Evolution of a Digital Federal Depository Library Program: A Transition Timeline

The transition to a more electronic or digital Federal Depository Library Program (FDLP) began thirty years ago with the passage of the GPO Access Act, which brought digital publications into the FDLP through a system of online access to the Congressional Record, the Federal Register, and other publications distributed by the Superintendent of Documents. With the success of GPO Access, in 1995 Congress directed GPO to conduct a study of the electronic Government information landscape and to determine the necessary measures to transition the FDLP into a more electronic program. The results of the study included strategic and transition plans for making an electronic program happen. In fiscal year 1995, the number of print titles sent to Federal depository libraries was 17,466. By fiscal year 2022 that number had fallen to 4,371. Additionally, the Superintendent of Documents' appropriations earmarked for printing dropped by about 50 percent since 2007, from almost $10.5 million to $5.2 million.

What follows is a timeline of laws, policies, directives, reports, and major activities that progressed the transition to a digital FDLP. Because the FDLP is dependent upon Federal agency publications and their dissemination of them, the timeline includes documentation that affected Federal agency practices as well.

June 1993	GPO Access Act 107 STAT. 112 Public Law 103-40	The GPO Access Act ushered the Government Printing Office into the Internet age by establishing in the GPO a means of enhancing online public access to a wide range of Federal electronic information.
1994	Federal Bulletin Board	A component of GPO Access, the FBB enable Federal agencies from all three branches of the Government to provide immediate, self-service access to Government information in a variety of electronic formats and subject areas. The FBB became obsolete and ceased to be maintained in 2001.
July 1994	Federal Register 59 FR 37906 (July 25, 1994)	OMB Circular A-130 Revision Transmittal 2, Management of Federal Information Resources. the revisions include, among other things, encouraged agencies to use information technology as a strategic resource to promote fundamental reevaluation of federal agency work processes, organizational structures, and ways of interacting

		with the public. It also issued guidance that agencies should provide electronic information dissemination products to the Government Printing Office for distribution to depository libraries, in addition to printed publications. This issue of the FR has a lengthy discussion of depository libraries their importance as partners in the dissemination of Government information and how this benefits the agency.
July 1995	Legislative Branch Appropriations, 1996 Senate Report 104-114	Recognizing that dramatic advances in technology and provide new opportunities for enhancing and improving public access to and supporting dissemination of Government information, directs the Public Printer to initiate a study that identifies measures that are necessary to ensure a successful transition to a more electronically based Federal Depository Library Program.
June 1996	Report to Congress Study…A Successful Transition to a More Electronic FDLP Released	This Report to Congress was conducted in accordance with provisions set forth in Senate Report 104-114. In addition to the study, *Electronic Federal Depository Library Program: Transition Plan, FY 1996 - FY 1998* is included in the Report to Congress, and was submitted with GPO's FY 1997 appropriations request. Public comments in response to this document proved useful to the study participants, and led directly to the development of the *Federal Depository Library Program: Information Dissemination and Access Strategic Plan, FY 1996 - FY 2001*, also included in the report.
Feb 1996	OMB Circular A-130	Management of Federal Information Resources, was revised and included a lengthy discussion of the importance of the FDLP, its mission, and for the first time, indicated that it was a matter of policy for agencies to provide depository libraries with their electronic information dissemination products.
Dec 2002	E-Government Act of 2002	The purpose of this act, Public Law 107–347, is to enhance the management and promotion of electronic Government services and processes by a number of measures including establishing a framework that requires using Internet-based information technology to enhance citizen access to Government information and service. It also required the Federal courts to make their opinions accessible via the web.
Aug 2003	NARA Affiliate Agreement	The National Archives and Records Administration recognizes GPO as an official archival affiliate for the electronic content on GPO Access - FDsys. The NARA-GPO

		agreement provides for the permanent preservation and access to the online versions of the Congressional Record, the Federal Register, the Code of Federal Regulations, and other appropriate publications from FDsys. This agreement was recently revised and awaits final signatures.
Sept 2006	Superintendent of Documents Policy 301	The Dissemination/Distribution Policy for the Federal Depository Library Program policy sets guidance for determining the format in which to disseminate/distribute it to Federal depository libraries. It also sets for the policy of disseminating the online version to depository libraries when a product is available in both tangible and online formats.
June 2007	Monthly Catalog Print Waiver	Letter with GPO request to and Joint Committee on Printing approval of a waiver on the production of the printed Monthly Catalog in favor of an online public access catalog, Catalog of U.S. Government Publications (CGP)
Dec 2009	Open Government Directive	This directive to heads of executive departments and agencies set forth the three principles of open Government: transparency, collaboration, and participation. It goes further to direct agencies to expand access to information by making it available online in open formats (OMB Memorandum M-10-6, 2009).
Dec 2010	FDsys replaced GPO Access	GPO Access, a WAIS-based system was replaced by Federal Digital System (FDsys) and became GPO's system of record. I was described as a world-class digital system and a "major step towards ensuring the American public has a one-stop site to access Government information that is authentic, version-controlled and permanently available."
Mar 2011	MOA with AOUSC	GPO entered into a Memorandum of Agreement with the Administrative Office of the U.S. Courts to ingest the opinions from U. S. appellate, district, and bankruptcy courts.
Nov 2011	FDLP Web Archive	To provide permanent public access to Federal Agency Web content, the Federal Depository Library Program harvests selected U.S. Government Web sites in their entirety. Access to these sites is made available through links in our online public access catalog, the Catalog of U. S. Government Publications http://catalog.gpo.gov

Sept 2012	Digital Content Contributor Partnership	The U.S. Treasury Department became the first Federal depository library to enter into partnership with GPO to ingest [their digital content](#) into FDsys, now GovInfo.
Dec 2012	House publications in FDsys	In a letter dated 12/19/2012, the chairs of the CHA and JCP directed the Government Printing Office to upload into FDsys all House Committee Documents, Committee Hearings and Committee Reports that are printed by the GPO
Feb 2013	Increasing Access to Results of Federally Funded Scientific Research	Office of Science and Technology Policy (OSTP) Memorandum for the Heads of Departments and Executive Agencies ([Holdren Memo](#)) directs agencies to ensure that the direct results of federally funded scientific research are made available to and useful for the public, industry, and the scientific community. Such results include peer-reviewed publications and digital data. Further, they must ensure that publications and metadata are stored in an archival solution that provides for long-term preservation and access to the content without charge. Agencies with over $100 million in annual conduct of research and development expenditures.
April 2014	First Digital Preservation Steward	The University of North Texas Libraries become the first Digital Preservation Steward, that will result in permanent public access to the current and future material in the UNT Libraries' Digital Collections that is in scope of the FDLP.
Sept 2014	First Digital-only FDL	[Sitting Bull College Library](#) was designated by GPO as the first digital-only member of the FDLP. The library is meeting their community's needs by developing an online Government information collection. Library serves the information needs of its students, faculty, and staff, the Standing Rock Sioux Reservation community, and the American public in North Dakota and South Dakota.
Aug 2015	Approval for regionals to discard tangibles	JCP approved a policy for regional depository libraries to discard depository materials in favor of using online versions if the publication resides in GovInfo, the library has held the publication for at least five years, and there are at least four tangible copies geographically dispersed within the FDLP.
May 2016	SOD-PPS-2016-3	A Superintendent of Documents Public Policy Statement, Government Publications Authorized for Discard by Regional Depository Libraries, was implemented in accordance with the JCP approval. This policy was revised as [SOD-PPS-2022-2](#).

July 2016	OMB Circular A-130	While a revision, Circular A-130 still requires agencies to make Government publications available to depository libraries through the Government Publishing Office regardless of format. It also requires Federal agencies to provide members of the public with access to public information on their websites. And they are to publish public information online in a manner that promotes analysis and reuse for the widest possible range of purposes, meaning that the information is publicly accessible, machine-readable, appropriately described, complete, and timely. This includes providing such public information in a format(s) accessible to employees and members of the public with disabilities.
Dec 2017	GovInfo	GovInfo designated as the primary user interface, in preparation for the retirement of the FDsys. In addition to providing an advanced, metadata-powered search experience, GovInfo also includes a content management system that securely controls digital content throughout its lifecycle to ensure content integrity and authenticity, and a standards-compliant (ISO 16363) preservation repository.
Dec 2018	ISO 16363 Certification	FDsys, GPO's online system of access received certification as a Trustworthy Digital Repository (TDR) incompliance with the ISO 16363 standard. GPO was the first organization in the United States and the second in the world to receive such certification. GPO has since passed the annual surveillance audits to maintain its certification — now the only organization in the world with this certification. This lifted the trust of the community for our ability to preserve digital content.
Apr 2020	Digitization of the U.S. Congressional Serial Set	GPO, in collaboration with the Law Library of Congress (LLoC) began work on a multi-year effort to digitize and make accessible volumes of the U.S. Congressional Serial Set back to the first volume, which was published in 1817. The LLoC is digitizing the Serial Set and GPO is storing the files in GovInfo. GPO staff are also creating bibliographic metadata about each volume and the individual reports and documents contained within them.

Aug 2020	Solely Online Selections by Regional Depository Libraries	GPO's Office of General Counsel concurred with the Superintendent of Documents to allow regional depository libraries to select online dissemination, without them having to make a corresponding tangible selection, for titles or series accessible through GPO's system of online access or from digital preservation steward partners.
Aug 2021	SOD-PPS-2021-1	This Superintendent of Documents Public Policy Statement, Regional Depository Libraries Selecting Solely Online Materials, was issued following the GPO OGC approval, to allow regional depository libraries flexibility in building and providing service to their Federal depository collections. This was superseded by SOD-PPS-2022-1.
Jan 2022	Elimination of FDLP Microfiche Distribution	Began the phase out microfiche distribution to Federal depository libraries, almost all titles are online. Awaiting the last remaining issues of Bound CR, Daily CR, and Federal Register to be converted.
Aug 2022	Ensuring Free, Immediate, and Equitable Access to Federally Funded Research	Office of Science and Technology Policy (OSTP) Memorandum for the Heads of Departments and Executive Agencies (Nelson Memo) to make publications and their supporting data resulting from federally funded research publicly accessible without an embargo on their free and public release
Nov 2022	SOD-PPS-2022-1	This Superintendent of Documents Public Policy Statement, Regional Depository Libraries Selecting Solely Online Materials, is a revision of SOD-PPS-2021-1, and takes into account the National Collection Service Areas.
Nov 2022	SOD-PPS-2022-2	This Superintendent of Documents Public Policy Statement, Government Publications Authorized for Discard by Regional Depository Libraries, is a revision of SOD-PPS-2020-1, and takes into account the National Collection Service Areas.
Dec 2022	Congressional Mandated Reports	Public Law 117-263 requires GPO to create a portal through which the public will have access to Congressionally mandated reports deposited by Federal agencies.
Feb 2023	GPO Response to the Task Force on a Digital	In January 2022, GPO Director Hugh Nathanial Halpern appointed the Task Force to study the feasibility of a digital FDLP. After researching and studying the implications of a digital FDLP, the Task Force determined that GPO can and should move to a digital

	FDLP's Report and Recommendations	FDLP. The [report of the Task Force](#) offered recommendations on how this might be accomplished. In [Director Halpern's response](#), he said that he intended to adopt the Task Force's recommendations. He did note that there are a few instances where GPO can't complete the recommendation as written, though we will endorse its spirit.