



Highlights of [GAO-04-830](#), a report to the Chairmen and Ranking Minority Members, Committee on Appropriations, U.S. Senate, and Subcommittee on Legislative Branch, Committee on Appropriations, U.S. Senate

## Why GAO Did This Study

The transformation of the Government Printing Office (GPO) is under way. This report captures the results of our efforts over the past year to assess and help strengthen GPO's transformation and strategic planning efforts. It is the final part of GAO's response to both a mandate requiring GAO to examine the current state of printing and dissemination of public government information and a congressional request that we conduct a general management review of GPO focusing on that GPO's transformation and management.

## What GAO Recommends

To further GPO's transformation and build on the actions already taken by GPO's leaders, GAO is recommending that GPO leaders take steps to improve planning and goal setting for the transformation. GAO is also recommending that GPO begin adopting leading practices of world-class organizations in financial management and information technology management.

We provided a draft of this report in June 2004 to the Public Printer for review and comment. The Public Printer agreed with our findings and recommendations and noted that this report will be a major part of GPO's transformation process.

[www.gao.gov/cgi-bin/getrpt?GAO-04-830](http://www.gao.gov/cgi-bin/getrpt?GAO-04-830).

To view the full product, including the scope and methodology, click on the link above. For more information, contact J. Christopher Mihm at (202) 512-6806 or [mihmj@gao.gov](mailto:mihmj@gao.gov).

# GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE

## Actions to Strengthen and Sustain GPO's Transformation

### What GAO Found

Federal government printing and dissemination are changing due to the underlying changes to the technological environment. The Public Printer and his leadership team understand the effects of this technological change on GPO and have begun an ambitious effort to transform GPO and reexamine its mission. Federal agencies are publishing more documents directly to the Web and are doing more of their printing and dissemination of information without using GPO services. At the same time, the public is obtaining government information from government Web sites such as GPO Access rather than purchasing paper copies. As a result, GPO has seen declines in its printing volumes, printing revenues, and document sales. To assist in the transformation process under way at GPO, GAO convened a panel of printing and information dissemination experts, who developed a series of options for GPO to consider in its strategic planning. The panel suggested that GPO

- develop a business plan to focus its mission on information dissemination as its primary goal, rather than printing;
- demonstrate to its customers the value it can provide;
- improve and extend partnerships with agencies to help establish itself as an information disseminator; and
- ensure that its internal operations are adequate for efficient and effective management of core business functions and for service to its customers.

GPO can also use other key practices that GAO identified to help agencies successfully transform, such as involving employees to obtain their ideas and gain their ownership for the transformation. GPO fully applied one of these practices, related to ensuring that top management drives the transformation, and has partially implemented each of the remaining eight practices. To fully implement the remaining practices, GPO needs to take actions including establishing its mission and strategic goals and developing a documented plan for its transformation.

GPO has taken some initial steps to adopt the best practices of other public and private sector organizations, most notably with respect to human capital management. GPO is actively implementing the recommendations GAO made in October 2003 (see [GAO-04-85](#)). For example, GPO reorganized the human capital office into customer-focused teams devoted to meeting the human capital needs of GPO's operating units. Continued leadership attention is needed to build on the initial progress made in information technology and financial management. For example, GPO should implement an information technology investment management process to help management choose, monitor, and evaluate projects, and GPO should train its line managers to effectively use financial data.