



January 7, 2011

To the American Library Association Midwinter Conference:

In view of my very recent appointment by the President, I sincerely regret my inability to attend the American Library Association Midwinter Conference, but I want to extend warm greetings to the conference attendees and best wishes for a successful meeting. I would also like to take this opportunity to give you my general outlook on the Federal Depository Library Program (FDLP) and the role GPO plays in providing public access to Government information.

I have always had great admiration and respect for the GPO employees and the depository librarians and depository library directors who make the FDLP work for the American people. Over the past 30 years I have consistently advised Public Printers, the Joint Committee on Printing, and GPO's legislative and oversight committees that the FDLP is one of the most important programs the agency carries out. With roots in the early 19th century, it is the original Open Government program, a way to keep America informed by cataloging and distributing the official publications of the Government to participating libraries throughout the country where they are available for free use by the public. That mission continues today in GPO's collaborative partnership with more than 1,200 libraries nationwide, and through its online information dissemination programs – first GPO Access and now the Federal Digital System, or FDsys – whose objective is to provide no-fee permanent public access to authentic online Government information.

The Federal depository library community knows better than anyone else that the rapid development of new technologies has resulted in a sea change in the way the public locates, accesses, and uses Government information. I believe GPO and the community have been major contributors to that change with the introduction of a centralized online dissemination program enacted by the GPO Access Act in 1993 – legislation that I supported – and the development and implementation today of FDsys.

A top priority for GPO will be to improve the FDLP by completing the development of FDsys, which the library community has been patiently waiting for. GPO also needs to provide a robust ability to harvest agency publications made available on the Web to ensure they remain permanently available to the public. In addition, digitized historical print materials will be a highly useful resource. I also firmly believe the FDLP must continue to be responsive to the needs of depository library users who require access to an official print version, particularly in light of the challenges of permanence (including assured backup systems), digital authentication, and preservation that have yet to be fully resolved.



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I believe it is important that GPO provide collections, training, and other services to meet a wide variety of depository library needs in order to allow them to best fulfill the needs of their patrons, from those who require the latest forms of digital access to those who may not know how to use a computer. In this age of budget constraints and continuing demand for services, I can assure you that GPO will work with the Federal depository library community to evaluate measures that will help them continue to carry out the program's goals.

I look forward to working with the Federal depository library community through the Public Printer's depository council, the library associations, and other stakeholders to ensure the FDLP is a system that recognizes the unique needs of its member institutions and empowers them to work effectively with the patrons they serve, while preserving, protecting, and extending the historic goal of the program to keep America informed.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Wm. J. Boorman', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

WILLIAM J. BOARMAN
Public Printer