

How Acquiring GPO's URL Records through a Vendor Can Help You Manage This Growing Area of Government Information

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We all know that a growing proportion of government publications is being put on Internet Web pages. Batch-loading of GPO's catalog records from a company such as Marcive can improve a library's abilities to get records for these elusive resources.

If you have a document on your processing shelf, you know you need to get it cataloged or otherwise accounted for so that it can be found in the collection. Unfortunately there hasn't an equivalent trigger to alert you to the need for a record for a relevant online resource you don't know about. By getting a new set of records each month automatically, based on some sort of selection profile, your library efficiently receives new records for these resources soon after they are cataloged by GPO rather than having to rely on serendipitous browsing and searching to discover them.

A vendor like Marcive can help a library choose what URL records to get:

- **Records matching item profile vs. everything:** this really is a philosophical issue: should the library maximize the number of online resources represented in the catalog, or should it focus on those that match to some extent the institution's mission? Since there is little traditional expense involved in selecting online resources that the library probably wouldn't have considered in physical form in the past, the temptation might be to go ahead and get records for everything. That is probably OK at larger institutions with a diversity of programs

and users to support, and Marcive offers you the option of getting all records with a URL generated by GPO each month. However, as the number of online resources grows, many smaller, more focused institutions among our customers are sticking with or returning to a profiled approach, in which the records are acquired only for the same sorts of resources and agencies the library collects in physical form. For them, the item profile remains useful in this environment.

- **Records from targeted agencies for specific kinds of libraries:** this is just an extension of the above idea, but I had non-depositories in mind when I wrote it. As a very specific example, a hospital library that wanted records for Federal online resources was overwhelmed at what they received in their first batch of records, so we worked with them to select only the records for health-related agencies. While this was done without the use of the item numbers, we did rely on the SuDoc classification to efficiently narrow the selections. I think it's a big help to have either the item number or the SuDoc number in the records to facilitate selection.
- **Limit by other criteria:** in addition to helping the library decide which agencies' records should be represented, other guidelines can be set up. For example, many depository libraries are willing to get all records for online resources, as

long as the information in the records does not indicate that there was also physical distribution. They prefer records reflecting distribution in paper or MF as well as online availability be limited to what is in their item profile (if they are depositories).

We can let you know what online documents you are receiving catalog records for each month.

Your library system software may be able to generate good detailed reports for you to help you review each record load, but if it does not we can provide title lists for you.

We can help validate the URLs for you.

At Marcive we now routinely run a link checker on new GPO records. Most often this turns up minor typos in the PURL that can be fixed easily. In those cases we can fix the problem before distributing the records and notify GPO that there was a problem. I also have been little by little working through older records with URLs. For those that no longer seem to work I check what I can and send the information to GPO so that they may update the records with a new URL and PURL, confirm that a link is dead, or look again at a record that may now be linked to information different from that described in the record. Helping GPO track down changing URL information can make it easier for them to manage it, and that benefits all users of their records, not just MARCIVE's customers.

We can modify the record information to suit a library's needs or preferences.

We routinely add information to URL records that will display as notes or location information the library wants for these sorts of resources. You don't like the 856 subfield "z" the records come with? We can change it to something more suitable for you. Or we can make other modifications to the records to suit your needs. Just let us know and we'll be glad to work on it with you.

Some things aren't so easy. For instance, a public library may ask about controlling access to URLs -- can we modify the records so the URL is visible but not clickable except at approved workstations, for example. This sort of thing is more a function of what the local system is capable of, but if you can tell me that coding particular fields in a particular way will give you the results you want then it's worth asking about.

In the future Marcive expects to offer MARC records based on Department of Energy records. Many of these now point to copies of reports available on the Web. While this is still in development, I anticipate being able to offer the same benefits as with our current GPO record services: automatic distribution of records with URLs as they become available, with selection criteria defined by the library, and adjustments to the records based on the individual libraries' preferences.

These are just a few ways that getting GPO URL records through a vendor like Marcive can help you manage your access to these expanding resources. If you would like to discuss how Marcive's services can help you with GPO's URL records or take a closer look at what Marcive already provides you, please contact me at jnoel@marcive.com or 800-531-7678.