

Federal Depository Library Program Strategic Plan, 2009 - 2014



Creating an informed citizenry and improving quality of life

**Library Services and Content Management
Superintendent of Documents
U.S. Government Printing Office**

Draft Discussion Document: 01/15/2009

This draft will be updated with more details once input is received from the depository library community and the strategic direction is approved by the Depository Library Council.

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Federal Depository Library Program Strategic Plan, 2009 - 2014

The Federal Government has the obligation to disseminate and provide broad public access to its published information, as well as to ensure the authenticity and integrity of this information. Furthermore, the Government has an obligation to preserve its information and assure permanent public access.¹ This is accomplished through a variety of Federal agencies and programs, but the primary source for permanent public access to published information of the Federal Government is the Federal Depository Library Program (FDLP) administered by the U.S. Government Printing Office (GPO) and governed by Title 44, United States Code, Chapter 19.

The FDLP can trace its roots to 1813 when Congress first authorized legislation to ensure the provision of one copy of the House and Senate Journals and other Congressional documents to certain universities, historical societies, and state libraries. GPO has administered the FDLP since 1895. Today Federal depository libraries are still a primary location for the public to access the published information of the Federal Government.

Through the FDLP Government agencies share the responsibility for permanent public access to published Federal Government information with libraries that have chosen to serve their communities and the nation by building, preserving and ensuring continued access to tangible Federal Government publications collections and providing public access to a wide array of online Government information resources. The implementation of the GPO Access Act ushered GPO into the online age and accelerated the paradigm shift in the FDLP that changed GPO's relationship with depository libraries. Regional depositories have the responsibility for permanent public access in the tangible publication environment. In the online information environment GPO, as a National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) Archival Affiliate, has assumed primary responsibility for permanent public access.

Though the Principles for Government Information, which provide our core ideology, will remain essentially the same in the future, the introduction of digital technology has changed the ways Government information dissemination products and services are created and how they will look and function to meet the ever changing needs of the U.S. Government itself as well as the way public users of Government information now prefer to access and use it.

This document and strategic planning process address future modeling for the FDLP to successfully provide access to the published information of the Federal Government in the rapidly changing environment. GPO recognizes there are statutory constraints that currently limit the implementation of some models that may come forward during this strategic planning process. That does not preclude them, however, from being options to explore. Rather, they may become the impetus for legislative change.

¹ See Appendix A: Principles for Government Information

I. Current Condition

At present there are 1,247 designated Federal depository libraries, 51 of which are regional depositories. Depository collections are housed in a variety of types of libraries: college and university libraries; public libraries, law school libraries; court libraries; state libraries; special libraries; research libraries, tribal college libraries, and libraries of Federal agencies. The size of libraries that are stewards to depository collections and provide services to the public range from the smallest of libraries in Government to some of the largest libraries in the world. All of the Federal depository libraries provide a valuable public service and they impact their communities daily.

With about 97% of materials disseminated to depositories having an online equivalent, the FDLP is now a primarily electronic program. Since the mandated transition began in fiscal year 1997, the Program has 119 fewer libraries and two less regional depository libraries. During this same time period, however, thirty libraries were designated as Federal depository libraries. Eleven of these designations were within the last three fiscal years.

The FDLP is at the crossroads. The existing legislative authority and the current structure of the FDLP dates to 1962. Much has changed in libraries since then. Technological innovations facilitated the evolution of state and regional cooperative networks. Libraries have standardized bibliographic formats and transfer protocols that allow libraries to share catalogs and cataloging records. These same networks provide the infrastructure for rapid interlibrary loan and document delivery.

The more recent online Web-based environment and the distributive power of information technologies offer libraries an opportunity to provide access to materials they do not own and make available services that meet the high expectations of library users. As libraries are serving more and more users from locations outside the library building, librarians are turning to the online environment for delivery of information and services at the user's point of need. Consortia purchasing of full-text databases, cooperative virtual/chat reference services, and scanning publications for electronic delivery are examples of ways libraries serve their users in a networked environment. These services do not recognize geographic boundaries. With leaner budgets libraries look to collaborative solutions in an increasingly interconnected digital environment to meet user expectations for immediate access and service as well as to increase their return on investment.

A network of diverse libraries with varying needs, like the designated libraries in the FDLP, requires flexibility and collaboration such as is afforded Federal agencies through e-government initiatives. As stated by the Office of Management and Budget in *FY 2007 Report to Congress on Implementation of the E-Government Act of 2002*, "the use of information technology to provide consistent access to and dissemination of government information is essential to promote a more citizen-centered government in a cost-effective manner." The current framework of depositories exists within a structure designed more than forty-five years ago prior to the creation of statewide and regional consortia for resource sharing and prior to the development of digital information delivery networks.

For more than fifteen years the depository community has explored alternative structures for the FDLP. In today’s digital environment where geographic boundaries are non-existent to services, libraries are improving and increasing access to tangible and virtual information resources by digitizing collections; providing point of need services; and participating in collaborative relationships to share personnel, space, and services. To move forward in the 21st century, libraries also must be able to apply these options to Federal depository collections.

The results of a recent examination of the FDLP’s strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats are shown in Figure 1 below. GPO, with the depository community, developed this strategic plan that leverages identified strengths and opportunities to mitigate the external threats and internal weaknesses of the FDLP.

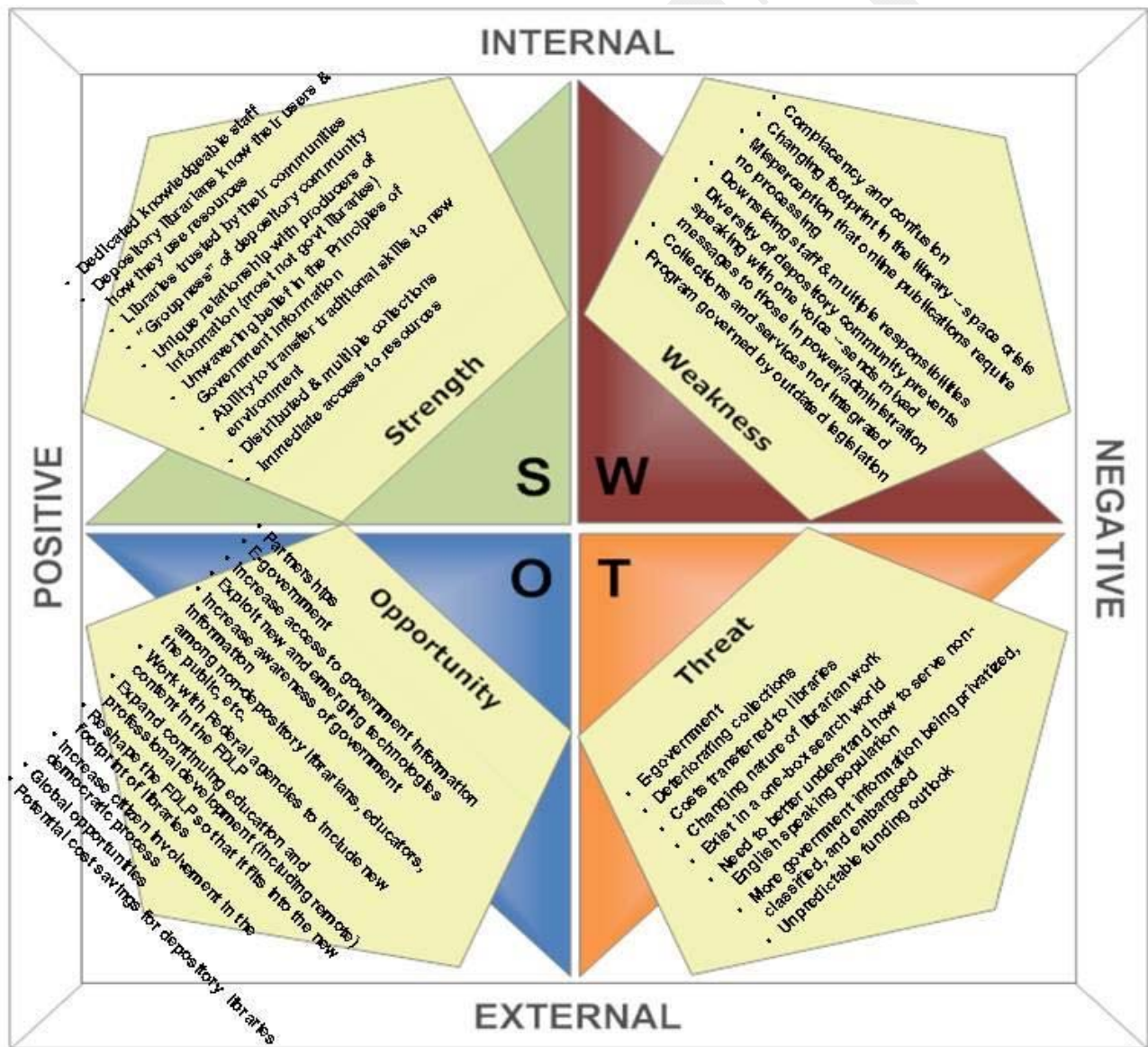


Figure 1: FDLP SWOT Analysis

II. VISION

The Federal Depository Library Program will provide Government information when and where it is needed in order to create an informed citizenry and an improved quality of life.

III. MISSION

The mission of the Federal Depository Library Program is to provide for no-fee ready and permanent public access to Federal Government information, now and for future generations.

The mission is achieved through:

- Organizing processes that enable desired information to be identified and located;
- Expert assistance rendered by trained professionals in a network of libraries;
- Collections of publications at a network of libraries; and
- Archived online information dissemination products from GPO Access, Federal agency Web sites, and partner Web sites.

IV. VALUES

Access

No-fee access for anyone, from anywhere, to use Federal depository resources or services

Collections

Tangible and online collections of official and authentic Federal information dissemination products built to support user and community needs

Collaboration and communication

A strong depository library network built on transparent, open communication and collaboration between and among depository libraries, Federal agencies, and GPO

Expertise and professionalism

Dedicated and knowledgeable staff in depository libraries; dedicated to the mission of the FDLP, to increasing their knowledge, and to their profession

Service

Enrich one's library experience by providing quality user-centric services; strong commitment to service

Stewardship

Good stewards of the resources entrusted to us by the American people

V. ASSUMPTIONS

- Developments in the larger library world inform the future of the FDLP
- Fewer Federal depository library professionals will be steeped in the FDLP or Federal resources
- Collaboration, cooperation, and flexibility are essential
- Depository libraries must be allowed to adapt to technological and Program changes to perform their roles
- Competencies to lead and manage the depository library of today and the future are different than those of the traditional depository library
- Government agencies and the private sector will continue to independently develop tools and resources to locate government information
- Partnerships between the government and the private sector will continue to develop and increase
- GPO must promote depositories and their resources outside the FDLP
- An enhanced system is needed to ensure persistent identification and description of Government information products available via Government electronic information services
- A primarily electronic FDLP offers opportunities to make more information locally available to the public with enhanced functionality
- GPO will continue to create new services that meet the needs of different types of depository libraries as technologies and libraries evolve
- As an unintended consequence of technology, the trend to shift costs from agencies to the user or to libraries will continue to occur

VI. GOALS

- Goal A. Develop new models for Federal depository collections
- Goal B. Develop new models for Federal depository services
- Goal C. Develop new models of communication for the depository library community

VII. STRATEGIES

The following strategies enumerated represent some ideas put forward to GPO by the depository library community.

Goal A: Develop new models for Federal depository collections

1. Revamp the disposition of materials process
2. Authorize regionals to replace tangible publications with online versions
3. Authorize designation of shared regionals across state lines
4. Develop a comprehensive collection of online Federal publications

- a. Expand digitization activities
- b. Establish digital content partnerships
- c. Work with publishing agencies
- d. Identify and capture fugitive publications
- e. Employ automated harvesting technologies
5. Distribute digital files
6. Maintain the digital registry

Goal B: Develop new models for Federal depository services

1. Increase access to and usability of Federal information
 - a. Develop/improve discovery and navigation tools
 - 1) CGP enhancements
 - a) Implement MetaLib
 - 2) GPO Access/FDSys functionality
 - a) Provide contextual help
 - b) Improve search and retrieval
 - b. Create bibliographic and metadata records
 - 1) Retrospective shelf list conversion (pre-1976)
 - 2) Continue to develop applicable automated metadata extraction tools
 - 3) Push cataloging records to depository libraries
 - c. Expand authentication activities for online Government information dissemination products
 - d. Explore using innovative technologies such as virtual worlds, MySpace, etc.
 - e. Develop user-centric service delivery models for an environment of shared digital resources
 - f. Replace PURLs
 - g. Work to initiate use of a mark to identify Government public domain (non-copyrighted) resources
2. Develop a registry of experts
3. Share resource (e.g., training materials, virtual reference)

Goal C: Develop new models of communication for the depository library community

1. Strengthen the network of Federal depository libraries
 - a. Foster collaboration
 - 1) Implement FDLP Desktop forums and “group spaces”
 - 2) Increase the number of partnerships
2. Develop a library relations plan
3. Develop new marketing strategies for the FDLP
4. Expand training and conference opportunities

5. Embark on Phase 2 of the FDL Handbook (review policies and procedures and identify policy/procedure gaps)
6. Conduct outcomes-based assessments of depository libraries

DRAFT

XI. CONCLUSION: WHAT WILL THE FDLP LOOK LIKE IN 2014?

In today's online environment change is happening at such a rapid rate that a "blur" is created. The blur is described by Davis and Meyer, in their book by the same name, as the convergence of speed, connectivity, and intangibles that create indistinguishable lines between products and services and buyers and sellers. Put in the context of the FDLP by using the National Atlas of the United States of America, in the tangible world the National Atlas is a book of maps. Online it is more. It is a service that allows users to download data into GIS applications. It also allows users to create customized maps by choosing which elements to include and the elements can come from multiple agencies. The product becomes a service and the user becomes the creator/publisher. This is not "business as usual".

Multiple models are required for the FDLP of the future in order to meet the varied needs of depository users and to meet the needs of the Program's diverse libraries. The future of the FDLP can be best depicted as a triangular pyramid that exists in an environment permeated by collaboration and flexibility. Services, collections, and communications each are represented as a face of the pyramid with equal importance. They support each other and provide or facilitate the means for access. The base or foundation of the pyramid represents access to our Government's information resources, our reason for existence, and always present. The wider base also represents the 100+ years of building tangible collections, creating best practices and establishing traditions, which have given the FDLP strength. As one climbs the pyramid into an increasingly online environment the distinctions between collections, services, and communications blur. Access to depository resources is always present. Necessarily, collaboration and flexibility encompass and pervade the entire pyramid – no one library can "do it all". This pyramid depiction allows for multiple models of providing access to Federal depository resources to develop.



In the Federal Depository Library Program of the future:



- ◆ The Principles for Government Information will still be the FDLP's core ideology.
 - ◆ Federal depository libraries will continue to facilitate access to the American public through traditional services as well as through enhanced or new services made possible by the digital age.
 - ◆ GPO, working actively with depositories, will ensure accessibility, findability, and usability of government information dissemination products.
 - ◆ The options for building Federal depository collections will increase.
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- ◆ Regional depositories will continue to have the responsibility for permanent public access for tangible publications that remain in their collections.
 - ◆ GPO will ensure permanent public access to, provide version control of, and authenticate Federal digital content. This does not rule out depository libraries providing redundancy.
 - ◆ Communication will exist, and improve, between and among GPO, depository libraries, other Federal agencies, and the public and communities served by depository libraries.
 - ◆ Consumers of Federal information will be able to access it from where ever they are and when ever they need it.

Appendix A: Principles for Government Information

Access to Government information is steeped in our history. From Thomas Jefferson in 1789: "Whenever the people are well-informed, they can be trusted with their own government; ... whenever things get so far wrong as to attract their notice, they may be relied on to set them to rights." And from James Madison in 1822: "A popular government without popular information, or the means of acquiring it, is but a prologue to a farce or a tragedy; or, perhaps both..."

These quotes, from the author of the Declaration of Independence and the Father of the Constitution of the United States, illustrate the recognition and importance of the free flow of information in a democratic society. The Founding Fathers thought it essential that the citizenry be informed about its government and its workings so as to allow effective participation in the democratic process. Federal depository libraries uphold the tradition of public access to Federal Government information that began with our nation.

By law and tradition, the following Principles for Government Information² have come to represent the core ideology of the Federal Depository Library Program:

- The public has the right of access to government information;
- Government has the obligation to disseminate and provide broad public access to its information;
- Government has an obligation to guarantee the authenticity and integrity of its information;
- Government has an obligation to preserve its information; and
- Government information created or compiled by government employees or at government expense should remain in the public domain.

Principles published by other organizations:

- American Association of Law Libraries. Government Relations Policy (April 2008). http://aallnet.org/about/policy_government.asp
- American Library Association. Government Documents Round Table (GODORT). GODORT Principles on Government Information (March 1991). <http://www.ala.org/ala/mgrps/rts/godort/godortfactsheets/prinGODORT.cfm>
- U.S. National Commission on Libraries and Information Science. Principles of Public Information (June 29, 1990). <http://www.nclis.gov/info/pripubin.html>
- U.S. Office of Management and Budget. "Basic Considerations and Assumptions" in Circular A-130 (11/28/2000). <http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/circulars/a130/a130trans4.pdf>

² U.S. Government Printing Office. *Study to Identify Measures Necessary for a Successful Transition to a More Electronic Federal Depository Library Program As Required by Legislative Branch Appropriations Act, 1996 Public Law 104-53*. June 1996. p.4-5. [http://www.access.gpo.gov/su_docs/fdip/pubs/study/studyhtm.html].

Appendix B: Scope of Government Information Products Disseminated Through the FDLP

In accordance with Superintendent of Documents policy, the scope of tangible materials for the Federal Depository Library Program includes all published Federal information products, regardless of format or medium, which are of public interest or educational value or produced using Federal funds. Exceptions are those products:

- ♦ For official use only or for strictly administrative or operational purposes that are not of public interest or do not have educational value;
- ♦ Classified for reasons of national security;
- ♦ The use of which is constrained by privacy considerations; or
- ♦ That must be sold by the publishing agency in order to be self-sustaining (“cooperative publications”).

All Federal information dissemination products published on an agency’s (or an agency’s official partner’s) publicly accessible Web site and originating from or funded by the agency are intended for public use and are to be considered in scope for the FDLP.