



*Office of the Superintendent of Documents*

**SUPERINTENDENT OF DOCUMENTS  
PUBLIC POLICY STATEMENT  
2016-4**

**EFFECTIVE:** 07/05/2016

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**SUBJECT: Permanent Public Access to U.S. Government Information through Preservation**

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**PURPOSE**

This policy statement is to assert the U.S. Government Publishing Office's (GPO) responsibility for preservation of Federal Government publications and information dissemination products to ensure permanent public access for future generations.

**BACKGROUND**

The Government Publishing Office (GPO) has been the U.S. Government's agent for providing free public access to Federal Government information for more than 155 years. The mandates of Chapters [17](#), [19](#), and [41](#) of Title 44, United States Code established GPO's responsibility for providing publications of the Federal Government to the general public through the Federal Depository Library Program (FDLP), comprehensive indexing to tangible and digital Government publications through the Cataloging and Indexing Program (C&I), and online access to and storage of digital Government publications (Public Law 103-40).

More specifically, [44 U.S.C. §1911](#) requires regional depository libraries or selective depository libraries that are not served by a regional to provide permanent public access to their depository materials. These depositories are to retain all publications received through the FDLP, except those authorized for discard by the Superintendent of Documents. There cannot be permanent public access without the preservation of the resources, whether tangible or digital.

Under [44 U.S.C. §1909](#), library collections are required "to be maintained so as to be accessible to the public." Maintenance of a collection is not the same as preservation, it is only part of the process. Maintenance is the proper care of collections, taking preventive measures (including disaster response), to protect them from decay and deterioration. Preservation also includes activities such as conservation treatment, replacement, or reformatting to address existing damage or to increase access. Together with maintenance of collections, these activities will ensure access to Government publications and information dissemination products for future generations.

In today's environment where the number of tangible publications distributed through the FDLP has decreased significantly in favor of online dissemination to depositories, and the preference

for agencies to publish to their Web sites, the responsibility for the storage of and access to digital Government publications and information dissemination products has unescapably shifted to GPO, and official hosting partners. As GPO does not have a tangible collection to preserve, reliance on partnerships with depository libraries, Federal agencies, and other institutions or organizations with Government publications is a necessity.

Preservation and conservation are steeped in GPO's history and contribute greatly to Keeping America Informed. GPO designed and is implementing GPO's Federal Information Preservation Network (FIPNet). FIPNet is a strategic initiative to expand the FDLP and C&I while at the same time guaranteeing the public long-term access to the Government's publications and information from libraries, Government entities, coalitions, and organizations working to ensure free access for future generations. GPO in collaboration with its FIPNet partners contribute to the preservation of both tangible and digital Government information.

Library Services & Content Management business unit is transforming its workflow processes from print-centric to content-centric. Publication (tangible and digital) lifecycle management best practices will be employed and will include preservation and the administration of FIPNet.

## **POLICY**

Through preservation activities GPO will provide free permanent public access to Government publications and information dissemination products that are within the scope of the Federal Depository Library Program and the Cataloging & Indexing Program for future generations.

Preservation activities will be administered through the use of publication lifecycle management best practice operations in Library Services and Content Management (LSCM) and collaborative FIPNet partnerships.

GPO harvested content, agency deposited content, and other Government publications or information dissemination products in digital form will be authenticated and preserved in GPO's Federal Digital System, or any successor online system of record. FIPNet partners may host and preserve digital content in accordance with agreed upon terms. Content hosted by partners is to be considered "official" but will not be digitally signed or authenticated by GPO.

As GPO does not have a collection of tangible Federal Government publications, the tangible depository publications will necessarily be preserved through FIPNet collaborative partnerships

GPO will create and maintain an inventory of preservation copies of record that includes condition statements and where the holdings are located.

## DEFINITIONS

<b>Digital lifecycle management</b>	The progressive technology and workflow processes needed to ensure long-term sustainability of and accessibility to digital objects and metadata. Lifecycle management is about active stewardship of digital assets over time through policies, staffing, resources, and technologies.
<b>GPO's FIPNet</b>	Federal Information Preservation Network is a strategy for a collaborative network of information professionals working in various partner roles to ensure access to the national collection of Government information for future generations.
<b>GPO's system of online access</b>	Authorized in <a href="#">44 U.S.C. §4101</a> , it is a means of enhancing electronic public access to a wide range of Federal electronic information. It is a content management system, a preservation repository, and an advanced search engine.
<b>Harvested content</b>	Digital content within the scope of Superintendent of Documents' dissemination programs that is gathered from Federal agency Web sites
<b>Information dissemination product</b>	Any book, paper, map, machine-readable material, audiovisual production, or other documentary material, regardless of physical form or characteristic, disseminated by an agency to the public. <sup>1</sup>
<b>Lifecycle management processes</b>	Elements of information dissemination products' lifecycle include: creation, discovery and acquisition; bibliographic control and metadata; collection care and conservation; digitization; authentication; access and dissemination; storage of tangible; and digital repository management.
<b>Permanent public access</b>	Government information dissemination products within the scope of the FDLP remain available for continuous, no fee public access through the Program as required by <a href="#">44 U.S.C. §1911</a> .
<b>Preservation</b>	Strategic initiatives, programs, and processes designed to maintain useful access to information assets, serving the information needs of both present and future generations.
<b>Preservation copy of record</b>	The preservation copy of record for tangible publications is the version set aside to protect its informational content and intrinsic value from decay or destruction. The copy of record may be nondestructively digitized to create a digital surrogate to function as the use copy. Intrinsic value is the worth of an item beyond the

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<sup>1</sup> The Superintendent of Documents adopted the use of this definition, which is used by the Office of Management and Budget and Executive Branch agencies. It is found in OMB Circular A-130.

information content; it includes a combination of factors including historic value and provenance.

The preservation copy of record for digital content is the preservation master file stored in a trustworthy repository. Derivatives of the preservation master copy are made available for access. The digital copy of record should be produced to specifications that will allow the creation of a printed facsimile version, should one be needed.

**Publication lifecycle management**

Managing tangible publications through their lifecycle stages of discovering, acquiring, classifying, cataloging, disseminating, accessing, archiving, and preserving.

**APPLICATION**

The Superintendent of Documents is responsible for ensuring permanent public access to all Government publications and information dissemination products within scope of the FDLP and C&I. Those products that cannot be made permanently accessible through the application of this policy will be handled on a case-by-case basis. The LSCM Preservation Librarian will determine the preservation best practices (for tangible and digital content) to apply within LSCM and within the terms of FIPNet agreements, with the approval of the Managing Director, LSCM. The Preservation Librarian will be the LSCM liaison to GPO's Office of Programs, Strategy and Technology (PST) for preservation and lifecycle management issues.

The Superintendent of Documents, through the Managing Director, LSCM or, as appropriate, the Chief Technology Officer, must authorize any exceptions to this policy.

**APPROVED:**

*SB Hall*

*7-5-2016*

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Acting Superintendent of Documents

Date