



Administrative Notes

Newsletter of the Federal Depository Library Program

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Public Printer Names Five to Depository Library Council

Public Printer Michael F. DiMario has named five new members to the Depository Library Council to the Public Printer. The Council advises the Government Printing Office (GPO) on issues related to public access to Government information products through the Federal Depository Library Program (FDLP). Administered by GPO, the FDLP is a nationwide, geographically-dispersed system comprising more than 1,300 libraries acting in partnership with the GPO to provide the general public with local access to Federal Government information products at no cost.

The newly appointed members bring diversified experience to the Council. They are:

- Paul Arrigo, Reference Coordinator/Government Documents and Electronic Services Librarian, Washburn University School of Law, Topeka, KS;
- Daniel C. Barkley, Interim Director, Government Information, Microforms and Reference, University of New Mexico, Albuquerque, NM;
- Barbara J. Ford, Assistant Commissioner, Chicago Public Library, Chicago, IL;
- Barbara Levergood, Electronic Documents Librarian, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, NC; and
- John Kavaliunas, Chief, Marketing Services Division, U.S. Census Bureau, Washington, DC.



Public Printer Responds to Draft GAO Report on Transfer to Library of Congress

[The GAO report will be distributed to depositories in paper and will also appear on GPO Access.]

March 21, 2001

Mr. Joel C. Willemsen
Managing Director
Information Technology Issues
U.S. General Accounting Office
Washington, DC 20548

Dear Mr. Willemsen:

This letter conveys the comments of the Government Printing Office (GPO) on the draft General Accounting Office (GAO) report *Information Dissemination: Electronic Dissemination of Government Publications* (GAO-01-428). The report was undertaken pursuant to the conference report on H.R. 4516, the Legislative Branch Appropriations Act for FY 2001 (H. Rpt. 106-796), which requires GAO to conduct a “comprehensive study on the impact of providing documents to the public solely in electronic format,” and to evaluate the feasibility of transferring GPO’s Federal Depository Library Program (FDLP) to the Library of Congress (LC).

The day is coming when Federal Government information may be made available to the public solely in electronic format, but that day is not here yet nor is it likely to appear in the foreseeable future. Apart from the fact that large amounts of Federal information are not digitized, significant issues concerning security, permanence, authentication, equity, and cost remain to be resolved before the American people can put their faith in an electronic dissemination system that will serve as one of the foundations of their social contract with the Government. Unfortunately, the draft report’s attention to these and related issues is simply too cursory to resolve them.

LC is a unique national institution of singular importance to Congress and the public. As a sister legislative branch agency, GPO has a longstanding relationship with LC that we value very highly; LC is a selective depository library, and we work together on many issues of importance in the field of Government information dissemination. With all due respect, however, LC is not an appropriate home for the FDLP. Its mission and operations are inconsistent with a large-scale publications/information dissemination program. Transferring the FDLP there will increase costs, impose additional burdens on LC, and not result in any improvement in the public’s ability to access Government information. While GAO’s analysts appear to have made an energetic attempt to develop a plan for the transfer, the resulting product contains a number of problems, based primarily on the assumption that the FDLP could be transferred to the LC without negative program impacts. In my view, these problems will minimize its usefulness to Congress.

Impact of All-Electronic Dissemination. The draft report is unable to demonstrate how the problems of ensuring authenticity, security, and permanence will be resolved in an all-electronic Government information environment. GPO has made significant efforts to address these problems, such as convening a Government-wide working group on permanent public access, the procurement of Public Key Infrastructure (PKI) technology, and continually upgrading security measures, and these efforts are ongoing. However, the report makes no contribution to addressing these issues beyond restating what GPO itself has pioneered, and does not discuss how LC would address or improve upon GPO's efforts. Moreover, it makes no reference to security issues, which are becoming increasingly important in an era when computer viruses can severely disable information systems worldwide in a matter of hours.

Another problem is the minimal examination of the issues surrounding the impact of an all-electronic requirement on the FDLP's statutory mandate for equitable access. GAO's opinion that "electronic documents offer far greater functionality than traditional paper documents" is only true—if at all—when the user has the proper technology at hand and the skills to use it. The draft report itself notes that the National Telecommunications and Information Administration recently found that 60 percent of American households have no access to the Internet. By contrast, the only barriers to the use of printed documents are basic literacy and physical disability, and the U.S. literacy rate far exceeds the estimates of the number of people with access to and the skills to use digital technology. Moreover, with the changes in paper manufacturing in recent years, permanency of paper is now virtually assured.

Although the FDLP serves a large number of libraries and users who are in a very sophisticated technological environment, the program is statutorily grounded in equity of access for all. During the transition to a more electronic FDLP—a transition planned and executed by GPO in partnership with Congress, Federal agencies, the judiciary, and the library and Government information communities—we have been showing due diligence in moving with all deliberate speed in making electronic dissemination the norm to the maximum extent that is appropriate. Nevertheless, the FDLP continues to distribute thousands of titles for which there are no electronic equivalents. Unless Congress is willing to appropriate the substantially increased funds to convert these publications to electronic formats, access to these titles will be lost in an all-electronic environment. The GAO draft report does not discuss how an entirely electronic program for Government information would be feasible in view of the FDLP's statutory mandate, what limitations it would have for the estimated 9.5 million public users of the FDLP annually, or how it would be more achievable by LC.

The draft report asserts that "electronic documents cost far less to store, maintain, and disseminate." It overlooks the fact that, because of the ease with which agencies are able to make publications available on the Web, the number of publications eligible for inclusion in the FDLP is increasing significantly. For FY 2001 to date, 16,525 titles have been added to the program, 61 percent in electronic format. The work involved in identifying, securing, archiving, and establishing bibliographic control of electronic publications—as well as the cost of supplying and maintaining the technology infrastructure for high-volume use—is growing significantly. In addition, continuous efforts are required to manage a digital archive to avoid deterioration of storage media and technological obsolescence of hardware and software. FDLP program managers have long recognized that these requirements will generate costs at or above

current program levels. An electronic Government information environment is also generating substantial additional costs for users and depository libraries, yet the draft report pays only scant attention to these. Absent from the draft report is an economic analysis of the costs of an all-electronic Government information dissemination program, including an analysis of cost impacts on end users, on depository libraries and their equipment and staffing needs, and on LC for providing such a service.

Transferring the FDLP to LC. Although required by H. Rpt. 106-796 to specify “how such a transfer might be accomplished,” “when such a transfer might optimally occur,” “the costs...of such a transfer,” and “measures that are necessary to ensure the success of such a transfer,” the draft report’s findings are basically equivocal, citing both advantages and disadvantages to the transfer, and provide little specific information on how such a transfer might be accomplished beyond proposing the creation of a GPO/LC/library community task force to guide it. It is difficult to see how this part of the report will be of much assistance to Congress. Fundamentally, the draft report does not address how public access to Government information would be improved by transferring the FDLP to LC.

The draft report includes a statement once made by LC that its mission and the mission of the FDLP are “not inconsistent,” yet at the same time the report cites testimony from the library community that the two missions “vary so significantly that the appropriateness of a transfer is questionable.” LC, in its 1993 and 1994 evaluations of a possible assumption of GPO’s Superintendent of Documents operations, questioned whether taking on those functions “might diffuse the Library’s principal focus—service to Congress.” One question that arises in this context is whether LC’s assumption of the FDLP would change the future treatment of certain publications issued by units of LC, such as CRS issue briefs and related materials, which are not included in the FDLP today.

In taking on the FDLP, LC would assume the added burden for ensuring the comprehensiveness of the FDLP collection. This burden would result from breaking the efficient link between production and dissemination that resides in GPO. To maintain the link, the draft report proposes leaving the FDLP physically in place at GPO but under LC management. In the absence of any demonstrated improvement to public access, that proposal seems to be nothing more than a solution in search of a problem.

Both LC and GAO cite a similarity between LC’s National Library Service for the Blind and Physically Handicapped (NLS/BPH) and the FDLP as evidence of a consistency of missions. In fact, LC’s 1994 study said “the depository program is *somewhat similar* to the NLS/BPH in that both have a mission to distribute materials to libraries” (emphasis added). Indeed, the similarities end there. The two programs are very different in terms of the amount of material distributed and the number of libraries and people served. According to its FY 2001 budget submission, the NLS/BPH distributes books and other materials of all kinds to 761,000 patrons and 138 network libraries. The FDLP by comparison disseminated last year 12.2 million copies of 29,000 Government titles to more than 1,300 libraries—including academic, research, law, public, and other libraries—utilized by an estimated 9.5 million persons (not counting the more than 200,000 titles made available via *GPO Access* and retrieved by the public at a rate of more than 26 million per month), and supported by the Government’s cataloging and indexing

authority for Government documents and a variety of other specialized services. In addition, under the FDLP the Government retains ownership of the distributed publications and the FDLP libraries are bound by statute to properly maintain the material and to provide access and service to the public.

The fact is that a large-scale publications/information dissemination operation such as the FDLP (like other Superintendent of Documents programs) is not consistent with LC operations. LC itself has suggested this before, and to this day it continues to rely on GPO to manage the distribution component of the International Exchange Program, which LC administers. Observers will recall that LC also cautiously approached the assumption of the Department of Commerce's National Technical Information Service operations when that transfer was proposed in 1999, in part presumably for the same reason.

The draft report is silent regarding the specific legislative changes that would be necessary to effect the transfer. Transferring the FDLP to LC would remove it from the oversight of the Joint Committee on Printing, could negatively impact the now-close relationship of the library community with FDLP program officials, and would call into question the future role of the Depository Library Council to the Public Printer. GAO contends that the separation of powers issue—which has never been adjudicated in a court of law with respect to the printing provisions of Title 44—is used by executive branch agencies to print without going through GPO, a situation viewed as a major factor in the “fugitive documents” problem. However, the draft does not address how aligning the FDLP with LC—another legislative branch agency—would improve this situation.

There is only a brief indication in the report about the cost impact on other GPO operations as a result of the transfer. GPO is required by law to fully allocate overhead and is unique in the legislative branch in the extent to which this is done. Overhead costs are spread to all of GPO's programs and are funded indirectly by those programs. If the FDLP and related programs are transferred to LC, a large part of the \$4.7 million for administrative services and \$3.5 million for information services would remain with GPO indefinitely. The inability to spread and share these costs over a larger number of activities would have a negative impact on other GPO operations, including congressional printing and the annual appropriation used to fund it, unless there is a reduction to those costs, such as a Reduction-in-Force for other GPO personnel.

The draft report is not clear about what level of organizational priorities the transferred FDLP would receive from LC. The report asserts that “a transfer...might also facilitate the depository library program and the Library working together to address the broad issues of acquiring, managing, and disseminating digital information...” However, it should be noted that LC's work in this area is heavily focussed in the area of copyright, intellectual property, and rights management, both because it is the administrator of the Nation's copyright mechanism, and because a preponderance of its collections in all formats are composed of works that are not in the public domain. This presents a huge technological challenge and a substantial commitment of funds and expertise. There is no analysis of the percentage of last year's \$100 million special appropriation to LC to develop a National Information Infrastructure and Preservation Program that would be devoted to public access to Government information.

Other questions remain unanswered. Assuming it is physically moved, where would the FDLP be placed organizationally within LC? Would it be kept together as a discrete unit, or would its functions be distributed among existing LC organizations? Would GPO's Cataloging and Indexing Program be organized within LC's cataloging effort or would it remain with the FDLP? In its 1994 study, LC observed that "the issue of fulfilling the depository libraries' needs while ensuring that overarching [LC] cataloging objectives are also met is one that must be resolved." What would happen to the rapid bibliographic support that GPO's Cataloging and Indexing program provides for depository librarians if it is transferred to LC? If the FDLP were to be divided among existing LC organizations, how would that impact its operations? What would be the effect of these changes on Government information users?

The draft report indicates that there would be impacts on the transferred employees, but these impacts are not fully spelled out. The ability of the transferred employees to retain wage bargaining rights—currently provided by 44 U.S.C. 305—would be subject to legislation. Retaining such rights, however, would affect their relationship with other LC employees, who do not bargain for wages. Other impacts are not discussed. Would the transferred employees retain their present position classifications and grades? Would they be entitled to the same employee protections they currently have at GPO? Assuming the FDLP function is physically transferred, where would the transferred employees be housed—in the District or elsewhere? Is there space in the current LC buildings? Would there be an area match with current space allocated to the FDLP by GPO?

GPO Access. Many of the electronic databases on ***GPO Access***, such as the *Congressional Record*, the *U.S. Code*, the *Code of Federal Regulations*, the *Federal Register*, and others, are derived from the printing processes managed by GPO's Production Department. While the draft report briefly notes the role of the Production Department in managing the day-to-day operations of ***GPO Access***, there is no discussion of how ***GPO Access*** might be separated from GPO's production operation and its mission to support Congress. In fact, such a transfer could lead to a duplication of effort and expenditures between GPO and LC if LC assumes the preparation of the electronic databases that it distributes. Authenticity and security could also be compromised by removing the locus for dissemination of the databases from GPO to another location.

Additionally, the draft report misrepresents the function and role of the FDLP Electronic Collection (FDLP/EC) with respect to ***GPO Access***. Occasionally the draft report refers to the FDLP/EC as a part of ***GPO Access***, and in other places it is referred to as a Superintendent of Documents program. Neither characterization is correct, as the FDLP/EC extends beyond the boundaries of ***GPO Access*** into partner institutions and agencies and exists as an operation within the FDLP.

The report does not deal with other aspects of ***GPO Access***, including GPO's Online Bookstore, the Federal Web sites hosted on ***GPO Access*** (including the Supreme Court's site), the Federal Bulletin Board, the FDLP Desktop program administrative information, and the popular *Ben's Guide to the U.S. Government for Kids*. The report is silent about whether these other components of ***GPO Access*** would be transferred to LC.

Factual Inaccuracies and Misinterpretations. The report draft contains a number of factual inaccuracies (e.g., implying that the GPO bookstores are part of the FDLP, identifying the FDLP/EC as a discrete program, inaccurate descriptions of the responsibilities of various GPO offices and personnel, misinterpretation of statistical information, incorrect statements about the role of regional depositories, etc.). We also question the purpose of the many appendices concerning the Documents Sales Program, when that program is not subject to transfer in the charge to GAO by H. Rpt. 106-796. My staff is available to work with GAO's analysts to correct these errors before the report is finalized.

Lack of Balance in Presentation. I strongly feel there is a lack of balance in the presentation of information from prior GAO audits. The GAO audit which claimed that GPO has a “monopoly-like” structure with respect to the acquisition of printing was conducted more than a decade ago, in 1989, and the recommendations it contained were officially closed out in a letter to us from GAO dated October 1993. The premise of that audit was faulty to begin with, since GPO utilizes thousands of private sector contractors on a highly competitive basis to acquire up to 75 percent of its production requirements. Indeed, Congress rejected a proposal, later contained in Vice President Al Gore's Reinventing Government project and based on that GAO audit, to remove the statutory requirement that all Federal agencies utilize GPO for their printing needs. Shortly afterward, Congress reaffirmed the existing Title 44 requirement for agencies to use GPO by incorporating “duplicating” into the statutory definition of printing found in the note to 44 U.S.C. 501.

Most importantly, however, GPO's operations have changed a great deal since that 1989 study was conducted. Indeed, a management audit of GPO commissioned by Congress and conducted in 1998 by Booz-Allen & Hamilton, Inc.—working under contract with GAO at the direction of the House Appropriations Committee—reached a number of very different conclusions. Booz-Allen found strong support in Congress for GPO's in-house production operations for congressional printing, stating that GPO's production area “effectively satisfies its priority congressional customers and meets the variable demands and outputs requested by Congress.”

Booz-Allen auditors found “universal support” among the agencies for our printing procurement program. The report says “these agencies viewed this service that GPO provides as an example of ‘government at its best,’ and none of them felt that they wanted or could do this function better than GPO.” Finally, Booz-Allen noted strong support for GPO's dissemination programs, especially the FDLP, and offered highly favorable comments on GPO's electronic information dissemination efforts that were not present a decade ago. These more recent findings about GPO should be used in any review of GPO's statutory structure, not a study that was conducted more than a decade ago, before the advent of significant downsizing (GPO's workforce has been reduced by more than 30 percent in the past decade) and the introduction of electronic information technologies that have made all GPO operations considerably more efficient and cost-effective.

The final word on GPO should come from the court of public opinion. In 1998, 1999, and 2000, GPO was named the top in-plant operation in the country by *In-Plant Graphics* magazine, a widely respected trade journal in the printing industry. Also in 1999, GPO was named by *PC Week* magazine as one of the top technology innovators in the Nation. In 1999, *GPO Access* was

selected as one of the top 50 legal research Web sites for the year by *Law Office Computing* magazine, and was named best research site for laws and best Government site overall by the newsletter *legal.online*. It was chosen as the first recipient of the American Association of Law Libraries Public Access to Government Information Award. In 1998, **GPO Access** was named one of the 15 “Best Feds on the Web” by *Government Executive* magazine. Other awards have included a 1994 Technology Leadership Award and the prestigious 1995 James Madison Award from the Coalition on Government Information.

Conclusion. Overall, the draft report does not provide the “comprehensive study on the impact of providing documents to the public solely in electronic format” ordered by H. Rpt. 106-796. Instead, major issues such as authenticity, permanent public access, security, equity of access, and cost considerations are only briefly noted as items that “should be addressed.”

The transfer of the FDLP and selected other Superintendent of Documents programs to LC may be “feasible,” but is it desirable? Would it benefit public users of Government information? The report suggests that there may be significant disadvantages to such a transfer. Similarly, there is no discussion of how or if LC might improve dissemination to the libraries and the public over the services provided by GPO.

Finally, there are errors of fact and bias in the presentation that we feel should be remedied. We are available to work with GAO personnel on these matters. To do so, please contact Mr. Francis J. Buckley, Jr., Superintendent of Documents, on 512-0571.

Sincerely,



MICHAEL F. DiMARIO
Public Printer

cc: The Honorable Mitch McConnell
The Honorable Bob Ney
The Honorable Christopher Dodd
The Honorable Steny H. Hoyer



[Handout]

Library Programs Service Update Spring 2001 Depository Library Council Meeting

New Electronic Titles Break through 60%

LPS has been making great strides in the transition to a primarily electronic Federal Depository Library Program (FDLP). From October 2000 through February 2001, 61% of the new titles in the FDLP were online electronic.

New Electronic Operating Guidelines

Recently LPS published the Superintendent of Documents' "Dissemination/Distribution Policy for the FDLP" (SOD 71) <www.access.gpo.gov/su_docs/fdlp/pubs/sod71.html> and the related list of "Essential Titles for Public Use in Paper Format" <www.access.gpo.gov/su_docs/fdlp/pubs/estitles.html>. LPS staff use these new guidelines in acquiring publications for the FDLP, particularly when deciding whether to make a publication electronic only.

Guidelines for an Electronic Program

Work is underway on other guidelines related to the eFDLP:

- Cataloging Priorities
- Classification of Electronic Resources
- GPO Cataloging Guidelines
- Recommended Specifications for Public Access Workstations in Federal Depository Libraries
- Proposal to Revise the "Basic Collection"

U.S. CODE

In FY 2001, GPO will begin producing the 2000 bound cumulative edition of the U.S. Code. All selecting depository libraries will receive the case bound edition.

Electronic Collection FAQs

In January 2001, a page of Frequently Asked Questions about the FDLP Electronic Collection and our discovery, archiving, and cataloging activities went live on the FDLP Desktop: <www.access.gpo.gov/su_docs/fdlp/ec/faq.html>.

Census 2000 Products

The Census Bureau has firmed up the dissemination plans for the Census 2000 data products. The basic reports will be distributed to depositories in paper. The Summary Files (which correspond to the Summary Tape Files of the past) will be distributed to depositories on discs with accompanying retrieval software. The Summary Files also will be available as compressed comma-delimited ASCII files via <www.census.gov>. All of this is in addition to American Factfinder, Census' powerful tool for finding and using census data <factfinder.census.gov>.

Partnerships

Through the efforts of former National Partnership for Reinventing Government (NPR) staff and LPS partners at the University of North Texas (UNT), the NPR Web site has been preserved at

the FDLP/UNT Cybercemetery site: <<http://govinfo.library.unt.edu/npr/default.html>>. The staff at the UNT Libraries, in cooperation with GPO staff, is always seeking out Federal agencies that are ceasing operation in order to ensure permanent public access to those Web sites. There are nine sites available in, or in preparation for, the Cybercemetery at UNT. Sites are preserved as they appeared when archived, and users are informed of the static, archival state of the sites.

GPO and OCLC, Inc. are cooperating on a project that will create a set of tools and processes for the discovery, description, archiving, and preservation of electronic publications. The toolkit will initially build on the existing Cooperative Online Resource Cataloging (CORC) functionality, and seeks to define workflow, specifications for a "vault" for document storage, and a standard set of metadata that will be useful for a variety of processes, including bibliographic description, document management in the digital library environment, and preservation. GPO is serving as a test case, and in the coming months OCLC will be seeking additional partners.

GPO has recently turned over the management of its highly successful "Browse Government Information by Topic" tool to the University of Central Oklahoma (UCO) Library in a new partnership agreement. Originally conceived as a collaborative resource, including the work and expertise of government information specialists from around the country, the tool organizes U.S. Government information on the Web into topical pathfinders based on GPO's headings for its longstanding series of Subject Bibliographies. UCO will maintain the Web site, coordinate volunteer contributors, seek new volunteers, and spearhead the expansion of topical coverage.

New Information Products for the FDLP

- Davis-Bacon Wage Determinations (online database), Item 0777-B-11, Class: L 36.211/2: <www.access.gpo.gov/davisbacon/index.html>
- Commission on Child Online Protection (COPA), Report to Congress, October 20, 2000 (online), Item 1089, Class Y 3.2:C 43/4/2001002363, <www.copacommission.org/report/COPAreport.pdf>
- DOD USS Cole Commission Report: Executive Summary, Item 0306, Class D 1.2:2001006655, <www.defenselink.mil/pubs/cole20010109.html>
- FBIS Publications, July 2000 - September 2000, Item 0856-A-11, Class PREX 7.10/3:2000/29, SL 2001-0018-E, SL date: 02/27/2001
- IRS 2000 CD-ROM, Federal Tax Products, Final Release, Item 0923-B-01, Class T 22.51/4:2000/REL.2000.2/FINAL, SL 2001-0018-E, SL date:02/27/2001
- LandView IV:The Federal Geographic Data Viewer (for Windows 95/98 and Mac) in DVD, Item 0154-B- 17, Class C 3.301:L 23, SL 2001-0018-E, SL date: 02/27/2001
- Plunder and Restitution: The U.S. and Holocaust Victims' Assets, Item 0851-J, Class PR 42.8:H 74/AS 7, 2001-0120-P, SL date: 02/14/2001
- Smoking and Tobacco Control Monograph #12, Population Based Smoking Cessation, November 2000, Item 0507-G-40, Class HE 20.3184/2:12, SL 2001-0129-P, SL date: 02/28/2001
- Trends in the Well-Being of America's Children and Youth, 2000, Item 0455-M-01, Class HE 1.63:2000, 2001-0121-P SL date: 02/14/2001



Recommendations and Responses

Depository Library Council to the Public Printer

Fall 2000 Meeting

1) Cataloging Priorities

Council recommends that GPO articulate its cataloging priorities for all publications, both tangible and online. Council further recommends that GPO identify the scope of its cataloging activities for online resources; i.e., what will be cataloged, what will not, and whether records for tangible publications will be updated when electronic versions are discovered.

Rationale: Federal depository libraries can make best use of both GPO cataloging records and local staff resources when they are able to dovetail their own work flows and procedures with those used by the GPO Cataloging Branch. Libraries can plan activities such as enhancement of GPO records with URLs for online versions if they know whether or not GPO will add PURLs/URLs to its records retrospectively, or they can catalog online resources that are not a priority for GPO Cataloging.

Response: The scope of GPO's cataloging responsibilities is codified in 44 U.S.C. § 1710 and 1711, which requires a "comprehensive index of public documents" that must represent all publications published by all U.S. Government agencies. Within this universe of potential resources we apply judgment to identify publications of immediate or continuing public interest and assign them highest priority cataloging irrespective of publishing agency, format, or media.

GPO Cataloging Priorities (from highest to lowest)

1. Publications of immediate or continuing public interest, irrespective of publisher, format, or media.
2. Publications sold by GPO.
3. Other publications distributed or made accessible to depository libraries.
4. Technical reports, irrespective of publishing agency or content.
5. Titles not distributed or made accessible to depository libraries.
6. Titles included in a series or other larger body of work for which bibliographic control is provided by another Federal agency.

High priority levels are one and two in this list, given the close association between public interest and many of the publications chosen for the Sales Program.

GPO catalogs online Federal Depository Library Program (FDLP) publications at partner sites and U.S. Government databases using the same priority system.

In general it is GPO's policy to create a cataloging record based on the format that was distributed or made accessible via the FDLP. Therefore, if a publication is included in the FDLP solely in online format, GPO will create a cataloging record for the online version, and appropriate record links will be made from a record describing a physical manifestation of the same content. All other factors being equal, preference is given to an online version of a high priority title distributed to libraries solely in online format rather than to the same title in other media.

When high priority publications are distributed in physical format and are also available online, both the physical version and the online version are considered high priority. In this circumstance, a cataloging record for the physical version may also include the title, access information and the PURL (Persistent Uniform Resource Locator) for the online version.

Records representing physical forms of high priority titles will be updated as online versions are discovered, as long as such efforts do not impede processing of uncataloged high priority work. Record updates of high priority resources will take precedence over cataloging works of less than high priority.

2) GPO Participation in Government-wide Initiatives

Council recommends that GPO continue to interact with agency and interagency initiatives that focus on access to government information utilizing new and emerging technologies.

Rationale: GPO has much to offer new information access initiatives given its experience in providing government information through the FDLP. FirstGov is the latest in a series of government initiatives that would benefit from the consultation and assistance of GPO in such areas as metadata, PURLs/URLs, Web site design for public access, Web search engines, and policies such as permanent public access.

Response: GPO is involved in numerous Federal Government initiatives utilizing new and emerging technologies to improve access to published Government information. Among the activities in which GPO is participating or monitoring are:

- CENDI, the Commerce, Energy, NASA, Defense, and Interior technical information providers' group.
- Federal Library and Information Center Committee (FLICC), including GPO staff chairing the Personnel and Education Working Groups.
- Federal Publishers' Committee.
- Federal Webmasters' Consortium.
- FirstGov.
- National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) strategic plan review.

- National Commission on Libraries and Information Science (NCLIS) “Comprehensive Assessment of Public Information Dissemination.”
- Permanent Public Access (PPA) Working Group.
- U.S. Dept. of Agriculture Digital Publications Preservation Steering Committee.
- U.S. Federal Government Information Clearinghouse Partnership.
- U.S. General Accounting Office (GAO) study of Superintendent of Documents’ operations.

In addition, GPO is also involved in several related non-governmental initiatives, including:

- ALA GODORT AD Hoc Committee on Digitization of Government Information
- Cartographic Users Advisory Council.
- Coalition for Networked Information (CNI).
- Council on Professional Associations on Federal Statistics (COPAFS).
- OCLC Cooperative Online Resources Catalog (CORC) project.
- OCLC/GPO digital archiving project.

3) PURL Identification

Council recommends that GPO enhance the online versions of Administrative Notes Technical Supplement and WEBTech Notes by adding a GPO PURL server search box so that URLs may be searched easily to identify associated PURLs. Council further recommends that the URL for the GPO PURL Server Search page be published in each issue of the paper format Administrative Notes Technical Supplement to aid FDLP library staff in resolving PURL issues.

Rationale: Council is aware that many FDLP libraries wish to add PURLs to their catalogs and Web pages when Electronic Library (EL) titles are announced in Administrative Notes Technical Supplement. Recognizing that the time lag between discovery of online titles and PURL assignment would result in an unacceptable delay if inclusion of PURLs were required for announcement of online titles in Administrative Notes Technical Supplement, Council suggests this solution to support timely announcement of accurate information.

Response: The Library Programs Service (LPS) continues its efforts to integrate the use of PURLs in the numerous products and services that are available to the Federal Depository Library community. Recently several applications have been enhanced to include access to PURL resources.

Beginning with the January 31, 2001 issue of the online version of the Administrative Notes Technical Supplement, a link was created to direct users to the PURL server. Additionally, a PURL search box has been added to the WEBTech Notes search screen on the FDLP Desktop at http://www.access.gpo.gov/su_docs/fdlp/tools/webtech.html. These changes will enable users to quickly identify GPO assigned PURLs for online resources in the FDLP Electronic Collection (FDLP/EC).

4) Policy and the Infrastructure for Permanent Public Access

Council recommends that GPO, with assistance from a Council working group and selected members of the depository community, examine policy and infrastructure necessary for the hosting and maintenance at multiple FDLP sites of digital government information for the purpose of providing no-fee permanent public access.

Rationale: In light of the dramatic increase in online products, there is a need to identify the policies and infrastructure necessary to accelerate the partnership processes. Council believes that the establishment of a working group, consisting of the Council Electronic Preservation Committee and selected experts from the depository community, would assist GPO in accomplishing the recommendation. The working group should consult with content partners and others involved in digital preservation for their experiences relating to costs and lessons learned. The issues to be examined should include:

- Official status and authenticity
- Currency (maintenance and updating of serial files)
- Integrity and viability of files
- Costs involved (to include public services)
- File types (source files, PDF, text, HTML, etc.)
- Redundancy (mirror sites).

Response: A working group has been formed, under the leadership of Donna Koepp, consisting of Council members Cathy Hartman, Greta Marlatt, Mary Redmond, and John Stevenson; and Chuck Eckman (Stanford), Barbara Levergood (Univ. of North Carolina Chapel Hill), Tim Byrne (Univ. of Colorado), and Elizabeth Cowell (Univ. of California San Diego). A preliminary meeting was held at ALA Midwinter in Washington. The group will address the six specific concerns in the charge, and will give a progress report at the Council meeting in April in San Antonio. Based on an upsurge of recent interest and activity in the FDLP community, GPO has requested that the WG give special attention to local and consortial projects to digitize older or fugitive government information and to advise GPO on the relationship of such projects to the six areas of concern and to the FDLP in general.

5) Draft Superintendent of Documents Policy Statement

Council recommends that GPO proceed with the draft Superintendent of Documents (SOD) Policy Statement dated October 6, 2000. We further recommend that GPO consider a review of the definitions listed in the policy, a clarification of the concepts therein, and an expansion of the essential titles to be available for selection in paper.

Rationale: Council understands that GPO must take serious steps to balance their budget in light of the \$2 million budget reduction directed by Congress. However, the policy can be clarified in the following ways: 1) adding and defining the term *announcement* and reviewing the definitions for *dissemination* and *distribution* in relation to the term *announcement*; 2) adding the term *online product* to parallel the term *tangible product*; 3) reviewing the entire document to

reflect these new and changed definitions; and 4) editing and amending the content as Council discussed.

Council is concerned that the list of essential titles needs broader input from the depository community. Council requests that interested parties submit additional titles for consideration to Laurie Hall <lhall@gpo.gov> by November 10, 2000.

Response: The Superintendent of Documents' policy statement on "Dissemination/Distribution Policy for the FDLP" (SOD 71) and the related list of "Essential Titles for Public Use in Paper Format" were presented in draft form and discussed at the fall 2000 Council meeting. The discussions at the meeting resulted in several suggestions for clarifying the draft. LPS staff incorporated the substance and spirit of the discussions at Council and input received as a result of posting the draft to GOVDOC-L.

These are important working documents for LPS staff to use in acquiring publications for the FDLP, and are resulting in a more predictable decision-making process. SOD 71 has been published in Administrative Notes, and is available on the FDLP Desktop at http://www.access.gpo.gov/su_docs/fdlp/pubs/sod71.html.

The expanded list of "Essential Titles for Public Use in Paper Format" is also available on the FDLP Desktop, at http://www.access.gpo.gov/su_docs/fdlp/pubs/estitles.html. The List contains titles of 42 publications or series that GPO is committed to keeping available for selection in paper format as long as those titles continue to be issued in paper by the publishing agency. These specific titles and series exemplify the application of SOD 71. In October and November LPS received comments and suggestions from the depository library community for the list. LPS received suggestions from 55 persons, recommending 207 specific titles as essential for distribution in paper. Only 105 of the 207 titles were recommended by more than one person. Of the 207 specific titles recommended, we added 22 to the "Essential Titles" list, including the open-ended category for decennial census publications.

All of the other suggestions were also considered, with the following results:

1. Many of the remaining suggested titles and categories of publications meet the special conditions or needs categories identified in the policy statement, which states that publications in such categories will be distributed in paper. For example, military history titles are included in the "titles of historical significance" clause in policy statement part 4.(b).
2. Other recommended titles, such as the Bureau of Labor Statistics' *National Compensation Survey*, are not specifically cited on the list because they are considered to be of "significant reference value to most types of FDLP libraries."
3. Some suggested titles did not address the choice between dissemination in paper or online. For example, there were suggestions to include titles that are currently distributed in microfiche.

4. The remaining suggested titles not addressed above will not necessarily be migrated to online dissemination only. They are, however, subject to being migrated to online format as funding or other circumstances change.

6) Official Status of Online Bills

Council recommends that GPO work with the Clerk of the House and the Secretary of the Senate to certify the official status of Congressional bills available through GPO Access. Council requests that GPO report on their progress at the spring 2001 meeting of the Depository Library Council. Council further recommends as an interim solution that GPO add a statement on applicable Web pages that the official print bills are produced from the same source as the online products available on GPO Access.

Rationale: It is the sense of Council that users need to be assured of the official status of the online Congressional bills. We believe that this can be accomplished by a certification statement similar to that used by the National Archives and Records Administration on GPO Access for the Federal Register and the Code of Federal Regulations.

Response: The printed versions of Congressional bills produced by GPO have long been recognized by both Congress and the Courts as the official versions of these important instruments. In making Congressional bills available online through GPO Access, GPO has worked diligently to ensure that the digital versions are exact duplicates of the printed ones. As a result, users downloading a given bill from GPO Access can be assured that they are being sent the same official information. To further increase this assurance, GPO is in the process of procuring public key infrastructure (PKI) technology that will ensure that the official information being downloaded from GPO Access arrives at the user's terminal without being tampered with.

This PKI solution will enable GPO to certify that the user is receiving an unaltered copy of the official Congressional bills that reside on GPO Access. Through the use of a free reader application the user can validate that the official text transmitted from GPO Access has arrived at their computer locked and unchanged. They can then unlock it at their leisure and use it as they see fit.

GPO has been pursuing a broad solution that will assure that users have received the complete and accurate contents of all of the products on GPO Access. While neither this action, nor anything else that GPO can do will force acceptance of electronic versions by outside parties, it is the most positive means of guaranteeing that the user has received the same official text that appeared in the print version. Hopefully, it will also serve as the proof that is needed to foster the acceptance of the electronic version in official matters.

7) Identification of Online Products for Inclusion in the FDLP

Council recommends that GPO establish a working group for the purpose of tracking selected agency Web sites for online-only government publications. The goals of the working group would be to determine the scope of agency online publishing, recommend priorities for inclusion in the FDLP, and examine other issues as identified by the working group.

Rationale: Recent trends by government agencies toward exclusive use of the Internet to publish information have challenged the FDLP, as information dissemination is very different in the digital environment. GPO needs to bring these resources into the FDLP. However, GPO's resources to discover these products are limited. Therefore, Council believes that the depository community should participate in bringing these documents into the FDLP. The above working group will plan this pilot project, seek volunteers, and implement and manage this undertaking.

Response: A working group, consisting of approximately 30 volunteers and chaired by Diane Eidelman, a former member of Council, has been formed to work with LPS to increase the number of electronic resources included in the FDLP Electronic Collection. Fugitive online resources will be identified from periodic reviews of selected agency websites.

To make maximum use of the information this group will provide (titles, URLs, and OCLC records, if available) LPS has established a counterpart team that includes catalogers, publications management specialists, and other LPS staff. The LPS team will respond to information conveyed to it by the online fugitives working group and from other sources. LPS is developing operational guidelines for additional information that will provide guidance to the working group and will assist LPS in processing the discovered online fugitives and adding them to the FDLP Electronic Collection.



Census Product Update Online

The Census Bureau has just launched a new biweekly online newsletter--Census Product Update--to inform users about recently released Census Bureau data products and those on the near horizon. Census Product Update (item 0138-A-05, SuDocs C 3.163/7-2:) combines the best features of the Monthly Product Announcement and the I-Net Bulletin (both of which were discontinued in December) and issues up-to-date product information every two weeks, along with hot tips and special pages to bookmark. A particular focus of future issues will be data products from Census 2000.

To view the latest edition, click on the following URL:
<<http://www.census.gov/mp/www/cpu/32901.html>>.

Users can receive the Census Product Update via e-mail or view it on the Web. To subscribe, click on <<http://www.census.gov/mp/www/cpu.html>>



2001 Draft Recommended Specifications for Public Access Workstations in Federal Depository Libraries

These recommended specifications are intended to assist depository librarians who are planning purchases of new personal computers (PCs) for public use in Federal depository libraries. This document supersedes the Federal Depository Library Program (FDLP) "Recommended Specifications for Public Access Workstations in Federal Depository Libraries" (Administrative Notes, v. 21, no. 9, June 15, 2000).

In accordance with Depository Library Council action at its spring 2000 meeting, these recommended specifications will become requirements October 1, 2002.

RECOMMENDED NEW WORKSTATION CONFIGURATION

COMPUTER

Processor

IBM-compatible chip, 800 MHz Pentium III or AMD processor minimum. Consider 1 GHz.

Note: Pentium 4 processors are now available. As of this writing (3/2001) software applications need to catch up with this architecture. If, however, your library uses video and 3D applications, you should consider purchasing a Pentium 4.

- FOR CARTOGRAPHIC DATA USE: 1 GHz processor

Memory (RAM)

128 MB (expandable) minimum

- FOR CARTOGRAPHIC DATA USE: 256 - 512 MB SRAM

Ports

One (1) Serial

Two (2) Universal Serial Bus (USB)

One (1) Parallel

One (1) P/S-2 Mouse

One (1) SVGA Video (If video is built into system board)

I/O bus

PCI. Should have at least four available PCI or shared PCI/ISA slots after system is configured for delivery.

Video

64 or 128 bit PCI interface SVGA controller. Should come with 8MB Windows RAM (WRAM) or Video RAM (VRAM), and be expandable. Recommend the selected device provide MPEG hardware acceleration.

- FOR CARTOGRAPHIC DATA USE: 64 or 128 bit PCI interface SVGA controller with 16 MB WRAM or VRAM

Audio

Sound Blaster PCI64 sound card or compatible

Drive Bays

One (1) 3.5" half-height (HH)
 Three (3) 5.25" HH Externally Accessible
 Two (2) 3.5" HH Internal

DISK DRIVES AND STORAGE

Hard Disk Drive

20 gigabytes (GB) capacity or greater, partitioned into smaller drives for quicker access time. SCSI II interface. Consider additional hard drive space (60GB) in order to increase the number of CDs that can be installed or electronic files that can be stored.

- FOR CARTOGRAPHIC DATA USE: 20.0 GB or greater capacity, or network connectivity that provides the same.

Removable/External Storage

3.5" 1.44 MB drive. Use an older system for 5.25" floppy conversion.

Also, strongly recommend additional external and/or exchangeable drives, especially drives such as CD-RW, Zip or Jaz drives for downloading files too large to fit on a regular floppy disk or for large scale back-up.

DVD Drive

5X speed minimum, 8X recommended. Ensure compatibility with CD-ROM, CD-R, CD-RW, DVD-ROM, DVD-Rs. Must have a MPEG-2 decoder card for video.

- FOR CARTOGRAPHIC DATA USE: 8X DVD. Single platter or changer design. Should support all available standard CD formats. Avoid proprietary I/O designs.

CD-RW Drive

- FOR CARTOGRAPHIC DATA USE: 4x4x24x (rotational speeds to read/write/rewrite)

PERIPHERALS

Monitor

17" Super VGA (SVGA) Multimedia monitor, 0.25 dpi or smaller. Consider 17" flat panel. May want to consider rotatable displays if in a technical services area or if users do a lot of word-processing.

- FOR CARTOGRAPHIC DATA USE: 21" monitor, Super VGA (SVGA), with at least 70 MHz vertical refresh rate at 1024x768 resolution non-interlaced, 0.28 or smaller dot pitch; display card which supports 1024x768 resolution at 70 MHz or faster.

Printer

Ink Jet or laser printer. Must support PostScript. 10MB Memory, minimum. More recommended if using PostScript or color.

- FOR CARTOGRAPHIC DATA USE: Color ink jet printer, 36", 600 dpi, 68 MB or more memory, or access to a comparable networked printer

Keyboard and Pointing Device

Microsoft-compatible keyboard, plus mouse or other compatible device. Strongly recommend ergonomically-designed products.

Internet Connectivity

Local Area Network with TCP/IP. 10/100 MB Ethernet network interface card (Strongly Recommended)

or

Broadband connections such as Digital Subscriber Line (DSL) or Cable

SOFTWARE

Operating System

Most new computers with a Windows-based operating system come preinstalled with either Windows 2000 or Windows Millennium Edition (ME). Windows 2000 is based on the NT kernel, has more security features and is designed for networked environments while ME is the replacement for Windows 98 and is marketed for home use. See Related Issues and Considerations below for upgrading issues.

Communications

Package which supports multiple file transfer protocols and data transfer rates up to 56 Kbps.

Client Software

World Wide Web graphical browser with forms support. Java-enabled browsers such as Internet Explorer 4 or Netscape Navigator 4 or greater are required for use of some online databases.

Viewers

WWW graphical browser (see above) will handle both GIF and JPEG graphics. Additional PDF viewer and MPEG player; strongly recommend viewers for other file formats such as TIFF. Later versions PDF viewers have a search capability. Adobe Acrobat Reader 5.0, soon to be released, will support assistive screen readers.

- FOR CARTOGRAPHIC DATA USE: GEOTIFF file viewer. Viewing software for raster data, such as Photo Shop Pro or Print Shop.

Applications Software

Consider getting an integrated "office suite" product such as Microsoft Office or WordPerfect Office. Otherwise:

Database

dBASE file format compatible or dBASE and ASCII comma delimited file importing database management software; useful to have fixed field format (SDF) import ability.

Spreadsheet

Lotus .WK1 file format compatible software; support for other formats such as Excel and Quattro Pro

Word Processing

Software (Microsoft Word, WordPerfect, WordPro, etc.) capable of importing major text file formats, e.g., ASCII text and RTF files

Mapping Software

- FOR CARTOGRAPHIC DATA USE: Data manipulation package, such as ArcView 3.1 or higher, Landview, MapInfo 4.5 or higher, or other similar packages

DVD AS A PERIPHERAL

A DVD external drive may be purchased to add to an existing workstation. However, here are some cautionary notes about this. Most of these products are first and second generation DVD drives and not all of them read CD-ROMs. If you want the flexibility to use this as an additional CD-ROM drive, verify its compatibility with CD-ROMs before purchasing. External drives are available only at 1X and 2X speed. This is equivalent to 9X or 18X speed CD-ROMs and slower speeds than were recommended in the 1998 specifications. Most external DVD models use a SCSI or PC card interface. Macintosh machines and many recent PCs have a SCSI interface. Make sure your system has a compatible interface. It must also have a MPEG-2 decoder card for video.

RELATED ISSUES AND CONSIDERATIONS

These specifications are intended to assist depository staff in making informed purchases which will best achieve the goal of providing public access to Federal Government information in a variety of electronic formats.

These guidelines are aimed at providing reasonably robust workstations which should provide years of service before they become obsolete, but LPS encourages the purchase of equipment that exceeds these specifications if at all economically feasible. The speed at which computer capabilities are evolving indicates that the higher the initial outlay, the longer the useful life for the equipment. If a higher end system is not affordable, look for flexibility and expandability in the system that will allow for enhancements and upgrades at a later date. As these guidelines address minimums, ensure compatibility among chosen components before purchasing.

Depository libraries must have computer equipment sufficient to allow timely and equitable public access to Government electronic information products and should allow printing or

downloading information selected by the user. During a depository library inspection LPS will use a functional approach to determine compliance with this requirement.

If computers in your library are currently running Windows 95/98 and you are considering upgrading the operating system to Windows 2000, be advised that there may be hardware and software incompatibilities. Because Windows 2000 is based on the NT Kernel, upgrading to Windows 2000 from NT 4 is less troublesome.

The Workforce Investment Act of 1998 (August 7, 1998) amended §508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 to require “individuals with disabilities, who are members of the public seeking information or services from a Federal department or agency, have access to and use of information and data that is comparable to that provided to the public who are not individuals with disabilities.” Federal depository libraries must provide hardware and software to allow this or accommodate users in some other manner. Electronic and Information Technology Accessibility Standards; Final Rule was published in the December 21, 2000 (pp. 80499-80528) issue of the *Federal Register*. Further guidance from the U.S. Access Board can be found at their Web site, which is available from:

<http://www.access-board.gov/news/508-final.htm>

The National Commission on Libraries and Information Science (NCLIS) is currently working on recommended specifications for a workstation that meets these standards and they should be available in late April 2001.

Libraries should determine if they have a need to duplicate depository CD-ROMs for preserving data or to create circulating copies. If the need is there, the library should consider purchasing a CD-R (compact disc recordable) or a CD-RW (compact disc rewritable) drive. These can be purchased as either internal or external drives. With a CD-RW the discs can be reused, unlike those of the CD-R that can only be used once. The other major difference between CD-Rs and CD-RWs is that CDs created from a CD-R can sometimes be read in older CD-ROM drives while those created from a CD-RW can only be read from MultiRead drives. This is something to consider particularly if you are creating circulating copies and want to meet the needs of most of your users. Be sure to check compatibility with your operating system. The chart below will help decipher portability:

DRIVE TYPE	READ	WRITE
CD-R	CD-Rs and CD-ROMs	CD-R format only
CD-RW	CD-Rs and CD-RWs	CD-R, CD-RW, CD-ROM
DVD-RAM	CD-ROMs, CD-Rs, CD-RWs and DVDs	DVD-RAM

LPS cannot anticipate or address every possible depository library computer scenario, and depository libraries are encouraged to adapt this menu of specifications to fit their local

situations. Depositories may require multi-purpose single workstations, electronic access in networked environments, or a combination of both. Given the large variation in the size of Federal depository libraries and the numbers of users served, LPS cannot recommend a universal standard for the number of public access workstations in any given library. However, when assessing workstation needs, librarians should consider such local factors as:

- the amount of information provided over the Internet compared with the amount from CD-ROM
- whether and how the workstations are networked
- to what extent users are permitted to perform additional information processing at the public access workstations
- whether users are experiencing extended waiting times at library peak service hours, etc.

When configuring workstations, bear in mind that some government CD-ROM products now link to the Web to update information on the CD-ROM. This means that for the user to get the newer information and the full benefit of the product, at least one workstation must have **both** CD-ROM capability and Internet accessibility with a graphical browser.

Additional or different capabilities may be desirable for workstations used by library staff. Some libraries may elect to add applications software, such as spreadsheet, word processing, or data base software, to their public access workstations, but this is a local resource management decision.

Many depository libraries have existing computer equipment that is no longer "state of the art." These specifications should not be applied retrospectively to existing equipment, although they may assist in determining the appropriate time for replacement or upgrading. Libraries should also consider keeping this equipment in order to access electronic products that cannot be read with newer hardware and software.

LPS works with the Cartographic Users Advisory Council (CUAC) to develop any additional specifications which support GIS applications. These are included in the recommendations with the indicator "• For cartographic data use:".

For additional information, or if you have any questions about these specifications, please contact Cynthia Etkin, Program Analyst, at cetkin@gpo.gov or by voice at 202.512.1119.

Related guidelines:

- "Depository Library Public Service Guidelines for Government Information in Electronic Formats," Administrative Notes, v. 19, #11 (September 15, 1998). http://www.access.gpo.gov/su_docs/fdlp/mgt/pseguide.html
- "FDLP Internet Use Policy Guidelines," Administrative Notes, v. 20, #2 (January 15, 1999). http://www.access.gpo.gov/su_docs/fdlp/mgt/iupolicy.html



Readers Exchange

Recognition for Your GovDocs Web Sites

Bob Gaines

Head – Government Documents & Microforms

Jackson Library

University of North Carolina, Greensboro

Recently our Government Documents subject Web site, “Sexual Harassment Resources” received a small but much appreciated honor when it was chosen as a “Hot Site” by USATODAY.com in their “Web Guide” section (<www.usatoday.com/life/cyber/arch.htm> and click on “Hot Site Archive” and then on Feb. 8, 2001). The following week, it was also listed in the “Life” section under “The Net: New and Notable,” page 3D, in the Feb. 15 issue of USAToday. While we have no idea how USAToday picked it up, this recognition is no doubt due to our having “given” the site to many of the major Web directories and search engines (see the various logos at the top of our site: <<http://library.uncg.edu/depts/docs/us/harass.html>>). Which brings us to the crux of this article: there are probably hundreds of depository libraries out there with thousands of helpful Web sites, BUT those sites may not be readily available to the public because no one knows they are there!

When we first began to create Web links to U.S. government resources, approximately 6 years ago, there was little to link to of any substance. One was reminded of the little old lady on the TV commercial of yore, asking, “Where’s the BEEF?!” The “beef” arrived quickly, as mandated by Congress, and fairly soon we found ourselves with nearly a hundred and fifty Web sites to keep up with and correct and revise on a regular basis – not a job for the squeamish. With these sites now attracting approximately 14,000 hits per month, one would think that they were “visible” enough and well worth the effort put into them. Indeed, the labor intensive nature of keeping Web sites up-to-date might remind us all of the unrelenting work of shelisting all those thousands of paper and fiche documents which we used to receive every year. Of course, we continue to receive a quite impressive number of paper, fiche, and CD-ROM documents, but the shelisting and the catalog records are now automated, and much of what we receive is actually on the Web anyway, so we can and should spend more time on helpful Web sites. How then do we make certain that those time-consuming sites are actually available to the largest number of patrons? The answer was alluded to above – give the site to as many of the well known and heavily used Web directories and search engines as possible, and make certain that they are prominently displayed and easily accessed through your own institution. Remember – even most search engines have some subject directory functions, and we found that quite a few already had “Sexual Harassment” subject pages set up, recommending a small number of sites. Since none of these sites appeared to have anything like the sources we had provided, we decided to “rattle the cage” of as many Web directories and search engines as possible. It is one thing to have your site covered within a major search engine, but it is another level entirely for your site to be listed on one of their subject directory pages. We all assume that this will increase usage substantially, and, after all, this is one of the primary reasons for the continued existence of depository

libraries, and an excellent argument for retaining the Federal Depository Library Program! Think about it – who knows U.S. government information sources better than government documents librarians, and who, therefore, can put up better Web resources?

A side issue – should we utilize information resources NOT directly related to the U.S. government? Absolutely! We decided long ago not to limit our information to only that which was government-produced. If it helps, put it in.

Those of us who have recently dealt with the major Web directories and search engines will have encountered the daunting issue of payment for listing! We have paid NOTHING – NADA – for our listing in Yahoo, the DMOZ Open Directory Project, the Librarians’ Index To The Internet, the Scout Report for Social Sciences, and last but not least, Grace York’s excellent GODORT Handout Exchange (which does NOT charge for anything!). We simply sent in our sites and hoped for the best. The gurus who run these directories will generally recognize a useful site when they examine one, so if your resources fill any void in their listings, they will very likely use it without asking for a dime.

Closer to home, all depository librarians who have created substantial Web resource sites should be in close contact with any and all local institutions which utilize the web. Every public library, large or small college, school media center, government or business site which has potential need for our information should be contacted, notified of your work, and encouraged to link to your material. Sharing information starts in your neighborhood!

Government information, like the rest of the universe, is now riding the crest of the World Wide Web/Internet wave. It has been sink-or-swim time for depository libraries and the FDLP for several years. We now must live with workstations which are obsolete in a matter of months instead of years, and ever increasing requirements for hardware and software. Publications which we have come to value and utilize over decades are now being shifted to electronic format and generally to Web sites – the world’s cheapest method of mass distribution. We worry about archival issues with respect to information published only via the web, and CD-ROM documents which might be just about as useful as a Frisbee in a few years. Still, we continue to live in a world of human communication and interaction, and the more efficient we make that world, the better we will all be for the effort.

[Addendum]

Just a little piece of statistical information - we just got our Web site stats for this department for the month of February. Normally we have around 14,000 hits on the Documents Department Web sites for a given month. Last month we totaled 19,367, with 6880 of those coming from the “Sexual Harassment Resources” site alone! A little publicity never hurts!



Correction on Authorship of Previous Readers Exchange Article

Larry Schankman was the co-author of the Readers Exchange article “Government Documents Processing Tutorial” which appeared in the March 15, 2001 Administrative Notes (v. 22, # 5).

Depository Library Council to the Public Printer As of 3/27/01

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