

Tips to Effectively Transition to a More Online Federal Depository Collection



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More and more government information is migrating to the web. The reality is that all depository libraries are, to one degree or another, transitioning to a more electronic collection. The following tips offer ways to assist depositories as they continue to incorporate online government publications into their services and collections.

- **Examine your Federal depository collection and its usage.**
 - Analyze formats, subjects and trends in usage of the collection.
 - Examine your library profile to select an electronic format for items you currently receive in tangible format, and then deselect the tangible item if the electronic version satisfies user needs.

- **Analyze resources available to provide access to the electronic collection and evaluate any savings or trade offs of “going virtual”.**
 - Analyze how the library is currently managing and providing access and services to online depository and non-depository resources.
 - What changes in the workflow would have to be made?
 - Are there any tasks (like processing) that can be reduced or eliminated?
 - Are there any personnel and/or training needs for reference service, cataloging, or technical support in an online information environment?
 - Review existing equipment and workstations used to provide public service/access to online depository and non-depository materials.
 - Are there enough workstations to accommodate more users as your online collection grows?
 - Is there a plan in place to regularly upgrade or replace equipment as necessary?

- **Revisit your Collection Development policy.**
 - The acquisition of electronic resources for government information must reflect the analysis of your library collection and its usage.
 - Weed tangible copies according to the substitution and superseded guidelines. Recognize that your institution may desire to retain, maintain, and provide access to a tangible collection. Consider off-site selective housing agreements.

- The depository coordinator is encouraged to seek input for selections. Suggestions should be solicited from depository staff, other library personnel (reference staff, collection development staff, etc.), and users.
- Cooperative collection development and interlibrary loan can also provide access within a local area to tangible copies of rarely used items.
- **Consider starting with a pilot or a small virtual collection.** It is often easier to start with a small change that proves successful and gains acceptance than to begin with a major undertaking.
- **Modify your profile.** All depositories should select or provide electronic access to titles from the "Basic Collection" found on the FDLP Desktop at: http://www.access.gpo.gov/su_docs/fdlp/coll-dev/basic-01.html
- **Work with your regional librarian.** Your regional librarian can assist with discards, substitutions, and superseded titles. They can also help you balance local, state and program needs.
- **Consider the National Collection when disposing of tangible materials.** Some historical government documents being discarded may be appropriate for the National Collection. For assistance, call 1-866-512-1800 or send e-mail to ContactCenter@gpo.gov.
- **Network.** Pursue contact with those who have built electronic collections and have provided quality services in their use.
- **Enlist the support of library administrators and other staff in the transition process.** A successful transition requires the support of administrators, librarians, and support staff to make it happen.
- **Promote the newer electronic formats to users and library staff.** They offer instantaneous access to a broader spectrum of users, are easier to use in some cases, and are available 24/7/365.

Building a more online federal electronic depository collection in no way lessens the importance of tangible materials the library retains.

Further questions should be directed to Janet Scheitle, Director, Program Planning and Development, Library Services at JScheitle@gpo.gov.

http://www.access.gpo.gov/su_docs/fdlp/coll-dev/online_coll_tips.pdf

