

# **Regional Depository Libraries in the 21st Century: A Time for Change?**

## **A Report To The Joint Committee On Printing**

### **I. INTRODUCTION**

The Federal Depository Library Program (FDLP) operates under the authority and mandates of 44 *United States Code* §§1901-1916. The existing structure of selective and regional depository libraries dates back to the Depository Library Act of 1962, which established regional depository libraries.

Within this statutory framework, different models of sharing resources and responsibilities between regional and selective libraries within the states they serve have been implemented over the years, with Government Printing Office (GPO) approval. These include different models of intra-state sharing between regional and selective libraries, and for sharing of some services between regional depository libraries in one state and selective depository libraries in an adjacent or near-by state where no regional library exists.

In recent years, technological innovations and the online information environment have made it possible for a number of depository libraries to participate in multi-state collaborations for rapid interlibrary loan and other services. Technological innovation and the online environment have also made it possible to develop models for sharing resources and responsibilities between regional depositories in different states and the selective libraries they support.

In September 2007 the Government Printing Office (GPO) sent forward a request to the to the Joint Committee on Printing (JCP) for approval of a proposed shared regional designation between the University of Kansas and the University of Nebraska at Lincoln. While the JCP did not approve the request, there was concern that the Kansas/Nebraska proposal to share resources and responsibilities was a “signal that growing challenges confront regional depository libraries in maintaining and supporting effective public access through the FDLP”.

The JCP directed GPO, in consultation with the library community, to conduct a study of regional depository libraries. The study is to determine the extent to which public access through the FDLP is impaired by current and projected conditions in regional depository libraries. A report of the findings and any recommended legislative changes to improve the FDLP were to be delivered to the JCP by June 1, 2008.