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## Remarks at the Federal Depository Conference April 8, 1992

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I want to join Wayne and Bob in welcoming you to the first Federal Depository Conference. I am happy to be here with you and delighted to see such a wonderful turnout ...

As many of you know, I spent many hours in this room when I was a member of the Depository Library Council, and I certainly never expected that I would one day stand before you here as the director of the Library Programs Service. I see many familiar faces in the audience -- and many new ones. I look forward to getting to know all of you better during this conference and as we work together to fulfill our common mission of depository public service.

Obviously I share your strong commitment to public access to government publications through the Depository Library Program -- and your sincere desire to improve the service that together we provide to the publishing agencies and the people who through your libraries use their publications.

The theme of this conference is particularly appropriate. Public service is the essence of the Depository Library Program, and it has been - and continues to be - redefined by the new electronic publications entering the program.

We have come a long way since Census Test Disc No. 2 was sent to 143 depository libraries in September, 1988. LPS has now distributed -- and you have received and provide service for -- over 175 CD-ROMs and numerous other publications on personal computer diskettes. We have our own electronic bulletin board . We are working on evaluations of 5 electronic pilot projects, and we are continuing to participate in the U.S. Supreme Court's Project Hermes.

We are still awaiting results from the biennial survey. We anticipate that it will confirm that over 80% (and perhaps as high as 90%) of depository libraries have - or soon will have - computer workstations and CD-ROM drives available for public use of the electronic information products you have received. The acceptance and implementation of these new technologies has occurred with incredible speed.

It is truly an exciting time to be part of the Federal Depository Library community.

I am fortunate to wear two hats at GPO, as director of LPS and of the new Office of Electronic Information Dissemination Services (EIDS) -- a new initialism for your alphabet soup.

Both LPS and EIDS focus on the delivery of government publications to the people who want and need the information.

You are all familiar with LPS, but EIDS is a new office and I want to take a few minutes to talk about that office and how its activities relate to and support the Depository Library Program.

Like LPS, EIDS is under the Superintendent of Documents. Its primary mission is to work with other parts of GPO to assist our customer agencies in producing and disseminating electronic publications.

EIDS is helping agencies evaluate the new publishing opportunities that are available because of CD-ROM and other technologies. We are sharing not only GPO's experience with the production and procurement of electronic information products, but also our experience with the dissemination and use of those products.

Through the Depository Library Program and the Sales Program we have gained significant experience with the dissemination of electronic products and -- more importantly -- we have gathered a great deal of valuable information about how these products are used and how they can be made more useful.

We are meeting with agencies individually. The EIDS staff are speaking at conferences and using other opportunities to communicate with groups of agency publishers -- This month that includes a presentation to the Electronic Publishing Roundtable of the Federal Publishers Committee on Monday (which a number of you were able to attend), as well as participation in the IFPP CD-ROM course next week and in the SIGCAT CD-ROM Conference at the end of month.

To each meeting we are taking information about the Sales Program and the Depository Library Program and at each meeting we are sharing the feedback that you have provided to us -- sharing the lessons that you have learned working with the electronic publications that are already in the program, so the next publication can be better than the last publication.

I have coined a phrase to replace the overworked expression "user friendly," and I talk to the agencies about the need for "simple, intuitive, and self-instructing software." I know how important that is in part from your feedback on the ability of the public to use the electronic publications you have already received and made available. I stress the benefits not just to you and your users -- but to their other constituencies as well.

EIDS is advising the agencies not just on the selection of retrieval software, but also on the media, manuals, packaging and other components of a successful electronic publication.

And we are offering the agencies mechanisms for dissemination to the public at no additional cost to the agency if the publication is produced or procured through GPO.

For some agencies your users are the primary audience to whom they are addressing their publications. To others your users are a secondary audience who can benefit from the publications developed for and targeted to other constituencies. In either case, you and your users are a source of positive, constructive feedback to the agencies -- a laboratory for testing their products -- a resource for supplementing their own user support and public service activities.

The agencies that already participate in the Depository Library Program are delighted with the supplementary materials that you develop and share with one another and with your users. The ones who are considering participation are impressed by your commitment and your effort to make these electronic products accessible and useful to the public.

Those of you who were at the FPC meeting Monday heard Ken Rogers from the Department of Commerce say how important this program is to his agency - how they value the support -- the public service -- that you offer to the users of the National Trade Data Bank.

Commerce does not publish the NTDB through GPO. Yet they provide over 675 copies to us each month -- at their own expense -- so we can send them to you and you can get the information into the hands of the small business owners and others who need it.

When I put on my EIDS hat and go out to talk to the agencies, I represent your desire to have more electronic publications in the program and your preferences for product designs that enable you to more effectively deliver the agencies' information to the public. I also offer the Depository Library Program as a low cost way to meet their own public service objectives. I offer them the benefit of your staff, your commitment, your public service, to supplement and enhance their own.

The Depository Library Program - and the Sales Program - are strong incentives for the agencies to work with GPO for the production and procurement of electronic information products.

The advent of new technologies present us daily with new challenges and new opportunities for public service. We are off to a good start, but there is still much that must be accomplished.

Each new electronic product brings a new precedent, a new policy. We are having to look again at the old ways of doing things and re-evaluate them. We must keep what is good, what works, what makes sense -- and not be afraid to change what no longer works. We must challenge ourselves to meet not just the letter of the law with respect to public access and public service, but the true spirit of program.

We will continue to reach out to the agencies to encourage their participation in the program. You must continue to reach out to your entire community -- the entire Congressional district, the entire state, the entire network of depository libraries -- to encourage the fullest possible utilization of the materials that are provided to you.

Together we can redefine and strengthen the standards for public access and public service in the new, and increasingly electronic, Depository Library Program. We can ensure that the Program provides an unparalleled service to the publishing agencies and to the public.

I am excited by the opportunity to work with you -- and for you -- both in EIDS and LPS. Together we are a powerful team, and I believe that together we can meet Wayne's challenge to define -- and then implement -- the "practical policy of the possible."

This conference is an excellent place to begin that journey.