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Regional Depository Libraries Working Groups, Committees, Associations, Task Forces, Coalitions: What Have We Been Doing for the Past Few Years?

Julia F. Wallace, University of Minnesota
Minneapolis, MN

Good afternoon. As you can see, I do not have a spiffy Powerpoint illustrated program to jazz up my presentation, but I have decided that if I did, the first slide would say "Been there, done that." This is the point in the conference where we discover that there is nothing new under the sun, and I'm going to identify and summarize some of the many activities and reports in which we in the depository community have participated. Luckily, librarians know that studying history can be a useful exercise, and that revisiting where we have been can inform us as we decide where we should be going.

I have provided you with a brief handout which identifies some key activities and reports since 1986. These reports, and others as well, are listed in the Bibliography for the GPO Study, which is found in Attachment D-3. For those which are available on the Internet, I have provided current URLs.

As you will see as I go through these materials, we have gotten pretty good at enunciating principles and goals, but we are less articulate when we try to define new structures for the Federal Depository Library Program (FDLP). The trends which influenced these efforts will seem familiar: changes in technology and in policy, different perceptions of the correct role for the government in information dissemination, and constantly threatened Federal budgets.

While I will focus here on some specific reports, I need to acknowledge that many other activities also were going on during this same 10-year period. Of course the initiatives of Congress provided the framework, and within this time period a number of bills were introduced which provided incentives for the library community to take action. Congress also held some landmark hearings on government information during this period. Our own associations also were busy. The Special Libraries Association has held several related Institutes, most recently in the fall of 1994. The American Association of Law Libraries (AALL) has a Government Relations Committee which holds telephone conference calls

monthly, and their Washington Office follows government information issues actively. The AALL Annual Meetings frequently include programs to update members on these issues. The Association of Research Libraries also maintains an influential presence in Washington, and committees and task forces have studied issues related to government information.

The American Library Association (ALA) keeps watch on these issues through its Washington Office, which prepares a recurring report entitled "Less Access to Less Information By and About the U.S. Government." The office has started its online ALA Washington Office Newsletter (ALAWON), which covers government information issues along with other issues of interest to librarians. And of course ALA's Government Documents Round Table (GODORT) is a major focus for activities of government documents librarians. In addition to active participation in legislative action, GODORT has prepared white papers, position papers, and statements of principle. GODORT's Ad Hoc Committee on the Internet just released its "Whitepaper: Government Information in the Electronic Environment" in January; it is being published in the March 1996 issue of Documents to the People. GODORT has presented major programs on government information and depository libraries at several recent annual conferences.

And of course the Depository Library Council has studied and discussed the restructuring of the depository library program, especially since 1991; while I will not be summarizing all of those discussions, the Council's report on the subject is one of the eight documents on the list of landmark activities.

The ARL Study¹

In 1986 the Association of Research Libraries (ARL) convened a Task Force on Government Information in Electronic Format. The task force was chaired by D. Kaye Gapen, and included Nancy Cline, Malcolm Getz, Jean Loup, and Barbara von Wahlde. The report, released in October 1987, is entitled Technology & U.S. Government Information Policies: Catalysts for New Partnerships.

To indicate how little the basics have changed in ten years, I'd like to quote from the first paragraph of the report:

"The terms and conditions of public availability of U.S. Government information are very much in question. Technological advances in information storage and retrieval have created circumstances and concerns about access to and dissemination of information in electronic formats. Questions surrounding the issue are entangled with concomitant pressures to reduce Federal spending, shrink the size of government, minimize government competition with private enterprise, and gain a national competitive advantage--both economic and strategic--over foreign nations. Longstanding tensions inherent in the laws, regulations, and practices that collectively make up U.S. Government information policies are exacerbated by these pressures and by the opportunities, challenges, and financing questions posed by information in electronic formats. Technology, moving faster than policy development, has left U.S. Government information programs resting on uncertain foundations."

The ARL report suggests that circumstances warrant a reassessment of library responsibilities in view of new opportunities made feasible by technologies. It presents five scenarios for dissemination, and a three-tiered model for a depository library program. The dissemination scenarios have similarities to visions offered today, with some interesting differences.

1) Limited Government Role. Government offers data on tape to libraries, which mount datafiles and provide necessary software and service.

2) Government Agency Manages Dissemination. Each agency, acting independently, provides data from agency or intermediary computers, with each agency setting its own standards.

3) GPO Acts as Publisher. Agencies are required to provide the Public Printer with raw data; GPO puts data in standard format and provides it along with public domain or generic software for the Depository Library Program.

4) GPO Provides Full Support. GPO provides fully usable information to libraries, and pays any telecommunications charges.

5) Data to the Highest Bidder. Agencies auction data to the highest bidder, with exclusive rights to dissemination; libraries pay retail price for electronic information. The three-part model for the depository program presented by ARL is reflected in several of the later reports we will look at. The three levels are:

1) Basic Services. Information centers with small collections and computerized gateways to information located elsewhere.

2) Intermediate Services. Larger collections, and some local electronic information, with gateways to more electronic government information located elsewhere; some mediation and synthesis provided.

3) Full Services. Research level collections and a full range of electronic information, both locally-available and gateways; services include value-added characteristics and specialized software packages.

ARL's task force proposed six principles, which also will sound familiar:

1) Open exchange of government information should be protected.

2) Federal policy should support the integrity and preservation of government electronic databases.

3) Copyright should not be applied to U.S. Government information.

4) Diversity of sources of access...is in the public interest and entrepreneurship should be encouraged.

5) Government information should be available at low cost.

6) A system to provide equitable, no-fee access to basic public information is a requirement of a democratic society.

.OTA Report²

While it was not a library community activity, the OTA's report *Informing the Nation: Federal Information Dissemination in an Electronic Age*, published in 1988, provided a foundation for much of the discussion to follow. Many librarians and library associations provided input to this report. It acknowledged the essential role of Federal information, and the new opportunities for cost savings and efficiency presented by technological advances. However, it recognized the eroding of the institutional roles of centralized agencies like GPO and NTIS, and identified new concerns for equity.

The report suggested that technology had outpaced the statutes, and that Congressional action was urgently needed. It proposed a reorganization of the Federal Depository Library Program, and considered relocation within the government of both GPO and NTIS. It also recommended a government-wide index of information regardless of format, which would begin with a combination of the GPO's Monthly Catalog and NTIS's Government Reports Announcements and Index.

From 1988 to 1991, the ideas percolated, more information became available in electronic formats, and Congress held more hearings on electronic information. The GPO initiated pilot projects in new technologies, and also faced budget pressures. In 1991, the reorganized Depository Library Council initiated a series of focused discussions on the GPO's electronic future and the structure of the FDLP.

The Librarians' Manifesto³

On Library Legislative Day in 1992, Ridley Kessler and Gary Cornwell visited with staff of the Joint Committee on Printing. At that time the JCP was chaired by Rep. Charlie Rose of North Carolina, and they met with his JCP staff director, John Merritt. Ridley is the regional librarian for North Carolina, and Gary was the incoming chair of Depository Library Council. In response to the questions and concerns expressed by Mr. Merritt, they volunteered to prepare a document identifying the major problems of the FDLP and outlining possible solutions. They enlisted the help of several other colleagues, all practicing documents librarians, and in June submitted their report to Mr. Merritt. The document was later revised for publication in the *Government Publications Review* as "Problems and Issues Affecting the U.S. Depository Library Program and the GPO: The Librarians' Manifesto."

In its introduction, the Manifesto acknowledges the "outdated vacuum cleaner" description of the FDLP which had been put forth by Peter Herson in a 1992 article in *Government Information Quarterly*. The document acknowledges that the current depository library structure is inadequate and inefficient, and outlines a layered system for libraries and a revitalized role for the GPO. The Manifesto envisioned a transition of the GPO from a print shop and warehouse to an information provider for the government, in partnership with the

depository libraries. GPO would become an intermediary, a coordinator, and a gateway to agency-based electronic information, eventually developing a common user interface.

The Manifesto suggests that some problems in Federal policy arise from differing definitions of "government document," and recommends that Title 44 should be revised to "securely fold electronic products and services into the Depository Library Program." It also acknowledges the problems of cost shifting from the Federal Government to libraries, and identifies software and license fees as major problems.

The general structure proposed for the FDLP consists of the following components:

- 1) Basic Service Centers. Small depository collections of documents, with few requirements for collection management or retention.
- 2) Public Access Libraries. Similar to current selective depositories, with chiefly high-interest materials, and with flexible requirements for collection management.
- 3) Resource Centers. Large libraries which would maintain comprehensive collections and provide document delivery to smaller libraries.
- 4) Gateway Libraries. With financial support from the Federal Government, these would provide gateways and delivery services for electronic databases, and also would assist other libraries with training and support.
- 5) National Depository Library. A national collection of last resort, and also a reference and management resource for other program partners.

The Manifesto recommends that before any firm recommendation for a new structure is made, several tasks must be accomplished. First, the goals and objectives of the FDLP must be fully delineated and examined. Second, the dissemination needs of Federal agencies must be analyzed. Third, the information needs of the users must be thoroughly examined. And finally, various scenarios for restructuring the system must be evaluated in terms of cost, benefits, efficiency, and accessibility.

Dupont Circle Group⁴

At the fall 1992 meeting of the Depository Library Council, the GPO discussed its major budget problems, and in a letter to all depositories that November, Superintendent of Documents Wayne Kelley outlined severe cost-cutting measures which were being proposed. Shortly after this, at the Midwinter 1993 meeting of ALA, GODORT members heard two challenges to become directly involved in planning for the future of the FDLP. Gary Cornwell, Chair of Depository Library Council, told attendees that change would come soon, and that depository librarians needed to be an active part of the planning. Shirley Woodrow, representing Joint Committee on Printing chair Charlie Rose, challenged depository librarians to identify ways to economize in the depository program. At the same time, several bills had been introduced in Congress which could profoundly affect the FDLP.

In response to these multiple challenges, the chairs of Council and of GODORT (Gary Cornwell and Julie Wallace) called together a small group of depository librarians to meet together just before the spring Federal Depository Library Conference in April 1993. The group, mainly former chairs or leaders in Council or GODORT, met for two days in the ARL offices overlooking Dupont Circle in Washington, hence the name of the group. The draft report which the group pulled together was distributed and discussed at the conference, and was distributed widely in the depository community. It was published electronically as well, and comments were encouraged.

The Dupont Circle Group Discussion Draft looked at both the governance of the FDLP and the structure of the program. It presented three governance models and two alternatives for government information service. It started with a mission statement and goals for a Federal Information Access Program. The mission is "to make government information freely available in usable formats to meet the diverse needs of multiple publics." The draft suggests that the program must be tied to the life cycle of information, ensuring public participation in all phases of information creation, distribution, access, use, and evaluation.

A very useful element of the draft is an itemization of benefits which a program provides, both to the public and to the agencies. It presents a clear statement of the strengths of the program, and proposes "Staking our claim in the electronic environment." A "Ghost of DLP Future" is also presented, suggesting a future with less and less information available through the program if the status quo were to be maintained.

The two service models in the draft have similarities but also basic differences. The first, termed "Federal Information Service Centers," is a three-level model with some similarities to the earlier ARL and Manifesto models. It would include:

- 1) Basic Service Centers, with small predetermined or selected collections.
- 2) Intermediate Information Centers, with larger collections and higher level connectivity; these centers would provide electronic gateways, value-added approaches, and more advanced mediation.
- 3) Full Service Centers, which would provide all services of Intermediate Centers, and also would provide local network services, locally-mounted databases and locally-developed software; they would also provide document delivery and research assistance.

The second service model was entitled Government Information Access Centers and envisioned a flexible, multifaceted access system providing a variety of options for participation based on local needs and cooperative planning. Libraries from small to large, and from mainly hard copy to mainly electronic, could all be participants.

The Dupont Circle draft also provided a list of ten interim proposals to aid in the transition, including a suggestion for minimum technical requirements for depository libraries.

Depository Library Council Report5

By the time the Dupont Circle Group met, Council was already on its way to creating its own report on the future of the FDLP. At the fall 1992 meeting the discussion of the FDLP's future was followed by appointment of an editing committee headed by Council member Robert L. Oakley. It was discussed at the spring 1993 Council meeting, and a discussion draft was distributed to the community for comment in June 1993. Comments were incorporated into the final report, "Alternatives for Restructuring the Depository Library Program: A Report to the Superintendent of Documents and the Public Printer from the Depository Library Council," which was completed in September 1993.

The Council report starts out with a brief history of the program and a statement of its values and objectives. A set of 10 assumptions is set forth, including assumptions that the FDLP is a vital link between citizens and government, but that as currently structured it is floundering. It assumes increased expectations from users for electronic information, a continuing need for information professionals as intermediaries, and many diverse points of access in addition to libraries. It also assumes that there may be some depositories which will not be able to be partners in the new electronic future.

The report outlines 10 possible scenarios for a future depository library program, which are not necessarily mutually exclusive but provide a variety of ideas for discussion. Some of the organizational scenarios include the following:

- 1) The ARL model, as outlined above.
- 2) A Direct Support Model, incorporating some ideas from the information industry suggesting that libraries be provided with credits or vouchers to select information products and even electronic equipment from government or private sources.
- 3) A network of super-regionals, or an alternative system of subject-based regionals, which would be libraries of last resort for either a geographic or a subject area, with major collection and service responsibilities. These would be fewer in number than present regionals, perhaps 10 in all.
- 4) A system of electronic depositories, which would provide appropriate hardware, software and assistance to serve users and other libraries.
- 5) Recognize a new role for depositories when electronic government information comes through networks or a single point of access, with the FDLP creating a foundation for building electronic dissemination systems. While this scenario asks whether there is any need for a program in the electronic age, and identifies many barriers, it also sets out elements of a successful system and presents the features of the FDLP which could allow it to play an important role.

Some additional concepts are included, such as a national collection of last resort, a recommendation for mandatory minimum technical standards, and a suggestion to rename the program. Council prepared this paper to stimulate discussion, distributing it widely in the depository community and to members of Congress.

Chicago Conference on the Future of Federal Government Information⁶

Following the discussion of the Dupont Circle draft, the participants in that effort agreed that a general, open meeting was the next logical step. A three-day conference was convened in Chicago October 29-31, 1993, and over 150 librarians and others attended. The purpose of the conference was to articulate a vision for dissemination of Federal Government information, develop strategies for the immediate revitalization of the FDLP, and identify methods to enhance the role of librarians in the life cycle of government information.

The conference agreed on a mission statement: "The mission of a Federal Information Dissemination and Access Program, offered through cooperating libraries, is to provide and insure equitable, no-fee access to government information in usable and multiple forms to the people of the United States of America." The report from the conference presents underlying values, a statement of goals, and descriptions of history and recent developments. The report then provides a framework for a model program. It outlines the responsibilities of each of the program partners: producing agencies, the central coordinating government authority, and participating libraries and librarians. The organizational framework is flexible, providing for planning and coordination by geographic clusters of libraries.

The Chicago Conference report also provided many suggestions for both the GPO and depositories for revitalizing the FDLP as part of the transition to a mix of print and electronic information. The report was widely disseminated and discussed, and led directly to the final two activities in my litany.

Coalition of Many Associations Framework⁷

In the spring of 1995, the leaders of several library associations convened to revisit the Chicago Conference report in light of new legislation and changes in technology. In order to focus discussions more clearly, the group formulated a brief 2-page working document to carry to each of the associations. As with the previous documents, it includes a mission statement: "The mission for an enhanced Federal Information Dissemination and Access Program is to guarantee ready, equal, equitable, no-fee access to government information regardless of format to the people of the United States of America through participating Libraries. Building on the success of the current FDLP, the nation must develop a broader Federal Information Dissemination and Access Program."

The framework identifies 7 essential components of the enhanced program, and provides a grid which identifies the responsibilities of the program partners in the stages of the life cycle of government information (Creation, Dissemination, Access, Use, Preservation, Evaluation). This model uses the three program partners from the Chicago Conference report (Producing Government Agencies, Central Operational Authority, and Participating Libraries) and adds Users as a fourth. The Framework document was officially endorsed by ARL, ALA, SLA and AALL in 1995.

The ALA Forum⁸

In July of 1995, ALA President Betty Turock and the ALA Washington Office convened a two-day forum of invited representatives from a broad group of organizations to address policy issues and to develop models for Federal responsibilities for information

dissemination and for a reinvented FDLP. In addition to the library associations involved in the previous efforts, this forum also included the Chief Officers of State Library Agencies, the Urban Libraries Council, and the Medical Libraries Association. The forum produced a report with two parts:

I. Reconceptualize Federal Information and Access Responsibilities. Proposes a new governance structure involving all three branches of government and all bodies with explicit information dissemination missions, with operational authority vested in a Chief Federal Information Dissemination Officer.

II. Reinvent the Current Federal Depository Library Program: A Federal/State/Local Library Partnership Program. Proposes a new partnership program, much more flexible than the present FDLP and based on local and statewide planning. The goals include the familiar "equitable, no-fee, efficient and dependable access," but also include goals relating to training and to measurement and evaluation. The chief emphasis is on empowering State and local libraries and consortia to design their own systems for services and for preservation, in partnership with the Federal Government.

So, as I said at the outset, we as depository librarians have enunciated our mission and goals, and we have made many proposals for reinventing our depository library program. I would also point out that the majority of the reports cited here suggest new names to replace the outdated "depository" term, as the GPO's Study itself does. The discussion of these issues is not over - the biggest challenge continues to be to move it beyond just the depository library community and to convince the larger information community and the Congress of the continuing need for and benefit of a Federal information dissemination and access program.

1. Association of Research Libraries. Task Force on Government Information in Electronic Format. Technology & U.S. Government Information Policies: Catalysts for New Partnerships. Washington, D.C.: Association of Research Libraries, [1987].

2. United States. Congress. Office of Technology Assessment. Informing the Nation: Federal Information Dissemination in an Electronic Age (OTA-CIT-396). Washington, D.C.: G.P.O., 1988. (Y 3.T 22/2:2 In 3/9)

3. Cornwell, Gary, Ridley R. Kessler, Duncan Aldrich, Thomas K. Andersen, Stephen M. Hayes, Jack Sulzer, and Susan Tulis. "Problems and Issues Affecting the U.S. Depository Library Program and the GPO: The Librarians' Manifesto." Government Publications Review 20, no. 2 (March/April 1993): 121-140.

4. "Dupont Circle Group: Discussion Draft," April 1993. The Dupont Circle Reporter: An Electronic Informal Newsletter for the Federal Depository Community. 1993.

5. Depository Library Council to the Public Printer (U.S.). "Alternatives for Restructuring the Depository Library Program: A Report to the Superintendent of Documents and the Public Printer from the Depository Library Council." Sept. 1993. Administrative Notes 16, no. 16 (Dec. 5, 1995): 23-59.

6. "Reinventing Access to Federal Government Information: Report of the Chicago Conference on the Future of Federal Government Information, Chicago, Illinois, October 29-31, 1993." Documents to the People 21, no. 4 (Dec. 1993): 234-246.

7. "Enhanced Library Access and Dissemination of Federal Government Information: A Framework for Future Discussion." Working Document endorsed by the American Association of Law Libraries, American Library Association, Association of Research Libraries, Special Libraries Association, 1995. American Association of Law Libraries Newsletter 27, no. 1 (September 1995): 14-15. and

8. "Model for 'New Universe' of Federal Information Access and Dissemination: Preliminary Results of Forum on Government Information Policy, July 20-21, 1995, Sponsored by American Library Association." ALAWON, ALA Washington Office Newline 4, no. 77 (August 9, 1995).

..A Brief Annotated Chronology

1986-87

The Association of Research Libraries convened a special task force to investigate new ways to deliver government information as it becomes available in electronic formats, and new models for the depository library program. The task force's report includes a set of six draft principles.

Association of Research Libraries. Task Force on Government Information in Electronic Format. Technology & U.S. Government Information Policies: Catalysts for New Partnerships. Washington, D.C.: Association of Research Libraries, 1987. (Task Force Report No. 3)

1988

While not a library community activity, the publication of the OTA's report on Federal information still serves as a landmark in the discussion of the transition into the electronic age. Many library associations and librarians contributed to the report.

United States. Congress. Office of Technology Assessment. Informing the Nation: Federal Information Dissemination in an Electronic Age (OTA-CIT-396). Washington, D.C.: G.P.O., 1988. (Y 3.T 22/2:2 In 3/9)

1991

The reorganized Depository Library Council initiated discussions of GPO's electronic future and the structure of the Federal depository library program. These discussions continued through several Council meetings, resulting in the report listed under 1993 below.

.1992

Gary Cornwell, incoming chair of Depository Library Council, and Ridley Kessler, regional librarian for North Carolina, responded to questions from John Merritt, staff director of the Joint Committee on Printing, by volunteering to prepare a document detailing the major problems confronting the FDLP and offering possible solutions. They enlisted the assistance of several colleagues, and prepared a report which was presented to the JCP in June. The report was expanded and published the following year.

Cornwell, Gary, Ridley R. Kessler, Duncan Aldrich, Thomas K. Andersen, Stephen M. Hayes, Jack Sulzer, and Susan Tulis. "Problems and Issues Affecting the U.S. Depository Library Program and the GPO: The Librarians' Manifesto." *Government Publications Review* 20, no. 2 (March/April 1993): 121-140. A November letter to depository libraries from Superintendent of Documents Wayne Kelley outlined a major budget shortfall and proposed program cuts.

1993

Attendees at the ALA Midwinter Conference in January heard challenges from the Joint Committee on Printing and the chair of the Depository Library Council, to take an immediate and active role in shaping a new depository library program.

In April, a small group of depository librarians assembled just before the Federal Depository Conference to get the discussion started.

"Dupont Circle Group: Discussion Draft," April 1993. *The Dupont Circle Reporter: An Electronic Informal Newsletter for the Federal Depository Community*. 1993.

Council continued discussions of the GPO electronic future, and issued a draft for discussion in June 1993. After community input, the report was issued in September.

Depository Library Council to the Public Printer (U.S.). "Alternatives for Restructuring the Depository Library Program: A Report to the Superintendent of Documents and the Public Printer from the Depository Library Council." September 1993. *Administrative Notes* 16, no. 16 (December 5, 1995): 23-59.

In October, over 150 librarians and others traveled to Chicago to deliberate the future of Federal Government information and the depository library program.

"Reinventing Access to Federal Government Information: Report of the Chicago Conference on the Future of Federal Government Information, Chicago, Illinois, October 29-31, 1993." *Documents to the People* 21, no. 4 (December 1993): 234-246; *Administrative Notes* 14, no. 24 (November 30, 1993): 11-29.

.1995

A Coalition of Many Associations (COMA) released a two-page framework, an update and distillation of issues from the Chicago conference.

"Enhanced Library Access and Dissemination of Federal Government Information: A Framework for Future Discussion." Working Document endorsed by the American Association of Law Libraries, American Library Association, Association of Research Libraries, Special Libraries Association, 1995. American Association of Law Libraries Newsletter 27, no. 1 (September 1995): 14-15.

The American Library Association convened a two-day forum of representatives from a broad group of organizations to address policy issues and develop models for Federal responsibilities for information dissemination and for a reinvented depository library program. "Model for 'New Universe' of Federal Information Access and Dissemination: Preliminary Results of Forum on Government Information Policy, July 20-21, 1995, Sponsored by American Library Association." ALAWON, ALA Washington Office Newslines 4, no. 77 (August 9, 1995).