Depository Selection: History and Current Practice

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In September 2005, GPO issued three related documents on new models for selection of tangible and online titles. The Federal depository library community was asked to review the documents and share their comments. GPO is now releasing revised briefing papers that incorporate feedback received during the comment period. No changes were made to Depository Selection: History and Current Practice. The revised documents are available at:

> ➤ Depository Selection: History and Current Practice
> ➤ Depository Selection Mechanisms: New Model for Selection of Online Titles
> http://www.access.gpo.gov/su_docs/fdlp/selection/electronic_revised.pdf
> ➤ Depository Selection Mechanisms: New Model for Selection of Tangible Publications
> http://www.access.gpo.gov/su_docs/fdlp/selection/tangible_revised.pdf

BACKGROUND

GPO has undertaken a review of the current system used by libraries in the Federal Depository Library Program (FDLP) to select tangible and electronic titles. This briefing document is intended to serve as background information for the discussion of future selection models.

HISTORY

Prior to 1923, depository libraries had no selection options and received all distributed publications. This changed as a result of language in the Legislative Branch appropriations bill for 1923 (42 Stat. 436). At this time, GPO developed the *Classified List of United States Government Publications Available for Selection by Depository Libraries* from which depositories could make their selections. Two copies of the list were sent to each depository, with one copy annotated and returned to GPO. The list was originally alphabetical by agency, but later revisions resulted in the entries being numbered sequentially. These item numbers were then used to identify and select publications. By 1947, there were 1,129 item numbers, each corresponding to a single Superintendent of Documents classification (SuDoc) stem.

Until World War II, cumulative lists of distributed documents were sent to the depositories six times a year. The librarian then checked to be sure everything selected had been received and sent the list back to GPO. As a result of wartime cutbacks, the cumulative lists were discontinued. Instead, item numbers were included in the *Monthly Catalog* to indicate distribution. In the early 1950's, shipping lists were introduced, and the *Classified List of United States Government Publications Available for Selection by Depository Libraries* was revised to allow for multiple classes under a single item number. At this time the *List of Classes* replaced the *Classified List of United States Government Publications Available for Selection by Depository Libraries*. During the early 1990's, however, GPO returned to the practice of maintaining a one-to-one relationship between item numbers and SuDoc classes as new classes

are created. In 1976, there were 3,000 item numbers. That number had grown to over 7,600 active item numbers by 2004.

CURRENT PRACTICE

Item numbers are managed in Depository Distribution Information System (DDIS), GPO's legacy system that maintains current selection information. GPO uses the selection information contained in DDIS to order the appropriate number of copies when a new tangible publication is available. GPO orders tangible publications at the time they go to press by riding print orders from the originating agency. If a tangible publication is not ordered through this mechanism, GPO must acquire stock from the agency, go back to press, acquire a digital copy or obtain a tangible copy suitable for digital conversion. When the stock is received, it is stored in GPO's limited warehouse space until it is classified and placed on a shipping list. The Automated Depository Distribution System (ADDS), also known as the Lighted Bin System, currently in place at GPO uses the item number information from DDIS to identify which libraries have selected a tangible publication, and the publication is distributed accordingly.

New item numbers are created on a daily basis as new titles are discovered. Item number creation is tightly interwoven with the creation of new class stems. New classes may be created for the following reasons:

- to establish one of the 16 "category classes"[1] for an agency or bureau, either newly established or for which the category class has not already been established,
- to establish a class for a monographic series,
- to establish a class for a serial.

In each of these cases, a new item number is created. The selection profile of an item number for a similar class is replicated to create the initial selection profile for the new item number. An entry in *Administrative Notes Technical Supplement* (*ANTS*) will notify depositories of the creation of the new class and item number. The entry indicates the existing item number used to create the new profile by inclusion of a note such as "Libraries selecting 0021-L will have 0021-L-01 added to their item selection profile." Once the entry has been published in *ANTS*, the file used to create that issue is uploaded into the WEBTechNotes database to make the entry searchable.

Once a month, the *List of Classes* is updated online. Each update includes all classes that have an active status in DDIS at the time the file is updated. Entries also include the distribution format. Format designations currently in use are:

- (P) for paper
- (MF) for microfiche
- (CD-ROM) for CD-ROM series or serials that are always in CD-ROM format
- (DVD) for DVD series or serials that are always in DVD format
- (EL) for online publications

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[1] Chapter 2 of the *Classification Manual* defines fourteen category classes: .1 Annual Report, .2 General Publications, .3 Bulletins, .4 Circulars, .5 Laws .6 Regulations, Rules, Instructions, .7 Press Releases, .8 Handbooks, Manuals, Guides, .9 Bibliographies and Lists of Publications, .10 Directories, .11 Maps and Charts, .12 Posters, .13 Forms, .14 Addresses. Two additional category classes have been established, without reserved numbers, since the last revision of the Manual. These are Electronic Products and Ephemera.

- (E) for miscellaneous tangible electronic products, such as CD-ROMs, DVDs, or VHS tapes, that may not have standard formats

The format (E) is only used if there are multiple tangible electronic formats in which a publication could be distributed. This format is most often associated with "Electronic Products" classes, the tangible electronic equivalent of "General Publications." CD-ROM versions of publications also available in paper are generally classified under the correct class for the paper version with /CD-ROM at the end.

There are two category classes for which GPO does not designate distribution format: "General Publications" and "Handbooks, Manuals, Guides." These category classes do not have specified formats because they are "catch-all" classes for miscellaneous publications that do not fit elsewhere in the class structure. As such, any given publication in one of these classes could be in any format, and no one format will cover all publications in that class.

In other cases, GPO endeavors to designate a single distribution format for each class whenever possible. Two or more formats may be specified under the following conditions:

- A series is published in multiple formats, but no one format will include all titles published in that series.
- A serial or series is published online, but does not include complete holdings. If an online version of a serial or series is complete from a certain date forward with no missing issues, it will be disseminated online and the format changed to EL only. If a standard date cannot be established for which all publications in a series or all issues of a serial will be online, the EL format is added to the tangible format in the *List of Classes*. For serials, tangible distribution is continued to ensure that all issues are available. For series, publications that are available online will be disseminated online, and publications that are only available in tangible format will be distributed in tangible format.
- The online version is not up-to-date. This may happen if a serial or series is available online, but online contents are posted significantly later than the tangible copies are distributed.
- The online version is not official. This may occur for things such as legal materials where the paper version is considered the official version and the online is not. It may also occur in cases where the online version clearly states that it is not official.

Past practice was to classify a serial that is part of a series under the class for the series. GPO has changed that practice and now establishes separate classes for serials that are part of a series. New item numbers are established at the same time.

Each year during the annual update cycle, libraries have the opportunity to add item numbers to their selection profiles. Libraries can add item numbers during the update cycle, and the added item numbers become active in their profiles on October 1 at the beginning of the fiscal year[2]. Libraries can delete item numbers from their profile at any time. The deletion becomes effective immediately in the library's profile, and the quantity ordered under the term contract is changed as soon as possible.

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[2] The 2005 update cycle was delayed because of new initiatives at GPO relating to item numbers. For more information, see http://listserv.access.gpo.gov/scripts/wa.exe?A2=ind0506&L=gpo-fdlp-l&F=&S=&P=852