

Preserving the Collection of Federal Government Documents

A Comprehensive Plan Outline

BACKGROUND

The U.S. Government Printing Office (GPO), with its mission of *Keeping America Informed*, plays a vital role by providing permanent public access to official and authentic Government information through the Federal Depository Library Program (FDLP) and the Cataloging & Indexing Program (C&I). In January 2013, after a ten-month study conducted at the request of Congress, the National Academy of Public Administration (NAPA) released their final report, [*Rebooting the Government Printing Office: Keeping America Informed in the Digital Age*](#). NAPA concluded that “GPO’s core mission remains valid, but that the agency—and the rest of the federal government—will need to continue to “reboot” for the digital age.” Their recommendations intend to better position GPO for the digital age through continuing transformation and strengthening its business model. The third of NAPA’s fifteen recommendations directly relates to the ability of future generations to access historical and current Government information. It reads:

“To safeguard the historical documents of our democracy for future generations, GPO should work with depository libraries and other library groups to develop a comprehensive plan for preserving the print collection of government documents. This plan should include cataloging, digitizing, and preserving tangible copies of government publications, a timeline for completion, and options for supporting the effort financially, as well as a process for ingesting digitized copies into the Federal Digital System. Congress should appropriate funds for the purpose of cataloging, digitizing, and preserving the government collection.”

At the time the NAPA study was undertaken, GPO was already in the midst of the FDLP Forecast Study (the Study). The Study is an important research initiative to gather data in order for GPO to better understand the pressing issues, goals, and viewpoints of depositories; document the needs, vision, and environment in which individual depositories exist at the state level; and obtain a clear vision, based on consensus, about the FDLP’s future direction. The outcomes of the study will inform the strategic directions for the FDLP and the Library Services and Content Management (LSCM) and will inform the development of a National Plan for the Future of the FDLP. One of the major findings of the Study is that many libraries look to preservation to ensure that access is reliable and that content remains available into the future.

In response to the preservation findings of the Study and the NAPA recommendation, GPO will develop a comprehensive preservation plan for the tangible and digital collections of Federal Government publications and information. It will be incorporated into the larger National Plan for the Future of the FDLP. What follows is an outline of the preservation plan elements.

Preserving the Collection of Federal Government Documents: A Comprehensive Plan Outline

1. Introduction
 2. Executive Summary
 3. Background
 - a. U.S. Government Printing Office (GPO) history
 - b. The FDLP
 - i. Mission of the Federal Depository Library Program (FDLP)
 - ii. Principles of Government Information
 - iii. Public access to documents and the FDLP
 - c. Cataloging and Indexing (C&I)
 - d. Timeline of significant collections
 - e. GPO's collaborative role with the National Archives & Records Administration (NARA) and the Library of Congress (LC)
 - f. Definition of Preservation
 - g. Preserving the National Collection
 - i. Standards and best practices
 - ii. Digitization as a viable means of preservation
 - iii. Role of Preservation in Achieving Permanent Public Access
 - h. Funding
 - i. GPO's constraints
 - ii. Federal Depository Library constraints
 4. A National Collection
 - a. Collection history
 - b. Collection scope: date span, national and local content
 - c. GPO's public documents collection at NARA
 - d. Government documents collection at LC
 - e. Federal Depository Libraries
 - f. National Libraries
 - g. Other Federal Agencies
 - h. Other Stakeholders
 5. Intellectual and Bibliographic access:
 - a. Current status
 - b. Projects to improve access
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- c. Impact on access and preservation
 - d. Holdings Records
- 6. Physical Condition Assessment:
 - a. Assessment of publications from NARA, LC, and selected FDL collections
 - b. Impact on access and long-term preservation
- 7. Risk Mitigation and Preservation Priorities
 - a. Collection Risks
 - b. Mitigation
 - i. Collections Care
 - ii. Disaster Prevention and Recovery
 - iii. Digitization (for preservation)
 - 1. Federal Agencies Digitization Guidelines Initiative (FADGI)
 - iv. Born and Exclusively Digital Content
- 8. Partnerships/Coalition Building/Outreach and Funding:
 - a. Content
 - i. Tangible
 - ii. Digital
 - b. Bibliographic
 - c. Training
 - i. Collection Care: training for basic repair, care and handling, disaster prevention and recovery
 - ii. Digitization: Training; Digitization Guidelines; Registry of Digital Projects; Shared Collection Repository
 - d. Digitization
 - e. Preservation
 - f. Timeline for Completion
- 9. Bibliography/References
- 10. Glossary