GPO **HUGH NATHANIAL HALPERN**
Director

since 1861

April 16, 2024

Ms. Jen Kirk
Chair, Depository Library Council
Government Information Librarian, Merrill-Crazier Library Utah State University
Logan, UT 84322

Dear Ms. Kirk:

This letter is in response to the Depository Library Council's (DLC) November 6, 2023, transmittal of the DLC recommendations resulting from the Fall 2023 Depository Library Council Meeting.

I agree that persistent, reliable access to government information is a core function of the Federal Depository Library Program (FDLP) and will ask staff in Library Services and Content Management (LSCM) to look for ways to increase cooperation with our publishing partners and to leverage our persistent identifier system in this effort. As staff review systems in the course of their work, they will keep the principles and recommendations of the PURL Working Group's report in mind.

Transparency is a key to a successful partnership like the FDLP. I will continue to press the Superintendent of Documents and LSCM management to share as much information as possible with the DLC and with the larger community of government information users. As GPO works to complete the transition to a digital FDLP, effective communication with all government information stakeholders will remain a priority.

The DLC's recommendations and GPO's responses, attached, are part of the permanent record of GPO's work. They will be published on FDLP.gov for the FDLP community and the public to access.

Should you have any questions about GPO's response to your recommendations, please contact Superintendent Matheson.

Thank you, Ms. Kirk, and to all the members of the DLC, for your continued commitment to the FDLP and to furthering GPO's vision of an America Informed.

Sincerely,

HUGH NATHANIAL HALPERN
Attachment
cc: Depository Library Council members
        Superintendent of Documents

April 2024

Recommendation 1.

The Exploring the Durability of PURLs and Their Alternatives Working Group proposes that the Depository Library Council accept the PURL Working Group Report and consider three additional recommendations to transmit to GPO:

- GPO enact the Principles of Persistent Identifiers and Persistent Identifier Systems through identified measures in the PURL Working Group's report (pp. 22-24).
- GPO explore the potential opportunities of prospective PID systems for additional uses beyond the current implementation of GPO's PURL system, in order to improve services to FDLs.
- GPO seek, as much as is possible within the Federal technology environment, to leverage interagency efficiencies in exploring technical solutions for needs related to PID system(s).

GPO Response:

We accepted the "Recommended Principles" last fall and will use the measures identified in the final PURL Working Group report as guides to operationalizing the Principles as we plan any changes to the PURL system.

GPO agrees that all systems need periodic review for stability and new interoperability opportunities keeping in mind the goal of a PID is permanence – not changing the identifier. Reviews of systems consider risk management from a technical and management perspective.

GPO is working to increase the number of partnerships with agency publishers across the government and to bring publications not managed in a repository environment with discoverable metadata and PIDs into GovInfo or another appropriate repository. While PIDs are an important part of persistent access, ongoing digital preservation activities on the digital objects they represent and ongoing communication with partners who hold objects outside of GPO are vital to providing perpetual access.

Recommendation 2.
Council requests access to the results of the information gathering survey conducted by GPO that was used to gauge library interest in receiving FDLP Print Distribution Titles. Council requests that the survey and the data gathered also be shared more widely with the FDLP community.

GPO Response:
The Print Distribution Titles (PDT) Information Questionnaire was sent to those who went to the September 19, 2023 meeting about the implementation of the digital FDLP. Attendees included regional depository coordinators, Preservation Stewards, and librarians from libraries that have a selective housing agreement with regional depository libraries.

As noted in the recommendation, the PDT questionnaire was for informational purposes only. The results were shared with the Depository Library Council and they were posted to FDLP.gov on October 31, 2023. Since that time, the print distribution criteria questionnaire responses were posted. The library allocations, as agreed upon by GPO and the receiving libraries, were also posted. The spreadsheet presents the information in different tabs: LIBRARY and TITLES; TITLES by NCSA and LIBRARY; TITLES by NCSA and LIBRRY TYPE; and TITLES MAPPED to receiving locations.

Recommendation 3.
Council requests that the Digital FDLP Implementation FAQs be updated following FDLP community feedback, and Council would like to review the updated FAQs to ensure that all community concerns, comments, questions have been addressed. Council also requests that GPO publish the following:

- The methodology used to determine those titles included in the FDLP Print Distribution Titles (PDT) List as well as the criteria used to determine which FDLs will receive the available titles.
- The minimum requirements for those FDLs that will accept titles from the Print Distribution Titles (PDT) List, including information on interlibrary loan, access, and preservation requirements.
- How reducing receipt of new, tangible materials provides an opportunity to shift focus for improved collection management of physical and digital collections.

GPO Response:
GPO continually monitors questions that come into askGPO for those that are appropriate to include in the Digital FDLP Implementation FAQs. Discussions and chats with the depository library community are also reviewed for topics and questions for inclusion.

A current version of the FAQs on FDLP.gov was last revised in April 2024. It includes question and answer pairs that address Council's concerns. The text of these FAQs is included as an appendix.

GPO agrees with Council that the questions and concerns of the depository library community need to be addressed. In the summer of 2023, a communications group was established within the team that is implementing the limited print distribution framework to ensure consistent and understandable messaging. This includes, but is not limited to, messaging through FAQs, appropriate web pages on FDLP.gov, and at meeting venues. GPO appreciates Council's willingness to review FAQs and other documentation.

APPENDIX: Updated FAQ items

Q What methodology was used to determine which titles to include on the Print Distribution Titles (PDT) List?

    A The List of Classes (LoC) was the basis for title selections. Several factors were used to determine which titles from the LoC to include on the PDT List.

- Statutorily required print titles.
- Legally controlling authority in some jurisdictions is print format.
- Item numbers under which publications were distributed since FY 2019.
- Popular titles based on item selection rates of depository libraries and feedback from depository library staff.
- Non-ephemeral maps where online version lacks sufficient resolution.
- Time-series statistical data
- Titles of an important reference nature
- *Paper Titles in the FDLP-Core List* (1996 and reaffirmed in 2019)[1]

A more detailed description of this methodology will be in the report of the new print distribution framework, which is expected to be completed and posted, prior to Council's spring meeting.

Q What criteria were used to determine which depository libraries will receive available print titles?

    A The criteria used to determine the print allocations to depository libraries was determined by the National Collection Service areas. Following the November 2023 NCSA meetings to discuss distribution criteria, depository library coordinators were asked to complete a questionnaire, *Determining Criteria for Distribution Print Titles*, which was open from November 20-30, 2023. The purpose was to allow them to provide input on their preferences for how criteria should be weighted when making these PDT allocations within their NCSA.

Coordinators were asked to rank the importance of each criterion by assigning it a number from 0-100 with the sum totaling 100. Depository coordinators also had the opportunity to add additional criteria by completing a free text box. The following heat map shows the resulting criteria weights in each of the NCSAs.

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[1] Later became known as *[Essential Titles for Public Use in Paper or Other Tangible Format](#)*.

Criteria	Midwest	Northeast	South	West
Print preservation commitment	17.08	16.76	16.26	13.19
Interlibrary loan available	13.27	11.25	12.35	13.23
Demonstrated user need for print	11.3	10.45	8.23	8.56
Extensive run of title preserved	8.35	12.01	9.17	7.78
Community with limited internet connectivity	7.89	7.22	7.61	8.69
Government information expertise available	7.58	8.51	8.66	7.16
Will provide reference service for NCSA	7.26	7.33	7.11	6.14
Library Type	5.89	6.72	6.21	6.4
Depository type (regional/selective)	5.55	5.31	7.42	6.23
Geographically dispersed	5.45	5.56	5.99	8.03
Distributed geographically - NCSA subregions	4.72	4.57	6.41	9.58
Depository collection circulates	4.42	4.23	3.63	4.46

In addition to the criteria, LSCM had other priorities for the allocation of print titles that would help ensure equitable distribution:

- Favor libraries with strong and compliant public access
- Existing Preservation Stewards have priority.
- Favor libraries with strong support for sharing materials.
- No duplication of titles at libraries on the same campus.
- Allocations were mapped for a visual of geographic distribution.
- Libraries receiving the bound Congressional Serial Set will not receive the individual House and Senate Documents or House and Senate Reports.
- Each of the following titles will be sent to allocated libraries as a set:
  - *Code of Federal Regulations* and *Finding Aids and Index*.
  - *Budget of the United States*, *Analytical Perspectives*, and *Major Savings and Reforms*.
  - *Congressional Record Proceedings and Debate* and *Daily Digest* (bound).

Q What are the minimum requirements for Federal depository libraries that accept to receive titles from the Print Distribution Titles (PDT) List, including information on interlibrary loan, access, and preservation requirements?

A Libraries that receive PDT title must agree to hold the material for 5-years. Supersession and online substitution will not be permitted during that time, as GPO will be working to secure Preservation Steward agreements to ensure the paper format remains accessible into the future.

PDT recipients must also commit to catalog and make all print receipts discoverable via the library's integrated library system (ILS) to support interlibrary loan and in-library access of the print format.

Q How will reducing receipt of new, tangible materials provide an opportunity to shift focus for improved collection management of physical and digital collections?

A A digital-first FDLP requires reducing the distribution of print publications to depository libraries. In so doing, GPO staff and fiscal resources will be aligned with operations for digitizing print titles and identifying, providing bibliographic control, harvesting, hosting, and increasing access to digital resources.

The importance of the physical historical collections held by depository libraries for access and preservation is not diminished in the digital-first FDLP. NCSA Steering Committees will work to develop collaborative collection management plans for the print depository collections. The collection flexibilities that exist in the new framework will allow depository coordinators to weed and right-size their collections if they so desire. GPO plans to develop user needs assessments to assist libraries in this effort. Also, a preservation plan is in development, which will call for preservation services to support depository historical print collections. Although tangible collections will cease to grow at the rapid pace they once did, there will still be a need for some collection management activities. Working with digital content will be the norm, and depositories may find the need to make staff shifts, as GPO is doing, to focus on making digital content easily accessible.