

# Proceedings of the 5th Annual Federal Depository Library Conference April 15 - 18, 1996

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## GPO Update

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Good morning everyone. It's my pleasure also to welcome you to the Spring 1996 meeting of the Depository Library Council and the biggest and, I'm sure, the best yet Federal Depository Conference. We regret the crowding, but the turnout for this meeting is totally unprecedented. Attendance is up about 50% from last year, and although we thought this year would be unique, we never expected that kind of jump.

First, I want to thank the many people, both in and outside of GPO, especially our own LPS staff, who contributed to the study of our Depository Program. I want to commend Judy Russell for the amazing job she did in pulling the whole thing together and Wendy Frederick and Ric Davis for the hours of work they put in finishing the writing and editing of the study report. I also want to thank the participants in Study Task 6, which was an "evaluation of current laws governing the FDLP and recommendation of any legislative changes necessary for a successful transition to a more electronic program." I think that many of the issues identified in the larger Study working group came together in the "legislative change task" and I recommend you look carefully at that section of the draft Study Report.

It seems that all we have been doing for the past several months in the Library Programs Service has had to do with the future; working on the study, preparing budget materials, and drafting plans. In this regard, I want to commend Gil Baldwin, our Library Division Chief, who has led these efforts. I also want to commend all of our LPS managers who have kept the traditional services going while at the same time being heavily involved in the study and planning activities.

Speaking of traditional services, I do have one piece of news that I think you will like in one respect, but probably is not good news for our overall program. Based on our output of titles distributed in the first half of this year, it appears that, for the first time in many years, the number of titles distributed in microfiche will be less than those distributed in paper. Where the ratio has been 60% fiche to 40% paper, it may be the reverse of that this year. As best as we can tell, this is the result of two things: 1) a downturn in the kinds of titles that would have been subject to conversion to fiche coming through GPO for printing, and, 2) we are receiving fewer single copies from agencies that we would have converted and distributed in fiche. The number of paper titles is about the same as the past two years, so that type of material is holding in better. Certainly, some of the fiche type material is now only being

published via agency Internet sites or what we are now referring to as "Government electronic information services."

### **Transition Tasks in LPS**

And that brings me back to the electronic environment. Judy has discussed the results of the study. Now what I would like to do this morning is share with you some of our thoughts on how GPO and the Library Programs Service will approach the movement toward a more electronic program. We have had our Appropriations hearing in the House where the feeling still seems to be for a rapid transition. However, the thoughtful expressions of concern from the many stakeholders in Government information led to the five-year strategic plan which was included in the study. Our Senate appropriations hearing is scheduled for mid-May.

At Library Programs Service, we will implement our plans through a project type approach, and we are now in the process of assigning responsibilities for specific projects and identifying tasks. We are approaching this on a project basis because it is coming on top of our regular work which must continue as well. Conceptually, we will break the implementation into four major projects.

1) The first project is the obvious one of acquiring electronic information products for the FDLP. This will include tangible products such as CD-ROMS, acquiring information for online dissemination via GPO Access, and the identification of information products falling within the scope of our program at other agency sites. As an extension of the traditional acquisitions work we do, Robin Haun-Mohamed and the Depository Administration Branch will be responsible for this project.

2) The second project will address cataloging and locator services. As you know, most agencies, excluding the sci/tech ones, have not cataloged their own publications. This has been a centralized service performed by the Superintendent of Documents. I have concerns that, in the electronic environment, agencies will not do any more than before to provide for real, persistent, bibliographic control. So, I believe that bibliographic control, at what has been the individual publication level, is a centralized service that the Superintendent of Documents should continue to perform, or at least fully coordinate. This major project, which will encompass a range of activities from traditional cataloging to the emerging suite of Pathway services, will be the responsibility of Tad Downing and the Cataloging Branch, with the help of our Electronic Transition Staff.

3) Transition-related activities which strengthen the depository library system through training, continuing education, and the revised inspection program, comprise the third project, which will be the responsibility of Sheila McGarr and the Depository Services Staff.

4) The fourth project is to establish a system for providing permanent retention and access to FDLP information. This is a role that our program has played through our Regional library system, and one that the Superintendent of Documents, in my opinion, must continue. Ric Davis and the Electronic Transition Staff, in addition to assisting with all of the transition projects and launching several on their own, have responsibility for this key project and for coordinating this issue with other stakeholders.

That's the project breakdown; now I'd like to focus on each of these four areas.

## **I. ELECTRONIC CONTENT FOR THE FDLP**

### **Online Electronic Products in the FDLP**

First, for the acquisitions project, the current definition of "government publication" in Section 1902 of Title 44, U.S.C. needs to be broadened to include, without question, electronic information, whether published as a tangible product or made accessible via an electronic online service. During the Legislative Task 6 discussions for the study, we arrived at some new definitions. Let me run through them quickly. They are included in the study report as Attachment F and in the Strategic Plan which is Exhibit 1.

"Government information" means Government publications, or other Government information products, regardless of form or format, created or compiled by employees of a Government agency, or at Government expense, or as required by law.

A "Government information product" means a discrete set of Government information, either conveyed in a tangible physical format including electronic media, or made publicly accessible via a Government electronic information service.

A "Government electronic information service" means the system or method by which an agency or its authorized agent provides public access to Government information products via a telecommunications network. The telecommunications network today is, of course, the Internet.

As you know, a common usage to describe things on the Internet has been "information products and services." We tried to deal with this in the December budget transition plan, when we defined products as tangible, and services as intangible or online information. But, for our application, this still did not work well. According to the dictionary, service is a "system or method of providing people with the use of something," therefore it is not the "something" itself. So, in our application, the "something," as we see it, is the information product or the content, and it is provided on an electronic information service. One other note, OMB has used "information dissemination products and services." We must be very aware of use of the word "dissemination" in this manner, however, because it can be construed to mean only those information products that are actually created for public dissemination. We all know how limiting that would be, since most Government information products are originated for internal use and then have external value as well.

### **Handling Online Electronic Products**

Even as we speak, electronic government information products are being incorporated into our program. I want to bring to your attention that the draft Study report, Appendix E to the Strategic Plan, the very last pages in the report, has a set of diagrams showing how we intend to handle the various agency publishing alternatives.

Some of the products coming into the program exist only as online files accessible from a Government electronic information service, and others may be related to print editions of

the same information content. We are developing a consolidated approach to presenting and identifying online electronic products. We think this approach makes sense in the electronic environment, but it does not necessarily carry forward all of the familiar (and resource intensive) elements of the paper-based model.

### **The "Custody" Issue**

The changeable nature of many online electronic products in terms of permanence or location has led us to concentrate initially on those electronic titles over which the Superintendent of Documents (SOD) has custody or control. This distinction has very real resource implications for LPS. The distributed information management environment of the Internet does not lend itself to a centralized holdings model. Instead, the originating agency, or the agency which has custody of the data, is best positioned to assume responsibility for it.

### **Presentation on GPO Access**

Preparing for the 21st Century: An Appraisal of U.S. Intelligence was the first document to be made available through the program exclusively in an online format. It first appeared on the GPO home page with a NEW highlight. We have now developed a specific Web page entitled "Government Information Products Available on the Internet From GPO" with the products arranged by Government agency and alphabetically by title under each agency. This page can now be reached from the Pathway services page on GPO Access, but we will be relocating it for quicker accessibility.

### **Classification**

A Superintendent of Documents classification number was established for Preparing for the 21st Century in order to allow the title to be processed for the various Monthly Catalog outputs, including presentation on the GPO Web site. However, this classification number may not be the model used for future electronic products.

Librarians from the depository community and LPS have joined together to review the application of the SuDocs classification system to online products. At the ALA meeting in San Antonio, concern was expressed over the announcement that LPS would not be applying the SuDocs classification system to online resources. There was also a misunderstanding of our intent concerning the application of the SuDocs system to physical products. That effort will be continued.

In response to this concern, LPS formed an ad hoc committee to consider these issues. The group is reviewing one proposal to keep some of the elements of the existing SuDocs class structure and adding a system generated number after it. It is assumed that one of the reasons for wanting to keep the SuDocs number is its usefulness in identifying information about the agency responsible for the product. The proposal being reviewed would allow this type of information to be retained, but would also allow staff to process the products more quickly.

As you know, the location requirements of intangible or online electronic data are not met by the SuDocs system. For electronic information products stored in a digital data repository, permanency and uniqueness can be ensured by applying the "persistent name," or URI, Uniform Resource Identifier; or "handle." When a standard for "persistent names" emerges, we will utilize or adapt the approach to identify the electronic information products under our custody. In the near term, the modified classification number I just spoke of may be assigned to electronic titles for control purposes until the "persistent name" approach matures. If you have ideas on this process, please contact Robin Haun-Mohamed, or of course, share them with the Council.

### **Notifying Depository Libraries**

We do not intend to issue an "Electronic Products" Shipping List for resources found only online on the GPO Access Services. Although we have included information about Preparing for the 21st Century in the latest Administrative Notes Technical Supplement in the E-Report column, this method is only an interim solution. We will use the "New and Hot" section of the new page on our Web site to notify you of online electronic products available from GPO Access.

### **Selection**

Online electronic titles will not be assigned an item number. When an online electronic product is available from GPO Access, all depository libraries have access to it and the limitations of the item selection do not apply in this context.

### **Document Conversion Efforts**

Our Electronic Transition Staff (ETS) has been exploring the feasibility and cost-effectiveness of various approaches to expanding the range of electronic content in the FDLP. ETS and members of GPO's Production Services staff conducted an in-depth investigation of the feasibility and costs of scanning and conversion requirements for FDLP titles. Our goal in scanning was to create searchable, full text documents rather than just scanned images. We conducted conversion tests on a number of documents using commercially available off-the-shelf software.

Our tests produced mixed results. While large-scale document conversion proved to be possible, it was also found to be in many cases, very expensive. Current document conversion and scanning technology offers the possibility of creating either non-searchable image or full-text searchable electronic files. However, documents we tested that were "text-intensive" had high character recognition error rates that would have necessitated a time-consuming and expensive proofing process prior to dissemination. So far, it appears that large-scale scanning of "text-intensive" publications is not a very viable option.

### **Our Next Steps**

While recognizing the limitations of the current technology, our test results suggested that there is still a limited use for this process. A selective number of paper documents that are approximately 30 pages or less, and are "graphics-intensive," may be converted to image-

only files and made available via GPO Access. These types of publications are excellent candidates for image-only document conversion.

We have also experienced success with some products that have been made available via GPO Access as ASCII and PDF files. However, these have not required conversion, but were products received by GPO from Federal agencies as original, electronic source files that are not only authoritative, but do not require significant proofing or have expensive "clean-up" costs associated with their data.

### **Source Data Files**

As nearly all Government information products exist in electronic form at some point in their life cycle, the most cost-effective method of incorporating additional electronic information products into the FDLP is to obtain that source data from the originating agency. We will be pursuing different approaches to this end, including reaching out to publishing agencies to provide us with their files, and obtaining electronic data files from printing contractors.

## **.II. CATALOGING AND LOCATOR SERVICES**

Our second project is to develop cataloging and locator services, which will include the Pathway services.

We intend to provide full AACR2, MARC format cataloging for Government information products which come under our custody, whether in a physical format or an electronic file in a SOD facility. Our Locator services, including Pathway services and GILS records, will index and point users to the content of other Government information products on the Internet.

### **Links Project**

Council recommended that LPS link MOCAT records that represent titles published in differing physical forms and/or in remotely accessible locations. This is a good recommendation, which we will pursue. The Cataloging Branch has done a considerable amount of homework investigating the potential use of linking entry fields. We consulted with CONSER and cataloging policy experts at the Library of Congress, in order to understand what is truly involved with such a venture, and to define the universe of potential linkages and the related complications.

We are considering a variety of options concerning how best to approach identifying electronic products on the Internet within the constraints of staffing and other resources. Within MOCAT, we will include the URL for those electronic titles which are available on GPO Access. Initially, the URL will not be hot linked but we intend to make them live links.

Another alternative we are investigating is Pathway Bibliographic Records. The concept is to identify selected full text electronic titles at agency Internet sites with abbreviated records consisting of six or seven data elements. The records will be hot linked so that users can proceed from the Pathway record to the electronic text at the agency site.

## **Pathway Services**

Other Pathway tasks are moving forward through the efforts of Maggie Parhamovich Farrell, Raeann Dossett, and Joe Paskoski. They have taken steps to facilitate searching on the Internet through the Pathway Indexer, which will locate specific files by keywords. A prototype Pathway Indexer is operational on the GPO Web site. The Pathway Indexer functions like many other Internet indexers such as Yahoo!, except the Pathway Indexer is limited to only Federal Government Internet sites. We are currently using Harvest software and hope to upgrade the Pathway Indexer to more sophisticated search software in the near future.

The second application is our Pathway browse capability. Instead of looking for specific information with the Pathway Indexer, users can browse through subjects and titles for their information. We are using the subject topics from the Subject Bibliographies for this purpose and analyzing Internet sites by subjects. Government Internet sites are then listed under the appropriate topic. Users can browse through the topic list and select a topic which interests them. The browse application is also used for the new "Government Information Products" list which I mentioned earlier. And finally, the Pathway GILS records created by LPS are integrated with the GPO GILS database. The Pathway GILS records are customized records in the GILS format which describe agencies at the highest level and point to agency Web sites and GILS holdings as well as to depository libraries.

For more information regarding Pathway services, please attend one of the demonstrations on Wednesday at 8:30 and 10:30. Also, Raeann, Maggie, and Joe will be conducting a focus group on Wednesday at 4:00 to solicit feedback regarding Pathway services.

## **.Status of GPO Cataloging Products**

Concerning current cataloging products, more than 38,000 Monthly Catalog records are now available at our Web site. These records begin with January 1994, and the most recent are those created two work days ago. Using the "locate" function, users are able to identify depository libraries that have selected titles represented by item numbers in these records.

The abbreviated paper edition of the Monthly Catalog is being distributed. To date, the January, February, and March 1996 issues have been published. The size and complexity of the paper catalog has been greatly reduced, which will allow us to save a significant portion of the more than \$500,000 that had been spent per year on the full paper edition. In May we expect to distribute the 1995 Cumulative Index to the Monthly Catalog, which will be the last of the old format paper products. We regret the confusion created by our inadvertently sending copies of the paper edition to libraries that had not selected it. If you did not select the paper edition but received a copy, treat it as you would an unselected title. If you selected the CD-ROM edition, be assured that we will honor your selection.

We had hoped to publish the CD-ROM edition of the Monthly Catalog at the same time as the abbreviated paper edition. There has been a delay, but we will soon be sending beta test copies of the CD-ROM prototype to Council members and other librarians. The search software, Dataware Technologies' Referencebook, provides effective searching, but we

need to receive comments related to the "user-friendliness" and overall design of this product.

There is no question that the cataloging and locating project will be a complex one. We look forward to the Council session tomorrow at 8:30 on "Bibliographic Access in an Electronic Environment" and to advice from the Council.

### **III. STRENGTHENING THE DEPOSITORY SYSTEM**

Now, to the subject of library service expectations. As we have said, in addition to tangible and online electronic information from GPO, electronic information from another Government agency's site will be considered FDLP information when we direct and link users to it via our Locator services. Every depository is expected to be able to offer public access to electronic information made available through the FDLP.

The "Guidelines for the Federal Depository Library Program," which were developed with the help of Council, were distributed to all depository libraries in February 1996. Paragraph 7-8 of the "Guidelines" states that:

Appropriate hardware and software must be provided for public users accessing electronic information available through the Federal Depository Library Program (e.g., CD-ROMS, on-line databases, etc.). This hardware and software should include computer work stations capable of providing Internet access that requires GILS-aware software, CD-ROM readers, and printers.

This requirement to provide public access to electronic FDLP information will be effective October 1, 1996. During a depository library inspection, we will use a functional approach to determine compliance with this requirement. The inspector will focus on the depository library's ability to provide public access to electronic FDLP information. The method selected by the depository library to meet this public access requirement is a local determination.

We have also prepared draft "Recommended Minimum Specifications for Public Access Work Stations in Federal Depository Libraries," which describes a single work station capable of meeting this requirement. When finalized, the January 1995 "Recommended Minimum Technical Guidelines" will be superseded. Copies of this draft are available and it will be discussed at the Council working session tomorrow afternoon.

These recommended specifications are intended to assist depository librarians who are planning purchases of new personal computers for public use. Computer equipment in depository libraries must be sufficient to allow timely and equitable public access to the Government information products accessible via Internet, to CD-ROMS, and should allow printing or downloading information selected by the user. Additional or different capabilities may be desirable for work stations 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 work stations, but this is a local resource management decision.



Depository libraries are encouraged to adapt this menu of specifications to fit local situations. Although these specifications describe a robust multi-purpose single work station, many institutions are providing electronic access in networked environments. We cannot anticipate or address every possible depository library computer scenario. Rather, these specifications are intended to assist depository staff in making informed purchases.

Given the large variation in the size of Federal depository libraries and the numbers of users served, we can not recommend a universal standard for the number of public access work stations in any given library. This must be a local decision based on several factors.

Also, these specifications are not intended to describe the best possible work station. Instead, they are the minimum, or baseline, specifications which should be considered when purchasing new stand-alone public access work stations. We encourage the purchase of equipment which exceeds these minimum specifications. The speed at which computer capabilities are evolving suggests that a higher initial outlay will result in an extended useful life for the equipment.

### **Inspection Program**

Concerning the inspection program, we intend to change the focus so that the resources devoted to periodic inspections can be reallocated to support and services to depository libraries. Now that the depository library self-study has been adopted as an evaluation tool, we intend that the basis for inspections will be that specified in 44 U.S.C. .1909, which states that "the Superintendent of Documents shall make firsthand investigation of conditions [in depository libraries] for which need is indicated ..."

We will concentrate on site compliance inspections of those libraries which submit unsatisfactory self-studies, have major changes in staffing or facilities, have prior records of non-compliance, or if complaints are received from the public concerning depository library services. Our Depository Services Staff will also be available to visit, consult with, and assist a depository library upon request.

Later this year, we will begin to implement the use of the depository self-study on a wider scale. We will concentrate our initial efforts on those libraries that have not been inspected recently.

### **IV. PERMANENT PUBLIC ACCESS TO ELECTRONIC FDLP INFORMATION**

And finally, to the burning issue of permanent access and retention. Historically, the FDLP, through the mechanism of the regional depository libraries, has guaranteed permanent preservation of, and access to, tangible Government information products. Regional libraries provide the only capability for permanent access to relatively complete collections of tangible government products at locations throughout the country.

I believe that working to ensure permanent access and persistent bibliographic control are the two most important roles for the Superintendent of Documents and our program in the electronic environment. These are both traditional roles that have been played by the

Superintendent of Documents and, I feel, must be continued as a part of Government information policy.

With respect to purely electronic Government information, there is no parallel mechanism to ensure that this information is "archived" for permanent public access. During the study, numerous participants raised issues concerned with preserving electronic Government information.

Our Legislative Task group proposed the following language that "The Superintendent of Documents will coordinate with issuing agencies, the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA), and with Regional and other depository libraries to establish a system so that Government information products available via Government electronic information services will be maintained permanently for depository library and general public access. This system will utilize as one component the electronic storage facility established by the Superintendent of Documents under the GPO Access Act."

We will undertake a coordination role for this overall effort. As a starting point, we will begin with ensuring permanent access to information that is under our custody. Dealing with the agencies regarding information products on their Internet sites will be another matter, however. It is critical that we seek to guarantee that information will still be available in formats that can be permanently accessed and preserved in the future. This will be accomplished by not only GPO, but by other Federal agencies, including NARA, as information is "refreshed" to new mediums for continuing availability and access.

I believe that legislation will be needed to address this major question and others, so, once again, please review the ideas put forward in Task 6 of the study report and we welcome your feedback.