

The Regional Role in Permanent Access to Electronic Government Information

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Providing Permanent Public Access to Electronic Government Information

- A Modest Proposal

Permanent Public Access

- There is a difference between "Permanent Public Access" and "Archiving."
- Depository Libraries have been concerned about permanent public access since the early 1990's.
- GPO's efforts to provide permanent public access is being attempted because the depository library community made its concern known.
- GPO usually tries, within reason, to do what the depository community asks. Although GPO's solutions are not always what we desire, GPO should get credit for trying.

Superintendent of Documents Letter dated August 25, 2000

- Many Concerns
 1. GPO Funding
 2. GPO's Electronic Collection
 3. How can you call it a depository program if publications are not "deposited" in the libraries?
 1. **GPO Funding**
 - GPO has never received the level of funding necessary to identify, catalog, and distribute all Federal Government publications.
 - The House of Representatives just tried to cut the Salaries and Expenses Appropriation of the Superintendent of Documents in half.
 - The sad truth is that GPO cannot really guarantee its own continued existence, let alone permanent public access to electronic Government information.
 - A little over a year ago, how many of us would have believed that the Department of Commerce would try to close NTIS?
 2. **GPO's Electronic Collection**
 - GPO doesn't maintain a print collection. Is it fair to expect them to do a perfect job maintaining an electronic collection?

- "Managing the FDLP Electronic Collection: A Policy and Planning Document": 3 Quotes
- 3. "FDLP Electronic Collection consists of four elements: ♦ (3) Remotely accessible electronic Government information products that GPO identifies, describes, and links to but which remain under the control of the originating agency."
- 4.
- 5. "Products in the Collection will be selected and acquired under policies and procedures that encourage and facilitate the sharing of resources."
- 6. "The experience of the FDLP with tangible products demonstrates that obtaining full compliance by the originating agencies has been an elusive goal."

Managing the FDLP Electronic Collection

- World Factbook: previous editions GONE? A message on GOVDOC-L (Monterroso)
- "Just wondering "Should the agencies have some kind of liaison at GPO whom they have to consult before erasing their online pubs?"
- Response from George Barnum sent by Robin Haun-Mohamed

World Factbook Response

- Realistically describes the problem of establishing and maintaining relationships with agencies.
- "All this is voluntary"
- Back issues of World Factbook not archived since it was distributed in paper.

3. How Can You Call It a Depository Program?

- Of course, it is our hope and GPO's that some titles will always be distributed in paper.
- The biggest problem with permanent public access is that electronic products are pointed to, not distributed to libraries.
- If electronic products were distributed to libraries, we would not be dependent on the Federal Government getting its act together and coming up with an enforceable Government-wide policy on electronic Government information.

Why Would Electronic Files Be Distributed to Libraries When They Can Already Be Accessed from a Central Location?

- Because of economics and the cyclical nature of the centralized vs. decentralized access to electronic data.
- Cataloging through OCLC is an example of centralized access to electronic data.
- Subscribing to a CD-ROM cataloging service (Marcive) is decentralized access to electronic data.

Government Information Examples of Centralized vs. Decentralized Access

- NASA Mainframe computers at the various NASA research centers (Decentralized)
- NASA RECON Database (Centralized)
- RECON = Remote Console

- DIALOG and other database vendors
- CD-ROM databases (Decentralized)
- The World Wide Web (Centralized)
- The next step would be towards decentralization

Economics of Centralized vs. Decentralized Access

- It was too expensive for NASA to have its bibliographic database loaded on mainframe computers at each of its research centers.
- NASA contractors still would not have access to the bibliographic database.
- Less expensive to pay a contractor (Lockheed) to mount RECON database on dedicated mainframe and provide remote access.

Economics of Government Information

- Lockheed spins off DIALOG and begins vending many databases.
- Pay as you go searching. Pay DIALOG for access. Pay royalty for each citation.
- CD-ROM provides unlimited searching.
- Allows unmediated searching.
- Networks allow concurrent users.
- Each technological advance broadens the market.
- The commercial vendors are making more money and the libraries are spending more money.
- With a few exceptions, when a library cancels subscriptions to electronic products, they retain nothing from the subscriptions paid in previous years.
- When you cancel a print subscription, you still have the printed volumes.
- There is duplication between various aggregator databases.
- The University of Colorado has some titles that are contained in at least four aggregator databases we subscribe to.
- How long can libraries continue to pay for this duplication?
- With growing frequency, publishers are ending licensing agreements with aggregator database providers and marketing the electronic version of their titles themselves.
- Libraries need guarantees that they will actually retain access to the titles for which they purchase access.
- Economics will cause libraries to demand an electronic product that the libraries control and can guarantee permanent public access within the library.
- As technology advances, computer storage becomes much cheaper.

Network Storage

- Snap Servers: a hard drive that connects to a network. The network can be accessible from the Internet.
- Microwarehouse <<http://www.warehouse.com>> lists a Quantum Snap! 120 GB Server 4000 at \$2,699.95.
- This is about the cost of two Russ Bassett 10 drawer microfiche cabinets.
- 120 GB will hold a lot of PDF, HTML and text files.
- Snap servers can be connected to networks with their own IP addresses. They can be daisy chained to add more storage to the same address.
- Moving computer files is much easier than shifting books or microfiche.
- Compression software will allow even greater storage on snap server.
- How did GeoLythics get all of the 1990 Census STF 1A and 3A data, plus the mapping data on to one CD-ROM disc?

New Expenses for Depository Libraries

- With every new format distributed to depository libraries, new equipment is required.
- Microfiche: readers, printers, cabinets, fiche duplicators.
- CD-ROM/Floppy Disks: computers, laser printers, networks, more computers.
- Internet: more computers.

Expenses for Depository Libraries

- Every year the cost of computer equipment goes down while the hard drives get larger.
- Microfiche cabinet prices just keep going up.
- You can't replace 10 microfiche cabinets with one cabinet that holds everything in the 10 cabinets, but is the same size as one cabinet.

How Could GPO Distribute Electronic Titles?

- GPO already touches each electronic title that is cataloged.
- With a couple of extra clicks, most files can be downloaded to a GPO computer.
- The file name assigned by GPO could be some form of accession number.
- GPO could include this accession number in the cataloging record.

Simple Distribution Scheme

- GPO could create a compressed file containing a week's worth of downloaded titles.
- The weekly files would be made available for FTP.
- Any library could download the week's file.
- Regionals would be required to download each week.

Complicated Distribution Scheme

- Selective depositories would be able to make selections of the types of titles they want to receive, similar to the current item selections (but simplified).
- Each selective depository would have its own FTP file to download, much like Marcive distributes cataloging records.
- Regionals would still get everything.

Won't There Be Files That Are Problematic to Download?

- Yes.
- The vast majority of electronic Government publications are in PDF, HTML or text format.
- The files and databases that cannot be downloaded can still be linked to in the GPO catalog record.

What Do We Do with These Electronic Titles Once We Have Them in Our Library?

- Anything you want.
- Using GPO catalog records, you can create links to the files on your server.

- You can classify the titles in SuDocs, LC, Dewey, or just use an accession number.

So What Are We Going to Do with All These Electronic Files?

- Provide the answer to the permanent public access problem.

What Is the Greatest Benefit to Regionals of Electronic Depository Libraries?

- No discard lists!