



# GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE

## Technological Changes Create Transformation Opportunities

Highlights of [GAO-04-729T](#), a testimony before the Committee on Administration, House of Representatives

### Why GAO Did This Study

Advances in technology have led to more organizations making information available over the Internet and the World Wide Web rather than through print, significantly changing the nature of printing and information dissemination. Government Printing Office (GPO) management recognizes that the new environment in which it operates requires that the agency modernize and transform itself and the way it does business. To assist in this transformation, GAO has been performing a comprehensive review of government printing and information dissemination and of GPO's operations.

In this testimony, GAO summarizes the result of its work to date, for which GAO convened a panel of experts on printing and dissemination (assembled with the help of the National Academy of Sciences) to develop options for GPO to consider in its transformation, and surveyed executive branch customers regarding their practices and preferences for printing and dissemination, as well as on their interactions with GPO. The testimony reports on how changes in the technological environment are presenting challenges to GPO and on its progress in addressing actions that GAO's work indicates could advance its transformation effort.

[www.gao.gov/cgi-bin/getrpt?GAO-04-729T](http://www.gao.gov/cgi-bin/getrpt?GAO-04-729T).

To view the full product, including the scope and methodology, click on the link above. For more information, contact Linda Koontz at (202) 512-6240 or [koontzl@gao.gov](mailto:koontzl@gao.gov).

### What GAO Found

The changing technological environment is creating challenges for GPO. Specifically, the agency has seen declines in its printing volumes, printing revenues, and document sales. At the same time, more and more government documents are being created and downloaded electronically, many from its Web site (GPO Access). The agency's procured printing business, once self-sustaining, has experienced losses in 3 of the past 5 years, showing a net loss of \$15.8 million. The sales program lost \$77.1 million over the same period. In addition, these changes are creating challenges for GPO's longstanding structure for centralized printing and dissemination and its interactions with customer agencies.

The Public Printer recognizes these challenges and in response has embarked upon an ambitious transformation effort. To assist in this effort, the panel of printing and dissemination experts GAO convened suggested that in its planning, GPO should focus on dissemination, rather than printing. The panel also provided specific options for it to consider as it transforms itself, presented in the table below. GPO officials welcomed the options presented, commenting that the panel's suggestions dovetail well with their own assessments. In addition, these officials stated that they are using the results of the panel as a key part of the agency's ongoing strategic planning process.

In addition, in October 2003, we reported that under the Public Printer's direction, GPO had taken several steps that recognize the important role that strategic human capital management plays in its transformation, including establishing and filling the position of Chief Human Capital Officer. At that time, we made numerous recommendations on the further actions it could take to strengthen its human capital management. In response, GPO is beginning to address these recommendations. For example, it has reorganized its human resources office into teams responsible for each of its divisions, serving as a "one-stop shop" for all of a division's human resource needs. It also plans to conduct a skills assessment of its workforce and is initiating a pay for performance pilot.

#### Options for GPO to Consider in Planning for Its Future

| Recommended option          | Description  |
|-----------------------------|--|
| Develop a business plan     | Focus its mission on information dissemination as the primary goal, rather than printing, such as by upgrading GPO Access.   |
| Demonstrate value           | Collect data to show customers the value that can be provided, such as through competitively priced printing and expert assistance in electronic dissemination.  |
| Establish partnerships      | To help establish itself as an information disseminator, improve and extend partnerships with agencies, particularly other dissemination agencies.   |
| Improve internal operations | Ensure that internal operations—including technology, how it conducts business with its customers, management information systems, and training—are adequate for efficient and effective management of core business functions and for service to its customers. |

Source: Expert panel assembled by the National Academy of Sciences and GAO.