

Recommendations to the GPO from the DLC

The Depository Library Council (DLC) to the GPO Director, upon the close of the 2015 DLC Virtual Meeting this spring, began work on developing formal recommendations for the U.S. Government Publishing Office (GPO). This June, four recommendations were presented to GPO staff; these recommendations will be discussed in detail at the [2015 DLC Meeting & Federal Depository Library Conference](#) (October 19 – 21, 2015) in Arlington, VA.

The recommendations are:

Recommendation 1 – Designation of a single site or tool as THE official source of communication related to the FDLP

Communication in the 21st century incorporates a wide variety of tools. Over the past year, tools used to disseminate information to members of the Federal Depository Library Program (FDLP) included email, listserv, the online newsletter *FDLP Connection*, Facebook, RSS feeds, PowerPoint presentations which are then archived online, video announcements embedded in virtual meetings, letters to library associations, letters to FDLP library directors, press releases and GPO's News & Announcements Service. While the *News & Announcements Service* is a mandatory subscription for depository coordinators, much of its content is not necessarily relevant to the FDLP (for example, a recent message involved the construction of a GPO parking lot). Conversely, important announcements involving upcoming meeting dates have been buried at the end of general articles within the *FDLP Connection* issued weeks before the official announcement appeared elsewhere.

Council recommends that GPO designate a single site or tool as THE official source of information related directly to the FDLP and advertise this widely. Subscriptions to this designated official source of information should be mandatory for all depository libraries so that all will be kept equally informed. While this does not preclude the use of multiple communication tools to disseminate official communications after they are originally posted on the designated site or tool, having a single site where official communications are consistently, quickly and reliably placed would greatly reduce if not eliminate the confusion over where to go for timely information about the FDLP.

Council further recommends that all official communications include a mechanism (e.g. a link to askGPO or a link to contact Outreach and Support) for community members to contact GPO directly with questions or comments.

Recommendation 2 – To better serve and support public libraries

Free and unimpeded access to government information is the most important tenet of the Federal Depository Library Program (FDLP). Since America's public libraries are open to everyone and provide equal access to information for all residents of their communities, public library FDLP depositories are essential to the fulfillment of FDLP's most basic mandate: free and unimpeded access to government information.

Since 2007, 47 public library depositories have relinquished depository status. This represents a 20.4% loss of public library depositories in a span of only eight years. Since 2007, public library depositories have relinquished depository status at four times the rate of academic library depositories and at twice the rate of all other depositories

Council recommends that GPO and Council work together to do the following:

- If possible, attempt to identify the reasons why these 47 public library depositories relinquished status;

- Survey or poll the library directors and depository staff of remaining public library depositories to identify what they perceive to be the most important challenges they face as depository libraries;
- Survey or poll the library directors and depository staff of remaining public library depositories to identify both the positive advantages they achieve by being depositories and what additional enhancements or benefits would help them to provide government information service to their patrons;
- Compile this data into a report; and
- Based on the report, attempt to identify possible changes to current FDLP policies and procedures, as well as any potential enhancements or benefits, that would encourage existing public library depositories to remain in the program, and that would provide an incentive for public libraries, not already in the FDLP, to apply for depository designation in Congressional districts that have vacancies.

Recommendation 3 - Clarify plans for data in the FDLP

Council recommends that GPO continue to provide FDLP Academy classes related to data librarianship and federally-produced data. Council further recommends that GPO work with agency partners to make data sets available for harvesting by the LOCKSS-USDOCS or similar local repository systems. Council encourages GPO to connect agency publishers, especially those new to making data directly available, with governmental (e.g., data.gov) and non-governmental (e.g., ICPSR) data collections. Finally, GPO can help encourage agency publishers to consider the archival value of their data sets and ensure permanent public access to those data sets via deposit into FDSys, local harvesting by libraries, and collaboration with data collection sites by clarifying what agency produced data sets are within the scope of both the national bibliography and the FDLP.

Recommendation 4 - Support for the *National Plan for Access to U.S. Government Information*

Council recognizes efforts of the Government Publishing Office and FDLP to move forward with the *National Plan for Access to U.S. Government Information*. Within this plan are some actions that can be instituted now, some that require approval of the Joint Committee on Printing, and some that would require a change to Title 44. During the past twelve months, the Government Publishing Office has begun to make changes that can be instituted immediately, such as developing the FDLP Academy, developing and testing a FDLP Coordinator Certificate Program for new FDLP coordinators, and creating metadata for the digitized bound volumes of the *Congressional Record*, 1873-1994.

Council recommends that GPO categorize each element of the National Plan in order to clarify what if any legal actions will be necessary for each, to help the community track progress and provide support toward full implementation.

Council commends GPO's efforts to realize development of the National Plan and supports GPO's actions to move forward with this important plan to ensure that Government information remains available and accessible in perpetuity.

Written by the Members of the Depository Library Council; Submitted to GPO by Depository Library Council Chair, Hallie Pritchett.

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