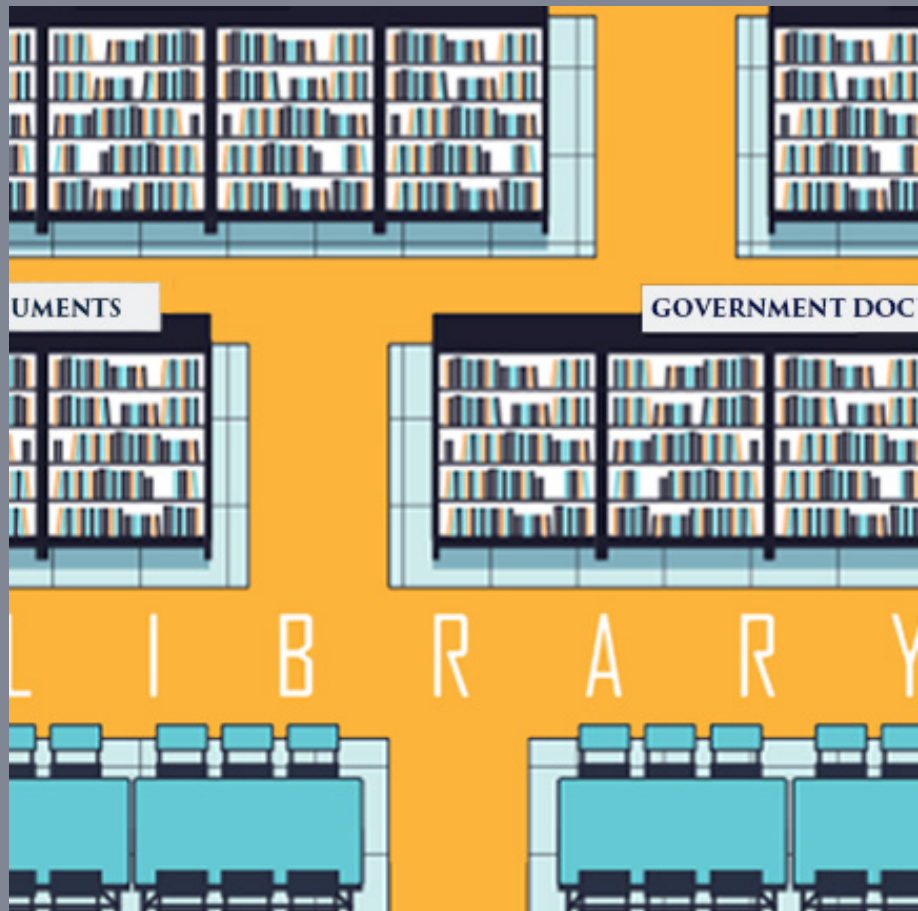


# Recommendations and Responses 2015

Recommendations of the Depository Library Council  
to the GPO Director and Responses from GPO



FEDERAL DEPOSITORY LIBRARY PROGRAM

<http://www.fdlp.gov>

## INTRODUCTION

This document presents the recommendations from the Depository Library Council (DLC) to the U.S. Government Publishing Office (GPO) from the 2015 DLC Virtual Meeting of April 28-30, 2015, and the GPO responses to them.

**Please Note:** This document serves only as an archival record of what was previously published. Links referenced in this document may not exist, may be superseded, or changed.

## RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE DEPOSITORY LIBRARY COUNCIL TO THE GPO DIRECTOR AND RESPONSES FROM GPO

FROM THE APRIL 2015 VIRTUAL MEETING OF THE DLC

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### **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.

#### ***GPO's Response:***

GPO recognizes the need for a streamlined communications approach with the FDLP community, and equally as important, the need to disseminate only relevant messages. As noted by the DLC, there are several communication vehicles used by GPO to interact with the FDLP community. They each have distinct purposes.

- 1) As a formal matter, depository coordinators (at a minimum) and other depository library staff members are asked to subscribe to the FDLP News and Events service, through [email](#) or [RSS](#). This is the official channel by which GPO sends formal news and announcements for FDLP libraries.
- 2) [FDLP.gov](#) is the official website for the FDLP. There, libraries will find guidance, requirements, tools, and other resources for managing the depository and the collection. All archived announcements sent via the FDLP News and Events service appear on [FDLP.gov's](#) homepage.

Numbers one and two above are the official vehicles by which LSCM disseminates important information to the FDLP community.

- 3) LSCM shares items of community interest via the [FDLP Connection newsletter](#). The newsletter is a bi-monthly publication that features articles from GPO, agencies, and from other depository librarians on items of interest to the GovDocs community. This is subscription-based; however, and once subscribed, new issues are available to all from [FDLP.gov](#) and also promoted by the FDLP News and Events service. The newsletter

is not a vehicle for news and announcements that haven't yet been announced via the FDLP News and Events service.

Number three above is intended to showcase items of interest to the FDLP community but is not a formal or required announcement mechanism.

- 4) GPO also uses press releases and social media to share good news stories and items of interest. You will find FDLP-related information on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, YouTube, LinkedIn, Pinterest, and through the Government Book Talk blog. It is possible to "friend" and follow GPO on all of these sites through links on the gpo.gov homepage. All press releases put forth by GPO's Office of Public Relations are cross-posted to the FDLP News and Events service, regardless of subject matter, as these contain important announcements about GPO, and the FDLP community is a major GPO stakeholder group.
- 5) GPO also shares information, news, and announcements through in-person and virtual meetings and conferences.

In an effort to streamline communications and clarify the intent of each of GPO's communication vehicles, LSCM will take several actions:

- 1) LSCM will modify communications guidance on FDLP.gov to make the intent of each communication vehicle clearer. Once the guidance has been updated, LSCM will post an official announcement via the FDLP News and Events service.
- 2) LSCM will pledge to follow the guidelines set forth in the guidance and refrain from disseminating new, major announcements via non-official communication vehicles.
- 3) LSCM will present on communication guidance at the 2015 DLC Meeting & Conference and be available for Q&A.
- 4) LSCM will ensure that any important information, announcement, or news that is shared for the first time during an in-person or virtual meeting or conference is also cross-posted via FDLP News and Events shortly after being announced at the event in question.
- 5) LSCM will speak with GPO leadership about the DLC's wish to eliminate the cross-posting of GPO Press Releases to FDLP News and Events that are not directly related to the FDLP community.
- 6) LSCM will include a closing line at the end of each FDLP News and Events announcement that includes appropriate contact information for the topic at hand.

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## **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.

***GPO's Response:***

The staff in LSCM welcomes the opportunity to work with the Depository Library Council to investigate and document the changing environment in public libraries that are current and former Federal depository libraries throughout the United States.

A good starting point for this initiative is the Public Libraries Council Session at the 2015 Depository Library Council Meeting and Federal Depository Library Conference. GPO staff will record the major points and issues, as well as any lessons learned and action items that develop from that discussion and form an internal project team.

GPO recommends that the DLC identify members that can work with GPO staff to plan this project for FY16, with a goal to deliver a report to the community at the Fall 2016 Depository Library Council Meeting and Federal Depository Library Conference. The report will include background information, analysis of data collected from public libraries, and recommendations for action.

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**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.[1] 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.[2] 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.[3] 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.[4]

***GPO's Response:***

***REGARDING PART 1 OF THE RECOMMENDATION – TRAINING***

Statistical compilations and data sets have long been heavily used by depository library staff. Sessions at the Federal Depository Library Conference held by statistical agencies are among the most highly attended. And statistical resources were mentioned in FDLP Forecast Study responses as an area in need of training.

When GPO procured an eLearning platform and ramped up its production of webinars, the Census Bureau was the first agency with whom GPO partnered to provide training; and we will continue to offer webinars about the Census Bureau and their data products and services. GPO also has tapped Federal data centers to conduct webinars: National Climate Data Center; National Geophysical Data Center; Data.gov; Consumer Financial Protection Bureau; National Oceanographic Data Center; and others. Statistics-related webinars have been delivered from your colleagues within

the depository library community as well. Content has varied, from “telling your story with data” to “using specific data resources” to “mapping data”.

The webinar recordings are publicly accessible, as are conference program recordings. Because of the high level of interest in these types of sessions, the FDLP Academy has offered an extensive number of classes on statistical resources and data librarianship and will continue to do so. Plans are already in the works to offer similar webinars and webcasts in 2016 and a representative from Data.gov will be presenting at the October 2015 DLC Meeting and Federal Depository Library Conference. Use askGPO or email [fdlpoutreach@gpo.gov](mailto:fdlpoutreach@gpo.gov) to suggest a webinar topic.

### ***REGARDING PARTS 2, 3, & 4 OF THE RECOMMENDATION – AGENCIES AND DATA SETS***

#### ***WHAT AGENCIES ARE DOING WITH THEIR DATA SETS:***

The Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs, within the Office Management and Budget (OMB), is the Federal Government’s central authority for approval of Government information collections, Government statistical practices, for the review of Executive Branch regulations, and coordination of Federal privacy policy.

On January 21, 2009, President Obama in his Memorandum on Transparency and Open Government stated, “Information maintained by the Federal Government is a national asset.” Since his first day in office, the President, OMB, and Federal agencies have worked to advance the management of Government information as an asset and to make data more accessible and usable:

- Open Government Directive (12/08/2009)
- Building a 21st Century Digital Government Strategy (05/23/2012)
- Open Data Policy – Managing Information as an Asset (05/09/2013)
- Open Data Action Plan (05/09/2014)
- Endorsement of G8 Open Data Charter (06/18/2015)
- Multi-Agency Science and Technology Priorities for the FY 2017 Budget (07/09/2015)

Through this policy documentation agencies are, in part, required to collect or create information in a way that supports downstream information processing and dissemination activities. “Open data” or publicly accessible data is to be structured in a manner that enables data to be discoverable and usable by end users. OMB defines accessible as:

Open data are made available in convenient, modifiable, and open formats that can be retrieved, downloaded, indexed, and searched. Formats should be machine-readable (i.e., data are reasonably structured to allow automated processing). Open data structures do not discriminate against any person or group of persons and should be made available to the widest range of users for the widest range of purposes, often by providing the data in multiple formats for consumption. To the extent permitted by law, these formats should be non-proprietary, publicly available, and no restrictions should be placed upon their use.

Further, any datasets in an agency’s enterprise data inventory that can be made publicly available must be listed at [www.\[agency\].gov/data](http://www.[agency].gov/data) in a human-and machine-readable format that enables automatic aggregation by Data.gov and other services (known as “harvestable files”), to the extent practicable. More than 138,000 datasets reside on data.gov, the repository for the Government’s open data.

#### ***WHAT GPO CAN AND WILL DO***

Federal agencies are already making data available through data.gov and taking actions to make their data easily accessible for users to gain knowledge and insights from large and often complex data sets. **GPO, however, has no authority to require an agency to submit their content for ingest into FDsys or any other Government or non-govern-**



**ment data repository.**

GPO agrees with Council that archiving and preserving data for permanent public access is extremely important; this importance is also recognized by OMB. OMB issued a memorandum on July 9, 2015 to the heads of executive departments and agencies on the subject of “Multi-Agency Science and Technology Priorities for the FY 2017 Budget.” This memorandum specifically states that “Preserving and improving access to scientific collections, research data, other results of Federally-funded research, open datasets, and open educational resources should be a priority for agencies.”

As GPO develops and expands its FIPNet partnerships, data sets will inevitably become part of the discussion for the hosting and preservation of digital collection assets. The scope of data sets and corresponding software required to render a data set’s information intelligible will be a necessary part of these discussions when they occur.

GPO is taking a more proactive approach with outreach to Federal agencies. We, of course, seek to acquire content for the Federal Depository Library Program (FDLP) and Cataloging and Indexing Program (C&I), but we also encourage Federal agencies to have their digital content ingested into FDsys, authenticated, and accessible for permanent public access. At the same time, we pursue other opportunities for collaboration with agencies, such as becoming content partners or presenting webinars or conference programs. The interactions with agencies also become teachable moments – we educate them about GPO’s information dissemination programs. While GPO believes that agencies do recognize the value of the data, they don’t always know how valuable it is to Federal depository libraries and their patrons. This we can remedy. Our work with the Office of Minority Health is an excellent example of this proactive approach. They now are aware of the FDLP and are providing content to GPO for cataloging and dissemination; they have conducted a webinar on their information resources; and they have provided GPO with publications to share at conferences where GPO is speaking to audiences they serve.

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**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.

***GPO’s Response:***

GPO thanks the Depository Library Council for its support of the *National Plan for Access to U.S. Government Information*.

Regarding necessary legal actions for implementing the National Plan elements, GPO is pleased to report that a letter dated August 5, 2015, from the Honorable Gregg Harper, Chair of the Joint Committee on Printing (JCP) to GPO Director Davita Vance-Cooks, conveyed JCP approval of the proposed Superintendent of Documents policy, “Government Publications Authorized for Discard by Regional Depository Libraries.” The JCP specifically approved of the conditions under which regional depository libraries could withdraw depository materials from their collections:

1. The publication is superseded or later issued in bound form; or,
2. The publication:
  - a. Has been retained by the regional in tangible form for a period of seven years from the date of receipt, processing, or shipping list date, whichever is the most recent; and,
  - b. Is available on GPO’s Federal Digital System in a format that meets the standards of the Superintendent of Documents as authentic with the digital signature of the Superintendent of Documents.

In addition to the above, the JCP added another condition: “A minimum of four tangible copies of the publication exist in the FDLP distributed geographically.” Further it was suggested that one way to accomplish this distribution would be to insure the preservation of one tangible copy in each of the four regions defined by the Census Bureau.

Approval of this policy, with the additional stipulation, provides GPO the administrative authority to implement certain actions that are necessary to achieve the desired outcome of, “the FDLP will have a governance process and a sustainable network structure that facilitates efficient management of operations, collections, and services”:

- Allow depositories flexible management of their collections;
- Explore alternative regional/selective structures; and
- Undertake transformation of the FDLP.

However, further modifications to the FDLP were included in the National Plan for *Access to U.S. Government Information* that will provide a more sustainable Program for the digital age, and they do require the approval of the JCP or legislative change in order to implement. These include the following:

- Provide a new depository designation for tribal libraries;
- Provide a new depository designation of affiliate access libraries for public, community college, and school or school system libraries; and
- Allow for shared regionals across state boundaries.