

SUPERINTENDENT OF DOCUMENTS
PUBLIC POLICY STATEMENT
4-2026

EFFECTIVE: 07/01/2026

Supersedes

SOD-PPS-2016-4

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SUBJECT: Permanent Public Access to the National Collection of U.S. Government Public Information Through Preservation

PURPOSE

This policy statement asserts the U.S. Government Publishing Office's responsibility to preserve the National Collection of U.S. Government Public Information to ensure 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 130 years. The mandates of Chapters [17](#), [19](#), and [41](#) of Title 44, United States Code establish 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 preservation of deposited, harvested, and reformatted digital Government publications through GPO's system of online access¹

The digital stewardship vision for the system of online access is to operate a standards-based preservation repository and to implement user-friendly, responsive, and innovative technologies to ensure all content information can be obtained, rendered, and understood by the general public and designated community into the future.

There cannot be permanent public access without the preservation of the resources, whether tangible or digital. Under [44 U.S.C. § 1909](#), depository library collections are required "to be maintained so as to be accessible to the public." Maintenance is the proper

¹ At the time of the issuance of this policy, GovInfo is GPO's system of record for online access. This policy will be valid with GovInfo or any successor system.

care of collections to mitigate risks to access, taking preventive measures to protect them from decay and deterioration. Preservation includes maintenance activities as well as conservation treatment, replacement, or reformatting to address existing damage or to increase access. Preservation and maintenance of collections, together, will ensure access to digital and tangible U.S. Government public information for future generations.

GPO's tangible collection of public documents is a distributed collection with holdings in Federal depository libraries. The libraries steward the collection and commit staff who provide services and facilitate public access to the depository collection. Over the years many depositories have built large documents collections, particularly regional depository libraries that could not discard materials until very recently and only under certain conditions. To contribute to preservation of the shared collection, some of these libraries have entered into GPO Preservation Steward agreements or other retention commitments for long-term access or preservation.

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 websites, the responsibility for the storage, preservation, and access to Government digital content rests with GPO and official hosting partners.

Library Services and Content Management collaborates with Federal depository libraries to preserve the National Collection by employing lifecycle management and preservation best practices, including preservation partnerships, digital reformatting, and preservation services.

The National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) recognizes GPO as an official Affiliate Archive. The [affiliate agreement](#) establishes mutually agreed upon standards for the permanent preservation of and public access to the digital content on GPO's system of online access.

POLICY

A preservation program will address the preservation needs of the digital and tangible content of the National Collection of U.S. Government Public Information. The program will be led by staff as assigned by the Managing Director, Library Services and Content Management.

Through preservation services for Federal depository libraries, GPO will ensure future generations have free permanent public access to tangible Government information that is within the scope of the FDLP and the Cataloging & Indexing Program.

GPO is committed to the digital stewardship vision of its system of online access. To support this vision, the system is CoreTrustSeal and ISO 16363 certified Trustworthy Digital Repository.

The Affiliate Archive Memorandum of Understanding with NARA serves as a contingency and succession plan for content in GPO's system of online access, per the ISO 16363 Trustworthy Digital Repository standard.

GPO partners may host and preserve digital content in accordance with agreed upon terms. Content hosted by partners is considered "official" but will not be digitally signed or authenticated by GPO.

An inventory of preservation copies of record will be maintained. The inventory will include condition statements and where the holdings are located.

Those publications that cannot be made permanently accessible through the application of this policy will be handled on a case-by-case basis.

APPLICATION

The Superintendent of Documents is responsible for ensuring permanent public access to the National Collection of U.S. Government Public Information. The Preservation Librarian is the subject matter expert for preservation activities in the lifecycle management of content in the National Collection.

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

APPROVED

SCOTT MATHESON
Superintendent of Documents

Date