelf Integrated Library System (ILS) within the next year. We want to bring our own operation up to the level of performance that nearly all of you now enjoy. All but 10 depositories use some type of ILS, with the most frequently mentioned being Innovative Interfaces Millennium (360), Endeavor's Voyager (167), Sirsi (127), and the ever-popular "other" (140).

LPS operations will change to make use of the capabilities of a new system. In the environment of managing the FDLP Electronic Collection, our goal is make our services and operations as standard brands library-like as possible. It is especially likely that the way in which we distribute the dwindling number of physical products in the program will have to change. We are still maintaining the distribution infrastructure from the days when we shipped six times as many physical products.

LPS expects to use the ILS to support cataloging, classification, acquisitions, serial check-in, library directory maintenance, and to provide distribution information to the distribution system. We anticipate that public access to the Federal Government will be improved through use of a standard Web interface catalog. In addition, much of the product status information you now ask us for should be accessible to you directly through the system.

To date, a working group of LPS staff has:

- Looked at current systems in use by LPS and their functions.
- Developed a statement of work to obtain the services of a library automation consultant. The consultant will assist us with defining our user requirements and with developing the criteria for selecting between competing systems.
- Begun to define system requirements.
- Begun to define data migration strategies.
- Begun investigating existing ILS offerings.
- Begun investigating training opportunities to prepare for an ILS.
- Queried other libraries that have obtained and implemented an ILS.

- Received input from the depository library community regarding interface requirements and service needs.
- Begun to work with Materials Management Service, Network Systems, the Office of Information Resources Management, and other GPO personnel.
- Developed material to request project approval from the Joint Committee on Printing. And I'm happy to say that on Friday [April 19, 2002] that approval was granted.

LPS Staffing Changes

Last fall I briefed Council on the unprecedented personnel turnover in LPS, both among the managers and operational staff. We have been working intensively to fill these vacancies and I am now able to report some progress.

James Mauldin is now the Chief of the Depository Distribution Division, and I'm very glad to have him there. James is also very savvy technically, and he is still acting as our network administrator. James is backed up by LPS veterans Cornelius Greene, Joe Powell, and James Brevard, all of whom have begun new positions this year.

Within a one-year span, LPS has lost four people to the Library of Congress, two to the Defense Technical Information Center, and one each to the Internal Revenue Service and the National Library of Education. These moves don't count retirements and other causes. The impact of this out-migration has been particularly marked among the library inspectors, Cataloging Branch staff, and in the Depository Distribution Division.

We've recently filled our two vacant Cataloging Section Chief positions, by selecting Michael Levinson and Jennifer Davis. Both Mike and Jennifer have previous experience as serials catalogers in LPS, and are very savvy about processing electronic products.

Since the last Council meeting we have brought one cataloger on board, and extended offers to two more. At this moment, we have 14 catalogers on board, and we still have six cataloging positions yet to fill. We've also hired one library inspector, for a total of four, and three more program analysts. Most of these are backfilling behind people who left, and LPS staffing remains significantly below our budgeted level. We are also in the process of recruiting for a new librarian position that will augment Betty Jones' operation in the Depository Administration Branch. As always, you can keep track of LPS staff moves by using the "Contacts" page on the FDLP Desktop <www.access.gpo.gov/su_docs/fdlp/tools/contacts.html>.

Electronic Documents Working Group

We have been working successfully with the "Electronic Documents Working Group." Volunteer members of the depository library and law library communities are assisting GPO in its efforts to bring

fugitive online documents into the FDLP Electronic Collection (FDLP/EC). Fugitives are those documents of public interest or educational value, and not classified for reasons of national security, which have not been acquired for distribution to Federal depository libraries or made accessible through the Catalog of U.S Government Publications (CGP).

There are two volunteer groups, one comprised primarily of American Library Association Government Documents Round Table people, and one of members of the American Association of Law Librarians. Three of their main functions are to:

- Identify electronic titles that are not yet in the program, and evaluate them for inclusion in the FDLP/EC.
- Identify online titles currently in the program in tangible format for possible migration to “e-only”.
- Identify titles/products that are currently in the program that have become fugitive, and determine their status and availability.

To support this activity we first established the Working Group site on the FDLP Desktop

<http://ww1.access.gpo.gov/gpoaccess/fdlp/tools/ewgroup/ewg_memb.html>

, including lists of the participants, what agencies they are each looking at, project resources, and more. We have asked contributors to supply some basic bibliographic elements, suggest a SuDocs class stem, and so on. So there’s more involved in this project than just the resource discovery phase. To support that, the various policies and processing guidelines that we use in LPS are available on the FDLP Desktop. So far we have received over 350 submissions. A few of these concern URLs that might be added to existing records, but most are identifying electronic fugitive documents.

Recently, LPS established a new email address, <lostdocs@gpo.gov>, for reporting fugitive documents. Previously the Electronic Documents Working Group and other members of the depository community sent all such notices to askLPS. The increasing volume of submissions to that location prompted the decision to separate the fugitive documents reports. This address, or its corresponding Web page <www.access.gpo.gov/su_docs/fdlp/tools/lostdocs.html>, should be used to notify LPS of any fugitive documents, regardless of format.

New Partnerships

Partnerships remain an important component of carrying out our commitment to permanent public access. We’re pleased that we have nearly wrapped up two more partnerships, both of which have been under discussion for some time.

The first, between GPO and the libraries of Indiana University, Bloomington, establishes permanent public access provisions for a collection of electronic publications originally distributed to depository libraries on floppy disk. IU, as part of a consortium effort within the Committee on Institutional

Cooperation (CIC), has mounted the content on servers for Web access. Many of the floppy disks were 5.25", and the drives are increasingly rare. The project relieves individual depository libraries of the burden of making older floppy disk media and outdated operating systems continuously available, as well as assuring that the information will be preserved in a stable environment.

The second, between GPO, the University Library of Case Western Reserve University, and the Census Bureau, establishes a Web site specifically for depository library access to Census 2000 data issued by the Census Bureau in comma-delimited ASCII format. Similar files were disseminated on CD-ROM for the past two censuses, and were made available over the Internet by FTP for the first time for Census 2000. To answer concerns within the FDLP community regarding download times and permanent public access, Case Western Reserve University will operate an FTP site for the files that will be specifically designated for FDLP users, and will assure that permanent public access provisions are in effect for these files.

These projects fill in more squares in the permanent public access matrix, and we thank Lou Malcomb of IU-Bloomington, and Tim Robson of Case Western, for being champions of these partnerships in their institutions.

Publicity and Promotion

Years ago the FDLP was sometimes referred to as the best-kept secret in Washington. We're sure not a secret anymore! Recently the program has gotten more publicity and attention than any of us could have imagined. It's true that maybe it hasn't been all we could have wished for, since we've gotten more attention over one withdrawn CD-ROM than we ever did over hundreds of thousands of publications distributed and cataloged, or users served.

What we would like to do, however, is to improve the positive awareness of the FDLP through a combination of national and local publicity efforts. And there is definitely room for improvement. In the Biennial Survey you told us that only 202 of you engage in active, on-going promotion to the general public. The overwhelming majority admit to either infrequent promotion or no promotion to the general public. We want to help you promote the value of depository libraries more effectively.

In early November, 2001, a GPO working group was convened to develop a marketing strategy to increase awareness of the FDLP among various constituencies. Led by the Chief of the Promotion and Advertising Branch, with representation from the Library Programs Service (LPS) and the Office of Electronic Information Dissemination Services (EIDS), the Group has drafted a marketing plan around the theme "U.S. Government Information: Make the Connection at Federal Depository Libraries." Examples of the graphic design associated with this campaign are here. We are also working within GPO to make sure that you can request promotional information easily, and that fulfillment is quick.

Once again, on behalf of the entire LPS staff, it's a pleasure to be here and talk with you. Please give us your feedback, and ask any questions that are on your minds.