Sustainable Environmental Stewardship at the U.S. Government Printing Office

Keynote speech from ROBERT C. TAPELLA, *Public Printer of the United States*

International Printing Week at California Polytechnic State University

The Business of Green Media Conference | Thursday, January 24, 2008 | San Luis Obispo, California

ROBERT C. TAPELLA, *Public Printer of the United States*

Dr. Levinson, distinquished faculty, honored guests, ladies and gentlemen:

Tonight, I would like to talk about the U.S. Government Printing Office and the roles we play. Then I'll discuss some of the environmental initiatives underway at GPO and conclude with my thoughts on environmental sustainability in Federal printing and the mission of information dissemination.

By law, the Public Printer heads the United States Government Printing Office, which has the mission to keep the American people informed about the work of their Federal Government.

The position of Public Printer traces its roots back to Benjamin Franklin and the period before the American Revolution, when he served as a "publick printer," whose job was to produce official government documents for Pennsylvania and other colonies. There is a portrait of Ben Franklin hanging over the fireplace in my office, and he looks over my shoulder every day. I'm certain Ben would be fascinated by just how much the business of government printing has evolved!

GPO Yesterday and Today

When GPO was established in 1861, printers set type by hand under candlelight. Printing presses were driven by steam and deliveries each morning to the Capitol were by horse-drawn cart. Since then, every Public Printer has had to adapt the agency to new technologies and new ways of meeting the information product needs of Congress, Federal agencies, and the American people.

Today, GPO disseminates the daily *Congressional Record*, the *Federal Register*, and numerous other products and services in print and digitally while also building the digital tools of the future that will enable our Government to work more effectively and efficiently.

To me it makes sense to talk a little bit about the history of GPO, because I believe that our past helps us to define our mission in the future.

Created in 1860 by an Act of Congress, GPO opened its doors for business on March 4, 1861, the same day Abraham Lincoln was inaugurated as President. Through war and peace, boom and bust, GPO has been there, producing and distributing the official publications of our government, what I call the "documents of our democracy".

It was at GPO that the text for the Emancipation Proclamation was set, and it was at GPO that ink was put on paper for the declarations of war sought by Presidents Woodrow Wilson and Franklin Roosevelt. A GPO bookbinder created the leather covers used for the surrender documents that were signed on the deck of the battleship Missouri in Toyko Bay in 1945, and GPO printed the documents, in multiple languages, that were used by the organizing conference for the United Nations that same year.

More recently, GPO produced the official edition of the 9/11 Commission's final report in both print and online formats. In 2005, for the Presidential Inauguration, GPO printed a range of materials including invitations, maps, signs, programs, tickets and other products. Many of these included unique and unprecedented security features prepared specifically for the first Inauguration since 9/11.

This year, on February 4th, GPO will authenticate by digital signature the *Budget of the U.S. Government* for FY 2009. This authentication will verify to anyone who downloads the e-Budget that the content is official and unaltered. This is the first time in history that the President of the United States will submit his budget to Congress electronically. This truly ushers in a new era for GPO and the Federal Government, with far reaching implications that I will talk about more towards the end of my remarks.

Unfortunately, GPO's middle name tends to get in the way of a true public understanding of our mission: *Keeping America Informed*.

Our mission and the notion of an informed public is one of the greatest ideas to emerge in the past millennium. It's an idea that was directly related to the single greatest invention of that era: Johann Gutenberg's development of moveable type, some 550 years ago.

This was not simply a method of producing ink-on-paper more economically. What Gutenberg did was to create a means for easily transferring language to a medium for widespread dissemination. The technologies we have today for accomplishing the same end—computers, e-mail, online systems, and even offset web presses—are all indebted to his vision.

Where once we solely relied on ink and paper, we now also use electronic ions and integrated circuits, but our job is still the same: to record the words and actions of our Government and make them available for our people.

GPO's Four Roles

GPO plays four roles today that are crucial to the information product operations of the Federal Government:

- we play a role in the legislative process by producing work for the United States Congress;

- we play a critical role in our Nation's security by producing security and intelligent documents for Federal agencies, most prominently the electronic passport for the State Department;

- we play a supportive role to all of the agencies and organizations of the Federal Government by helping them meet their printing and communication needs; and

- we play a facilitating role by working with the library community to provide free, open, and permanent public access to the documents of our democracy through the Federal Depository Library Program.

Let's take a closer look at each of these roles.

Congressional Work GPO's first purpose—the reason why we were established—is to provide the information products and services that are essential to the conduct of the legislative functions mandated for Congress by the Constitution.

In carrying out this role, we produce a family of legislative products. We print a *Congressional Record* for every day that Congress is in session. We print a *Congressional Record Index* every 2 weeks. The bound or permanent edition of the *Congressional Record* is compiled on an annual basis, and we print 4,700 copies a year. We print 400 copies of the House business calendar for every day that the House is in session, we print 2,100 copies of the Senate business calendar, and at the end of a Congress, we print the final House and Senate calendars.

Congressional bills, House and Senate reports (including conference reports), executive reports, House and Senate documents, and treaty documents are printed as they are filed during each session of Congress, in quantities ranging from 700 to 2,000 each. For posterity and for the use of about 300 Federal depository libraries, we produce the *Congressional Serial Set*, a bound compilation of House and Senate reports, executive reports, House and Senate documents, and treaty documents, for each session of Congress. Committee hearings and committee prints are printed throughout the year. All of these congressional products and services are produced at GPO's main plant in Washington, DC, and most of them are made available online as well as printed.

I've thrown out quite a few facts and figures. Here's the number I'd like you to remember:

Our plant prints the equivalent of nearly *3 billion* standard 8.5" x 11" pages per year. That's equal to about *20 million pounds* of paper. Beyond any particular printed product, if one were to follow how a bill becomes a law, one would find there up to 27 legislative steps. GPO plays a role in 12 of them. Congressional printing is a $90 million a year business for GPO, and is a core function of our mission.

Security and Intelligent Documents GPO plays a critical role in our Nation's security by producing passports for the State Department. Our premier security document, the U.S. passport, which we have produced for the State Department since 1926, has radically changed. Consistent with international standards, we are now including a contactless chip capable of holding biometric information into the printed booklet. It's the convergence of electronics with traditional printing that makes these documents intelligent. The contactless chip is just one of the many security features employed in the design of the new passport. And the demand for this type of product will be an ever growing Government need.

We are printing an unprecedented number of these intelligent documents. For FY 2008, we are planning to produce 28 million e-passport tourist books. These are the 28-page, blue covered books. We'll produce about 225,000 of the business traveler books. These are similar to the tourist books but have 52 pages to accommodate frequent overseas travelers who need more pages for visa stamps. We also produce a special blue book for military dependents. These are slightly different from a standard tourist book and are a production run of about 75,000. If you are a Government employee traveling overseas on official business, the State Department will issue you an official passport. These are the maroon books available in either 28- or 52-page varieties and represent nearly a quarter million in production numbers. If you travel overseas with diplomatic immunity, the State Department issues black diplomatic passports. We'll produce about 50,000 of these.

To put these numbers in perspective, when I first came to GPO five years ago, we were producing less than 9 million passports a year. Today, that number is fast approaching 30 million.

GPO produces more than just passports in our secure printing facility. We also produce the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) travel book. This green-covered, chip-less book, also known as the "alien book," is issued by DHS in special circumstances to non-citizens. We produce about 200,000 of these. For the U.S. Coast Guard, we produce the orange-covered *Merchant Mariner Book*, which is used as a credential for port visits and to hold qualification stamps of our nation's merchant marines. We produce about 60,000 of these.

While I would like to continue talking about the other secure and intelligent documents we design and produce, I need to stop here on specific products — lest I get accused of sharing state secrets! But in all cases with security and intelligent documents produced by GPO, we ensure Security by Design, Security by Materials, Security by Print, and Security by Technology.

Security by Design means that we have staff who are experts in the latest and most secure design software, which has been specifically designed for us that allows for security features including guilloche patterns, variable line widths, special security screens, special deformations, microtext, crystal patterns, UV ink preview, and many others.

Security by Materials means that we have experts who can prepare technical specifications for security papers and security inks. We have a division that specializes in paper mill inspections and technical audits, tracking and evaluating the latest secure technologies.

Security by Print means that GPO employs individuals with security clearances to manufacture, procure, design, and deliver high quality documents. In addition to providing in-house printing services, GPO has decades of experience in procuring documents such as U.S. Treasury checks and Social Security cards from the leading security printers throughout America.

Security by Technology means that GPO provides expertise and experience in utilizing the Nation's leading anti-counterfeiting protection products. We are continuing to enhance our capabilities with the use of electronic technologies such as Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) tags and Smartcards to increase the level of security we can offer.

I expect more than half of GPO's revenue eventually will come from secure and intelligent documents. And I believe it is a very exciting cutting edge business to be in.

Information Product Procurement GPO plays a supportive role to all of the agencies of Government as we help them meet their printing and communication needs.

In FY 2007, GPO procured 98,000 orders for our Federal customers from private sector vendors. This makes GPO perhaps the largest print buyer in America. We're offering our customers more flexibility in choosing and working directly with vendors, especially with small value jobs and complex purchases that involve multiple functions such as data preparation, personalization, and distribution. We also work in content development, graphic design, website design, and hosting rich media and print-on-demand.

The work we procure runs from simple black and white jobs to some incredibly complex projects. Here are just two examples of complex project:

Annually, we work in partnership with the Department of Health and Human Services' Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services to produce the *Medicare and You* handbook. There are 40 million copies printed and delivered to every person eligible for Medicare and Medicaid coverage nationwide. Last year, this work involved coordinating the work of three contractors to produce nearly 50 different versions of this product with state-specific information. This was a $17.5 million procurement.

We also awarded ten contracts for the 2010 Census. The print contract alone, worth nearly $50 million, is one of the largest printing contracts ever awarded by GPO and it was a unique, negotiated, best value, task-order contract containing multiple performance incentive clauses.

One of the most exciting opportunities we have for Federal agencies is the GPOExpress program. This is a contracted partnership between GPO and FedEx/Kinko's. GPOExpress allows Federal personnel to walk into or Web-into any FedEx/Kinko's print center nationwide, day or night, to take care of small printing needs, and at significantly reduced prices. This allows great flexibility and incredible convenience, and it also allows more work that previously was performed outside of GPO to be brought into our system, where the information can be made available for public access.

GPO and Permanent Public Access GPO plays a facilitating role as we work with the library community to provide free, open, and permanent public access to the documents of our democracy.

For nearly 200 years, this has occurred through The Federal Depository Library Program. GPO manages this program with the philosophy that the information created by the Government is the property of the people of the United States, and that the public has the right to access that information. If your tax dollars were used to create the information, it's our job to make certain that this information is made broadly available and kept in perpetuity.

GPO manages the Federal Depository Library Program in partnership with the American library community, and as the Federal Government moves from paper documents to electronic information, there is still much more collaborative work still to do.

For more than 500 years tangible documents were created using processes that could be seen and felt by crafts people who were trained in the art and craft of typesetting, printing, and binding. Authors began with a paper manuscript and saw their words transformed into type and reproduced as pamphlets, catalogs, and books. These tangible products were distributed by booksellers and delivered by the postal service; many found their way into library collections.

Today, for many documents, there is no longer a requirement for typesetting, printing, or binding, and there is no tangible document to make its way to library shelves or otherwise be preserved for the future. Authors begin the process by digitally recording their manuscripts on a personal computer and then making their documents available through web portals. With growing frequency, there is often no need for an original printing of multiple copies. Such documents are said to be "born digital and published to the Web." This publishing strategy has become so common today, that more than half of the Government information products we make available to our depository library partners never see ink-on-paper.

In years past, when printing presses controlled authentic Government information, it was easy for the Public Printer to be the leader in Federal information policy. Today, this task is much more difficult.

But we have a solution. It's called FDsys — GPO's Federal Digital System. This information system will be a digital repository for all published Federal documents — past, present, and future — that are within scope of the Federal Depository Library Program. The system will allow Federal content creators to easily submit content to GPO, where it can then be authenticated, managed, and delivered upon request in the forms and formats that users need them, and preserved for future generations. FDsys will form the core of GPO's operations and will forever change how we maintain and manage Government information.

FDsys is currently in beta testing and is scheduled to make its public debut at the end of 2008. With FDsys, GPO will not only keep pace with trends in information technology, but will show leadership and innovation, and restore GPO's position as the essential source for authentic Government information.

GPO and Environmental Sustainability

Now that I've discussed the roles of GPO, I'd like to switch my focus to some of the environmental initiatives we have underway.

GPO has a long history of recycling. Since 1860, GPO has been recycling waste paper, copper, brass, and scrap metal. In FY 2007, GPO recycled over 5 million pounds of paper, 99,000 pounds of non-ferrous metals, and 108,000 pounds of ferrous metals. From 1915 until 2003, when GPO stopped manufacturing its own inks, GPO recycled ink. Since 1954, GPO has been recycling corrugated boxes, and last year we recycled 1.5 million pounds of corrugated material. Other materials we recycle today include aluminum, silver, photographic film, phototypesetting paper, empty paint cans, 55-gallon metal drums, plastic drums, wooden pallets, CD's, floppy disks, and video cassettes. Most recently, we started a fluorescent light recycling program.

Today, as the largest industrial manufacturer in the District of Columbia, GPO tries to be as environmentally sensitive as possible, given our industry. This includes trying to be "green" in virtually every step of our printing processes. In concert with Federal policy, nearly all of GPO's printing—both produced inplant and procured—uses recycled paper. The vast majority of inks we use, again both inplant and for procured printing, are vegetable-oil based, again in concert with Federal policy. Just last week, the Environmental Protection Agency downgraded GPO from a Large Quantity Generator of Hazardous wastes to a "Small Quantity Generator." This was done by changing the solvents that we use to clean our presses.

I think our track record over the past 147 years has been pretty good, again considering the industry. But now we're looking ahead to the future. And the future is environmental sustainability.

By law, I have an obligation to "take charge and manage the Government Printing Office." In my view, this entails an obligation to be a good steward of the resources under GPO's control. Under my administration, GPO's business will be conducted in an environmentally, economically, and fiscally sound, integrated, continuously improving, efficient, and sustainable manner. In short, I believe in doing the right thing.

This may surprise a few people, but environmental sustainability is not a partisan issue. It's good business and good government.

It is also consistent with the policy of the current Administration. Executive Order 13423, signed by President Bush last January, calls for environmental sustainability and puts forward a single vision. This order consolidated and strengthened five executive orders and two memorandums of understanding and established new and updated goals, practices, and reporting requirements for environmental, energy, and transportation performance and accountability. The Office of the Environmental Executive, which reports to the President, was given not just policy responsibility, but authority to grade the success of each executive branch agency on their sustainable environmental stewardship.

Executive Order 13423 requires more widespread use of environmental management systems as the framework in which to manage and continually improve these sustainable practices. Environmental management systems are a planning and implementation tool to help Federal agencies better carry out their mission and be better environmental stewards. They will help to better equip agencies with the information, resources, strategy, and feedback they need to ensure the agencies are continuously improving their performance and reducing their environmental impact. In essence, the Federal Government is now doing what the leaders in corporate America are doing to promote environmental sustainability internally.

I mentioned the President's budget submission earlier. The White House is not printing any copies of the new *Budget* for their own use. Jim Nussell, Director of the Office of Management and Budget, said: "The E-Budget will have a 'green' focus above and beyond the fiscal sense." Executive Order 13423 was part of the reason for the Director's decision. OMB estimates that by going paperless with the new *Budget*, the Government will save more than $1 million over five years, more than 20 tons of paper, and roughly 480 trees. The White House is not just talking the talk, they are taking action.

Executive Order 13423 does not directly apply to GPO since we are a legislative branch agency. However, in my view the proper stewardship and management of GPO compels me to comply with the spirit of it. As Public Printer, I am committed to maximizing the environmental sustainability of production processes in our plant as well as the products and services that we procure on behalf of other Federal agencies and organizations.

Earlier I mentioned that the EPA has downgraded GPO as a hazardous waste generator. Currently, we are evaluating a solvent recycling system that may further reduce the amount of waste solvents by up to 90%. That's part of our desire to continually improve.

Currently, we print what essentially are two daily newspapers — the *Congressional Record* and *Federal Register*. These are produced on 40% post consumer waste recycled newsprint. They are printed on offset web presses just like those used in the newspaper industry and we have a tremendous amount of planned waste. I'd like to see that amount of waste reduced as soon as possible. Additionally, because our quantities printed are continuing to decline, I would like to see if we could move from web offset to digital equipment to significantly reduce paper consumption. Digital itself is a key sustainability initiative, and it is at the core of an ongoing transformation of GPO operations programs.

Where we continue to use paper, I would like GPO to use more environmentally responsible paper, both in our plant and for our agency customers. This is a complicated issue and one that I have begun conversations with the Office of the Environmental Executive on. In addressing paper, we have to include office and publishing paper, as GPO is one of the largest providers of copier paper to Federal agencies in the National Capital Region. I would like to dramatically increase the use of 100% post consumer waste re-cycled paper, provided the industry can meet the challenge of cost and performance. In October of 2005, GPO certified on behalf of the Joint Committee on Printing, the first 100% post-consumer plain copier, xerographic paper. To date, we have a single brand name product on the Qualified Products List (for JCP 0-71): Vision by Steinbeis Temming. I'd like to see more.

Important environmental issues come to mind in the manufacturing of paper. Millions of trees are cut down each year to make paper. Energy is used, water is used, and carbon dioxide goes into the air. There are now ways to make significant, environmentally positive improvements on all of these fronts. With important advances in technology, and now with attractive, high quality paper, I see the industry becoming a beacon for sustainability.

Manufacturing paper from recycled fibers consumes approximately 70% less energy than in the manufacturing of paper from fresh wood, and 73% less water. Carbon dioxide emission levels from the manufacturing process for recycled paper are at least 20% less than from fresh wood. I've been following one company in Germany which is in the process of building a power plant fueled completely by industrial waste to run their mill. Now that is moving towards environmental sustainability.

Today, the United States imports more and more paper from abroad and thousands of jobs are lost at home. At the same time, we are exporting more than 20 million tons of waste paper to countries which manufacture recycled paper and then sell it back to us at competitive prices. We can make dramatic improvements in our environment — and help our economy. By moving toward the manufacture and use of significantly more 100% post consumer recycled paper in America.

In concert with the Office of the Environmental Executive, I would like GPO to develop an environmentally advanced certificate or seal for a more environmentally responsible paper for use by Federal agencies. These could include Processed Chlorine Free (PCF) paper, carbon neutral papers, and Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) certified papers, and perhaps others. I'd like to encourage the paper industry to embrace such a move.

Finally, GPO is perhaps the largest printing and information factory in the world. It encompasses 1.5 million square feet and our newest building was completed in 1940. Our facility once included a blacksmith shop, hospital, bowling alley, ballroom, and a smelting factory in the days of linotype machines. It is both too large and too antiquated for our needs.

I would like to see GPO move into a new factory — one that has "green building certification" LEED — platinum. LEED is a voluntary green building rating system that provides measurable benchmarks for developing high-performance, sustainable buildings. Platinum is the highest standard. I'd like to see GPO move into the first LEED Platinum Printing Plant in America, and I believe that is an achievable objective.

So, there you have it: my vision of GPO performing four simply explained but critically important roles, and an agenda for promoting sustainable environmental stewardship throughout the Government Printing Office and our Federal agency customers.

I would like to conclude with the following quote:

"*Our position in the world has been attained by the extent and thoroughness of the control we have achieved over nature; but we are more, and not less, dependent upon what she furnishes than at any previous time of history.*"

President Theodore Roosevelt made this observation one hundred years ago during a speech to a national conference on conservation held at the White House in 1908. It's just as accurate today as then, and certainly a call to sustainable environmental stewardship. At GPO, we intend to move forward with this timeless vision so eloquently expressed by one of America's greatest leaders.

Thank you.