



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
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Statement Before the Federal Depository Library Conference
On
Including NTIS Electronic Content in the Federal Depository Library Program

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Good morning. It is a pleasure to be here at this depository library conference where all the possible ways to access our Government's information are being shared and discussed. This morning I want to add the National Technical Information Service (NTIS) to this discussion.

The mission of NTIS, as part of the Department of Commerce's Technology Administration, is to support the nation's economic growth and job creation by providing access to information that stimulates innovation and discovery. This is accomplished through two major programs: 1) information collection and dissemination to the public and 2) services for Federal agencies.

In support of its mission NTIS maintains a permanent collection of approximately three million scientific and technical reports that are produced by or for Government agencies and that are useful to U.S. business and industry. Many of these resources have not been made available through the Federal Depository Library Program (FDLP).

The responsibility for providing this content to depository libraries lies with the publishing agency and not with NTIS, as an aggregator. NTIS is exempt from FDLP obligations by the provisions of Title 44, United States Code, Section 1903 because its products and services "must necessarily be sold in order to be self-sustaining." NTIS receives no appropriations and must recover all its costs from sales.

Nevertheless, I am here today, in the spirit of our mission and the mission of the FDLP, to tell you that NTIS is interested in exploring how it can participate in the depository program by providing access to its electronic content. Unfortunately, we cannot provide access to print or microfiche products free of charge because of our statutory mandate to be self-sustaining. However, NTIS wants to work with GPO to provide the FDLP with access to as comprehensive as possible a collection of published Federal information.

As a first step, we will work with GPO to identify what NTIS content is not already accessible to depository libraries and to ascertain the percentage of overlap between our collections. Once this is determined, a pilot project will be initiated to provide depository libraries access to NTIS electronic content. While the technical details of the pilot are not worked out, we want the pilot to:

- Include all depository libraries as participants;
- Be designed and ready to implement in January 2007;
- Last six to twelve months;
- Use a subset of records in the NTIS database;
- Provide access to bibliographic records and abstracts, when they exist, for a fixed period of time - perhaps the most recent three to five years;
- Provide access to those records that contain links to full text online content; and
- Focus on the PB collection.

PB is an acronym for publications board that was used by the predecessor agency and it still used today to indicate reports that NTIS has added to its collection on behalf of Federal agencies. The focus of this pilot is on the PB collection because, it is estimated that this material, which represents approximately one-third of the NTIS collection, is most likely to contain content not currently available to depository libraries. The other two-thirds of the collection contain publications from the National Aeronautics and Space Administration, the Department of Energy, and the Defense Technical Information Center, which are already available through the FDLP.

During the pilot, information will be gathered and reviewed, including any impact on the financial stability of NTIS. Some adjustments may have to be made in the pilot if a negative financial impact is realized, since we cannot undermine the financial stability of NTIS.

NTIS and GPO both expect that the pilot will validate the assumption that NTIS can participate in the FDLP with its electronic content without suffering an economic loss that would be in violation of its legal requirements.

I would like very much to hear the thoughts and ideas of this community on how best to approach this pilot. I will be around for most of the meeting and welcome your input.