

KEY TERMS

**Adobe Acrobat
Portable Document
Format (PDF)**

A file format developed by Adobe Systems for viewing with free Adobe Acrobat Reader software. It preserves a printed document's original appearance; achieves a high aesthetic quality through the use of text, graphics, photos, and color; and provides full-text search capabilities. It also is independent of computer platform and distribution media. For these reasons, it is one of the primary file formats on *GPO Access*.

Application

A computer program that serves a specific purpose or task, such as accessing the text of congressional bills online. On *GPO Access*, a single application may be comprised of one or more databases and/or Web pages. For example, the *Code of Federal Regulations* is one application that relies upon 150 separate databases per year of volumes, while the list of CD-ROMs for sale is one application that contains approximately 200 Web pages.

ASCII Text

A file format that contains the raw data of a document without formatting, such as graphics or font formats (e.g., bold, italic, underline). It is one of the primary file formats on *GPO Access*. ASCII stands for "American Standard Code for Information Interchange."

CGI Script

Common Gateway Interface (CGI) is a standard for running programs on a server from a Web page. A CGI script allows these programs to interact with a Web server in real time. On *GPO Access*, CGI scripts are most often used to retrieve information from a database and format it in HTML. For example, when a user submits a query to the Sales Product Catalog, a CGI script retrieves the relevant sales records from the database and displays them on a search-results Web page. Because a CGI script retrieves information in real time, it may return different results at different times depending on the update schedule of the database; some databases, such as the Sales Product Catalog, are updated nightly.

Database

A collection of data that is organized for easy searches, retrievals, and management of its content. On *GPO Access*, one or more databases may constitute a single application. For example, 150 separate databases comprise each full year of the *Code of Federal Regulations* application.

Dissemination

The act of making Government information products available to Federal depository libraries and/or the public, through either tangible distribution of those products or provision of access to them via an electronic Government information service.

Encryption

A method of encoding data so that it is unreadable to everyone except the recipient. This technology is used on the Internet principally to ensure private, secure transactions for customers who submit personal information, such as credit-card numbers, to product and service providers. On *GPO Access*, encryption is used when customers order information products through sales applications, such as the Sales Product Catalog.

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**Federal Depository
Library Program
(FDLP)**

A nationwide, geographically dispersed system that consists of libraries acting in partnership with the U.S. Government for the purpose of providing free, local access to Federal Government information for the public. Depository libraries maintain tangible Government information products for use by the public, offer professional assistance in locating and using Government information, and provide local capability for the public to access electronic Government information services, such as *GPO Access*. This program was established under the provisions of 44 U.S.C. Chapter 19 and is administered by the Superintendent of Documents.

**Government
Information Locator
Service (GILS)**

A decentralized collection of Federal agency-based information locators that assist users in finding and obtaining publicly available Government information resources in tangible and electronic media. Through its GILS application, GPO is attempting to provide a single point of access to all Federal GILS databases.

**Government
Information
Product**

A publication or other work of the U.S. Government that is conveyed in a tangible medium, such as a book or CD-ROM, or disseminated through an electronic information service established and maintained by a Government agency or its authorized agent, such as *GPO Access*.

Host

To provide the infrastructure for housing a Web site or other electronic resource on a server. For the Web sites hosted by *GPO Access*, GPO provides the hardware, software, and communication lines required by its servers, but the information content is controlled by the originating agency.

HTML

A file format that consists of ASCII text with tags that signal how an Internet browser should display the contents, which may include formatted text, graphics, and hypertext links. While the majority of Web pages on *GPO Access* are coded in HTML, the file format is increasingly being used for documents on the service as well. HTML stands for “Hypertext Markup Language.”

Interface

The means by which people interact with something, such as a Web site. On *GPO Access*, the word “interface” refers generally to a Web page’s aesthetic and functional elements, such as text, graphics, layout, links, and search and retrieval options.

PDF

See “Adobe Acrobat Portable Document Format (PDF).”

**Permanent Public
Access**

The maintenance of continual, no-fee, public access to all tangible and intangible Government information products within the scope of the Federal Depository Library Program.

Retrieval

On *GPO Access*, a download of either a document from a database or a file outside of a database that contains Government information content.

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Screen Capture

A short video clip of a computer screen that records both sound and action. On the *GPO Access* interactive training CD-ROM, these videos demonstrate how to use the Web site by showing the user every mouse click, scroll, and text input to make from search to retrieval.

Server

A computer dedicated to controlling network traffic and resources. *GPO Access* servers process Web and database information requests and store information for permanent public access.

SKU Stock Number

A new type of stock number of to be used in sales product records when the Integrated Processing System is instituted. SKU stands for “stock keeping unit.”

**Standard
Generalized Markup
Language (SGML)**

An international standard for defining methods of representing and publishing electronic information. This “meta language” describes markup languages, such as HTML, and provides a method for describing text that is independent of the program and system that create it.

SWAIS

A system that allows users to search ASCII text files through an Internet telnet session or a direct modem dial-up session. SWAIS stands for “simple wide-area information system.”

WAIS

A distributed information service that allows simple natural-language input, indexed searching for fast document retrieval, and the influence of initial searches on future searches through a “relevance feedback” mechanism. Most of the Government information products on *GPO Access* are maintained in WAIS databases. WAIS stands for “wide-area information server” and is also the name of the company that developed this software.