

**Proceedings of the 1st Annual
Federal Depository Library Conference, 1992
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**Remarks delivered at the Federal Depository
Conference Rosslyn Westpark Hotel
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Robert W. Houk
Public Printer of the United States

Good morning ladies and gentlemen and welcome to the first annual Federal Depository Conference. I am pleased to see so many of you here.

I would like, first, to recognize those members of the Depository Library Council who are attending today's conference and to ask you to stand when your names are called so the rest of the audience can see who you are.

Gary Cornwell, who will be taking over as Chairman in October, is representing the current chair, Janet Fisher, who was unable to attend today's conference. Chris Kitchens; Maria Teresa Marquez; Susan Tulis; Mark Vonderhaar; John Weiner; Sandy Morton; B.J. Swartz; and Bob Oakley. Thank you.[Mr. Houk then introduced the 5 newly appointed Council members, previously announced in Administrative Notes, v. 13, #9.]

I also want to take a moment to recognize the fine work that Wayne Kelley has done in organizing this conference. Wayne and his personnel in the Library Programs Service have outdone themselves in making this event a reality. And what a reality it is. I quite candidly was told last year that this conference would fail. Librarians would not have the means to travel to Washington. But pre-registration topped 400, with every State represented save South Dakota. My Chief of Staff assures me that South Dakota is represented in spirit.

We have 17 from California, 29 from New York, 14 from New Jersey, 27 from Pennsylvania, 19 from Florida, 11 from Texas, 21 from Ohio, 10 from Wisconsin, 7 from Michigan, 10 from Illinois, 11 from Indiana - hello Sally Holterhoff - 10 from North Carolina - my compliments to Ridley Kessler and Chairman Rose of the Joint Committee on Printing.

Speaking of veterans of past meetings, I am pleased to see Ridley, former chair of the Depository Library Council; Linda Kennedy, chair of GODORT; Julia Wallace, in-coming chair of GODORT, to name but a few. In the coming days I hope to get acquainted with many more of you. Welcome to you all.

Science fiction writer Ray Bradbury once observed, "Without libraries, what have we? We have no past and no future."

I use that quote to describe, in essence, how GPO views the Federal Depository Libraries of this

Nation. They are, to GPO and the Federal Government itself, the final link in a chain between the Government and the governed, and a distinguishing feature of a representative democracy.

I have also opened my remarks with Mr. Bradbury's words to set a tone for this conference: that is, the importance of the Federal depository libraries in accomplishing a mission both urgent and essential, and the partnership between the libraries and the U.S. Government Printing Office in providing a unique public service.

The GPO and the Federal Depository Libraries are partners in the enterprise of disseminating Government information to the public. I use the term "partners" because it accurately describes our role in this vital enterprise. You will be hearing the word "partner" more and more as this conference progresses.

We are, essentially, conduits for the information that Government authors publish and the public requires. I want to describe, briefly, how the process works by way of illustrating our partnership.

The agencies of the Federal Government, financed by the taxpayers to publish the work they do, are GPO's customers. They contract with GPO to print, and in other ways reproduce, and then disseminate the information they have authored. In the printing process, GPO does three things:

- It creates information products and services in accordance with the specifications and needs of our Federal customer agencies.
- It then replicates, or reproduces, the information as distinct products and services.
- Finally, GPO disseminates the information products and services on behalf of the publishing agencies.

The dissemination process includes the agencies, the GPO, and the approximately 1,400 depository libraries across the country, who together provide public access to the information being disseminated. A survey conducted several years ago indicates that more than 167,000 persons utilize Federal Depository Library collections every week.

I want to stress the point that while disseminating Government information is essential to the functioning of a representative democracy, it is also part of the mission of the Federal agencies that authored the information. For them, the end product of their work is not a simple matter of writing reports. They must be assured that those reports are eventually made available to the public. This creates a requirement for the GPO and the depository libraries to serve as intermediaries between the agencies and the public. We share a unique role.

Public access to this information is the bottom line of the dissemination effort. Every library offers information. Every library offers inspiration, entertainment, the reinforcing of deeply-held beliefs, and the introduction of new ideas that may challenge those beliefs. But 1,400 libraries in this Nation also provide essential Government information to those men and women who find in it the knowledge that makes us all more learned, creative, prosperous, and humane citizens.

This part of the mission should not be a simple matter of keeping the information on file, any more than the simple writing of reports is the end of the process for the Federal agencies that publish them. The key to the enterprise is disseminating that information, not storing it. It's what separates a library from a warehouse.

This key point brings me to a central feature in the dissemination of Federal Government information: outreach. There is a fancy name for it too: affirmative public service. Whatever name you wish to use, it comes down to the same thing: marketing the information to the public. I do mean marketing, not advertising. For those who are students of marketing, you will remember the

four P's of marketing: product, price, promotion, placement. If you can visualize a Government document as a product, and trace through the other elements of marketing: price, promotion, and placement, you will understand, and appreciate the importance of marketing.

Through this framework, libraries designated as depositories serve not only their primary clientele, but also the entire population of their Congressional districts. A library's success in identifying and meeting these larger community needs is the measure of the depository's effectiveness.

Whatever the method used, the aggressive marketing of Government information, reaching out to the public that relies on such information, closes the circle of the dissemination effort. So, we encourage you, the Federal depository librarians of this Nation, to inform your communities of the wealth of Government information on your shelves, in your microfiche and map cabinets, and more and more frequently on your computers.

I want, finally, to outline initiatives GPO is taking to advance more aggressively into the electronic age.

These initiatives are described in a booklet called, "GPO/2001: Vision for a New Millennium." It is the product of enormous work by many hardworking GPO employees headed by Bill Hohns, our Deputy Public Printer. It is only the first step towards developing a final strategic plan, which will be called "Blueprint for a New Millennium."

We are currently inviting feedback from those who have read the Vision statement, which offers a view of the future in which GPO and the depository libraries will be relying much more heavily on electronic methods and formats to accomplish our mission of disseminating Government information. Simply put, GPO will be transformed from an environment dedicated to traditional print technologies to an integrated information-processing operation distinguished by the electronic creation, replication, and dissemination of information.

These changes, should they be adopted as outlined in the Vision statement, will evolve over time. We are not talking about a sudden revolutionary jolt. But the central element that will most affect the dissemination activities will be the gradual development and implementation of an electronic capability that will best serve the needs of our Federal customer agencies and the public users we all serve.

This capacity will consist of three basic elements:

- FIND, for Federal INformation Directory. This will be a comprehensive Federal information locator system. It will serve as a universal index to all Government information products and services, incorporating other directories that already exist or are created subsequently. This index has long been needed.
- A second element is SEND, which stands for Satellite Electronic Network Dissemination. It is, as its name implies, satellite-based, and is intended to work on a daily basis. When combined with GPO's continued distribution of products that remain in traditional print formats, it will fulfill GPO's responsibility to distribute electronic information products and services to the depository libraries. Moreover, SEND will increase the amount of information available to the depository libraries and dramatically improve its timeliness.
- An important feature in SEND is that it will be designed to allow the depository libraries to manage the information they receive, controlling their receipt of the information to meet their exact needs. Libraries will provide public access to the information through print-on-demand capabilities, or the provision of electronic user access through terminals, along with research assistance to patrons.

- The third element is INTERACT, which will serve GPO's sales program by making our general information dissemination activities bilateral, or interactive, rather than unilateral as they are today. INTERACT will provide on-line access to the database of information products and services residing at, or available through, GPO.

But the success of these future efforts, no less than the success of our efforts today, is tied to the strength of the GPO-Depository Library partnership. The key to that partnership is our commitment to the Federal community and the larger community of people it serves. The goal of our partnership and our commitment is an informed Republic.

In closing, I again welcome you to this conference. It is the first of what we hope and plan to be an annual event. With this turnout, I am encouraged and delighted that GPO organized this conference. You have much to hear today - and much to discuss - so I turn the microphone back to Joe McClane.

Thank you.