Bibliographic Access to Electronic Records: National Standards

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Good morning. It is a pleasure to be here today with Jean Hirons of the Library of Congress, and Wil Danielson, Eileen Seremeth, and Steve Uthoff of the Government Printing Office (GPO) Cataloging Branch.

We have an ambitious schedule this morning. To move things forward I will limit remarks to general matters associated with cataloging operations.

Those interested in our Internet related Cataloging Guidelines as a follow up to this morning's program will find two guidelines of potential interest. Our guidelines for cataloging electronic files and for linking records are available on GPO Access at:

http://www.access.gpo.gov/su_docs/dpos/fdlppubs.html

At the present time, more than 1,700 Monthly Catalog records contain Internet related URLs. While many records represent monographs, most represent serial titles.

Although not developed for maps and monographs, we apply selected Internet related CONSER policies to these materials. The authority of CONSER policies and their widespread use as guidelines within institutions that produce Internet related records create a solid foundation for application to serials, maps, and monographs.

While people continue to discuss options for some sort of generic "cataloging" of Internet related titles, the benefits associated with providing Internet access through records produced in accordance with AACR2 are undeniable. Agencies of the United States Government are using the Internet in an increasingly responsible manner for publishing information of importance.

Such information warrants the AACR2 cataloging required to assure electronic access to publications via online public access catalogs. Although continued access to electronic texts via Monthly Catalog records is not assured, trends in Internet related publishing suggest that the future of continued access will be better with each passing year.

Outreach efforts by Robin Haun-Mohamed and personnel of the Depository Administration Branch, specifically their efforts to identify and produce stable and long lasting presentations of published information, should produce tangible results. This work is complemented by efforts undertaken by Duncan Aldrich and Electronic Transition Staff (ETS) personnel to develop partnerships with various institutions to store electronic publications and provide long term access to them. These combined efforts should further contribute to the value of our cataloging, increasing the probability that Monthly Catalog records will provide hot-linked access to most of the electronically available titles they represent.

The availability of CONSER policies to guide our efforts and the suitability of OCLC's environment to produce these records have helped us to react quickly to a relatively new environment. These conditions have been useful to Steve Uthoff and others of us within the Cataloging Branch who have worked to establish suitable internal guidelines. During this process, Jean Hirons has provided guidance to us from the perspective of CONSER.

These efforts and the work of our catalogers have contributed to our current status as the second largest producer of OCLC records with URLs.

I would like to conclude by thanking Jean, who, as the Acting CONSER Coordinator, has wisely permitted member institutions to determine for themselves if they wish to use records for physical forms for recording Internet access related information for electronic versions or if they wish to produce a separate record for such resources.

The "Interim Guidelines for Online Versions of Printed Serials" do not require CONSER institutions to produce a separate record for an electronic version if a suitable physical form record may be enhanced with Internet access related information. Based on this interim guideline, institutions may decide for themselves if a separate record is required.

This optional approach is well suited to our needs. Although we expect that an increasing number of serials and monographs may originate as "Internet only" titles, recent experience indicates that most titles, particularly serials, retain physical forms and assume additional availability via the Internet. Were it not for the option to use a single record for both versions, our workload could increase without a corresponding increase in the number of titles. Such a situation would jeopardize our ability to produce cataloging records in a timely manner.

CONSER's Interim Guidelines are useful for their practical applications within cataloging operations and, as appropriate, are appreciated for providing a "single record" approach for public access. With many titles in both physical and electronic forms, CONSER's policies minimize a potential increase in workloads and provide access to many electronic titles in ways that are acceptable to most institutions.

Thank you for being with us this morning. At this time I will turn our program over to Wil Danielson who will provide insights and examples of cataloging Internet related titles.