Managing the FDLP Electronic Collection:

A Policy and Planning Document

October 1, 1998

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Executive Summary

The goal of the Federal Depository Library Program (FDLP) is to assure current and permanent public access to information published by the United States Government. The authority for the FDLP is codified at 44 U.S.C. Chapter 19.

One mission of the U.S. Government Printing Office (GPO) is to provide permanent public access to Government electronic information products as a continuation of its historic role in providing permanent access to printed information products in conjunction with regional depository libraries. As with printed products in regional depositories, these electronic products can be best managed as a library-like collection. This approach will facilitate accomplishing GPO's role in providing permanent public access to all products that are in scope for the FDLP. The FDLP includes all Government information products, regardless of format or medium, which are of public interest or educational value, except for those products which are for strictly administrative or operational purposes, classified for reasons of national security, or the use of which is constrained by privacy considerations.

Collectively, the electronic Government information products that are in scope for the FDLP comprise the FDLP Electronic Collection (Collection). The Collection consists of four elements:

1. Core legislative and regulatory GPO Access products which will reside permanently on GPO servers;

2. Other remotely accessible products managed by either GPO or by other institutions with which GPO has established formal agreements;

3. Remotely accessible electronic Government information products that GPO identifies, describes, and links to but which remain under the control of the originating agencies; and

4. Tangible electronic Government information products distributed to Federal depository libraries.

This policy and planning document (Plan) defines parameters and requirements for the electronic products in the Collection, and establishes a policy framework on which specific procedures for the development and maintenance of the Collection will be built. In managing the Collection, the guiding principle will be that the public has a right to access Government information prepared and published at Government expense--the same principle that has guided the FDLP throughout its history.

There are several useful distinctions between what is collected and maintained by the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) and GPO. First, the FDLP Electronic Collection is not comprised of the record copies of electronic products. The Collection consists of permanent access reference copies maintained by GPO or its partners for the convenience of reference. Inclusion of an agency electronic information product in the Collection is in no way intended to be a substitute for the issuing agency's disposition of that product to NARA in

accordance with a records schedule. Like all other Federal agencies, GPO has a responsibility to transfer to the National Archives those products that are scheduled as permanent records of GPO's operation. Second, the content of the Collection is significantly narrower in scope than the full range of Federal records in the purview of NARA. Content of the Collection is limited to digital publications which have public interest or educational value, except for those that are administrative in nature, or for internal use by the agency, or restricted for reasons of national security. Third, NARA intends to maintain electronic records in a format that is independent of any specific hardware or software requirements, and requires agencies to transfer such records to NARA in accordance with regulatory specifications that support that independence.

A key component of GPO's strategy to provide permanent public access to Government information is GPO Access, GPO's legislatively-mandated online service. The Government Printing Office Electronic Information Access Enhancement Act of 1993 (codified at 44 U.S.C. Chapter 41) requires the Superintendent of Documents to:

1. Maintain an electronic directory of Federal electronic information;

2. Provide a system of online access; and

3. Operate an electronic storage facility.

Together with the Federal Bulletin Board, these functions comprise the GPO Access information service. The successful implementation of these GPO Access responsibilities has demonstrated GPO's commitment to ensuring no-fee public access to electronic Government information products. GPO is responsible for permanent access to the Government information products residing on GPO Access, but ensuring permanent access to the broad range of products in the FDLP Electronic Collection extends GPO's responsibilities beyond the GPO Access databases.

The transition to publishing and disseminating Government information electronically has expanded the universe of Government information to which current and permanent access must be provided. While the traditional role of the depository library system to ensure permanent access to tangible products continues, a concomitant responsibility for electronic information has emerged for the Government. As the FDLP grows increasingly more reliant upon intangible, online electronic information, GPO, as administrator of the FDLP, must ensure the ongoing accessibility of FDLP electronic products. The establishment and maintenance of a Collection Management Plan for current and permanent access to electronic Government information products will ensure continued no-fee public access to the entire range of Government information available under the auspices of the FDLP. GPO will manage products in the Collection, link users to Federal Internet sites through cataloging and locator services, provide appropriate instruction and support for Collection users, and ensure permanent access to electronic Government information products through coordination with the Congress, other agencies, FDLP partners, and FDLP depository libraries. GPO's costs associated with developing and providing access to the FDLP Electronic Collection will be funded from the Superintendent of Documents Salaries and Expenses (S&E) appropriation.

GPO's efforts to manage the Collection are intended to support and complement the public information missions of the Congress, NARA, the Library of Congress and the other national libraries, and other Government agencies. Success of the Collection depends on the participation and cooperation of these and other constituents at various stages of the information life cycle. GPO expects to act in a leadership role to include products in the Collection and provide metadata and locator services, as well as to facilitate partnerships between agencies and other constituents for data storage, access, and preservation.

Managing the FDLP Electronic Collection

Mission and Purpose

The mission of the Federal Depository Library Program[1] (FDLP) is to assure current and permanent public access to the universe of information published by the United States Government. This universe includes all Government information products, regardless of format or medium, which are of public interest or educational value, except for those products which are for strictly administrative or operational purposes, classified for reasons of national security, or the use of which is constrained by privacy considerations.

The purpose of this policy and planning document (Plan) is to articulate the policies and responsibilities of the Government Printing Office (GPO) regarding the provision, through the FDLP, of current and permanent public access to electronic Government information products. This Plan establishes a policy framework on which specific procedures for the development and maintenance of the Collection will be built. Due to resource considerations, GPO's near-term focus is on the Government information disseminated via the Internet, including those products disseminated via GPO Access. The concepts outlined in this Plan are applicable to electronic Government information products in general. GPO's activities will eventually be extended to provide for permanent access to FDLP information disseminated in CD-ROM and other tangible electronic media.

This Plan is analogous to a library collection management plan, which is an essential tool that provides a policy framework through which a library's collection of resources is developed and maintained. A typical library collection plan defines the library's mission, goals and objectives in building a collection; identifies the user community and analyzes its resource needs; and provides guidance for formulating specific collection procedures.

Background

The Government Printing Office Electronic Information Access Enhancement Act of 1993 (Public Law 103-40) charged the Superintendent of Documents to develop mechanisms to enhance public access to a wide range of electronic Government information products. Specifically, the Superintendent of Documents is required to "(1) maintain an electronic directory of Federal electronic information; (2) provide a system of online access to the *Congressional Record*, the *Federal Register*, and, as determined by the Superintendent of

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1 The FDLP is codified at 44 U.S.C. Chapter 19. Additional detail concerning the Cataloging and Indexing Program is codified at 44 U.S.C. § 1710-1711.

Documents, other appropriate publications distributed by the Superintendent of Documents; and (3) operate an electronic storage facility for Federal electronic information to which online access is made available..." Collectively these are GPO Access[2], which GPO implemented by an agency-wide effort involving the Production Department, the Office of Electronic Information Dissemination Services, and the Library Programs Service.

The requirement to maintain an "electronic directory of Federal electronic information" is being met through a combination of traditional access tools, metadata applications, and electronic information locator services. These include the *Monthly Catalog of U.S. Government Publications*, the creation of authoritative MARC bibliographic records, Government Information Locator Service (GILS) records, and the suite of Pathway locator tools that allow users to find information by title, topic, or key word search on selected Federal Internet sites.

In 1994 and 1995, GPO initiated steps that met the basic requirements to provide a system of online access to the *Congressional Record*, the *Federal Register*, and other appropriate publications distributed by the Superintendent of Documents. Since June 1994, the number of databases maintained for remote access through the GPO Access service has grown significantly. As of October 1998 GPO Access provides users with over 116,000 individual titles. Current editions of the GPO Access databases are located in the GPO's main facility in Washington, DC.

The third basic element of the GPO Access Act concerns the storage of electronic Federal Government information products. To date, the basic requirements for storage have been met through various GPO activities, the most visible being the production and maintenance of the *Congressional Record* and *Federal Register* for remote online access, and the establishment of a remote online computer facility at Owensboro, Kentucky. Earlier editions of major GPO Access databases are migrated to GPO's remote site for permanent public access. Additionally, storage of selected Federal agency electronic information products is provided as a service to agencies on GPO's Federal Bulletin Board (FBB).

The successful implementation of these GPO Access responsibilities has demonstrated GPO's commitment to ensuring public access to electronic Government information products via the FDLP. Indeed, GPO Access is now recognized as the principal mechanism for incorporating electronic information into the FDLP, and is for the most part funded through the Superintendent of Documents Salaries and Expenses appropriation for the FDLP.

Key Assumptions and Guiding Principles

It is GPO's goal to assume responsibility for key aspects of the life cycle management of electronic Government information products for the FDLP. Developing the Collection will emphasize building content, assuring permanent access, and capitalizing on the cooperative strengths of GPO and the FDLP to build the necessary infrastructure for information access, retrieval, and delivery.

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2 Senate Report 103-27 incorporated the Federal Bulletin Board into GPO Access as well. A World Wide Web site was added in October 1994 and significantly expanded in June 1995.

This goal rests on several broad principles and core values, which guide the entire system of no-fee access to Government information:

- No-fee access to Government information is a right of the people.

- The Government has an obligation to provide broad, ongoing public access to its information.

- All information products that meet statutory criteria are to be included in a program of dissemination and access.

- Based on the mandate of 44 U.S.C. chapters 19 and 41, GPO's responsibility for providing permanent public access is extended to electronic Government information products that meet the statutory definition for government publications.

- A central coordinating authority will provide the most complete and cost effective dissemination and locator services.

- A system of shared responsibility for building, storing, disseminating, and preserving the Government information will produce the greatest benefit in return for resources invested.

- Depository libraries are key agents in the life cycle of Government information, providing a customer focus and meeting public access guidelines, including geographic criteria, to qualify for designation by Congress.

- Depository libraries make government information available without charge and work to minimize other barriers to access.

- Planning for the effective use of GPO's appropriated funds, as well as the belief that the value added by depository libraries is key to the FDLP, requires that Collection activities focus on depository access and depository users as a definable, known group representing the public's need for access to Government information.

- The cost of permanent access to FDLP electronic Government information products will be borne by the Government and not the end user.

The FDLP Electronic Collection will be composed of representations of primary data, secondary data sources such as finding aids, and metadata, and built on the core values of the FDLP. This Collection Plan is predicated on several basic assumptions:

- The GPO Access online system is the principal electronic delivery vehicle for the FDLP. For the foreseeable future, GPO Access will utilize the Internet and World Wide Web or successor technology.

- The mix of institutions and users with interests in the Collection is diverse and complex and includes Federal depository libraries and their users, other information consumers,

Congress, agency producers of information, information intermediaries of various kinds within and beyond the Government, and the various divisions within GPO.

- Products for the Collection will be selected and added according to criteria and input derived from the needs and demands of the various constituents.

- Selection and dissemination of resources should encourage and facilitate the sharing of resources.

- Success of the Collection depends on the participation and cooperation of the constituents at various stages of the information lifecycle: agencies must inform GPO of new electronic products in a timely and accurate manner; GPO must act to include products in the Collection and provide timely and accurate bibliographic control, as well as facilitate partnerships between agencies and other constituents for data storage, access, and preservation.

These key assumptions, then, lead to several more operational assumptions that are reflected in the Collection Plan:

- A variety of media and formats will, for the foreseeable future, comprise the content delivered via the FDLP.

- The mix of media and formats will necessarily be flexible and adjusted frequently to meet the demands of public need and advancing technology.

- To minimize undue complexity, maintenance, and expense, proprietary client software and other products with copyright-like barriers will be avoided, but, owing to agency decisions beyond GPO's authority, may be included where appropriate.

- Standards-based tools (e.g., traditional bibliographic description and metadata) will play a key role in the management of the Collection. Methods of access and retrieval should include and empower a broad spectrum of users.

- GPO will draw on the experience and expertise of its constituents and program libraries in developing policies which guide the inclusion of products in and management of the Collection.

- GPO's costs associated with developing and maintaining parts of the Collection under GPO's control are to be borne by the Superintendent of Documents Salaries & Expenses appropriation.

- Government information products are to be evaluated and recommended for inclusion in the Collection based on a defined decision making framework that takes into account the eligibility of the product under statutory definition, its value and importance to the user community, and priority in relation to other products.

- GPO will encourage the use of open-system standards, media and formats, and will strive to support user needs in a variety of formats.

Scope of the Plan

This Plan defines the parameters and requirements for the electronic products and services that constitute the Collection. The Collection will facilitate current and permanent access to Government electronic information products "except those determined by their issuing components to be required for official use only or for strictly administrative or operational purposes which have no public interest or educational value and publications classified for reasons of national security." (44 U.S.C. §1902)

Electronic Government information products which meet the criteria as Government publications include (but are not limited to): products that GPO produces or manages as services, and products that reside on sites hosted by GPO on agencies' behalf; products for which agencies plan only short-term access or may otherwise remove from a publicly accessible server; electronic source files provided by agencies for inclusion in the FDLP; products received directly by FDLP partners from agencies; and products which GPO identifies, catalogs, and links to but which are still under the control of originating agencies.

Defining the FDLP Electronic Collection

By establishing the GPO Access databases, GPO has taken responsibility for the life cycle management of such electronic Government information products as the *Federal Register, Congressional Record*, and the *Commerce Business Daily*. For such electronic products, GPO has assumed the role traditionally taken by regional depository libraries as provided in 44 U.S.C. §1911. A fundamental assumption outlined in GPO's 1996 *Study to Identify Measures Necessary for a Successful Transition to a More Electronic Federal Depository Library Program* is that FDLP dissemination of remotely accessible electronic information products will be through "a distributed system that provides continuous, permanent public access, involving the publishing agencies, the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA), and regional and other depository libraries." In the *Study*, this concept of permanent access to remote electronic products is a corollary to the traditional statutory requirement that regional depository libraries hold paper and microfacsimile copies permanently.

The FDLP Electronic Collection (Collection) consists of four elements:

1. Core legislative and regulatory GPO Access products that reside permanently on Government Printing Office (GPO) servers;

2. Other remotely accessible products either maintained by GPO or other institutions with which GPO has established formal agreements;

3. Remotely accessible electronic Government information products that GPO identifies,

describes, and links to but which remain under the control of the originating agencies; and

4. Tangible electronic Government information products distributed to Federal depository libraries.

Products included in the Collection must meet the criteria of 44 U.S.C. §1901-1902 and be in a usable format, and be of value and importance to depository libraries and the general public. This Collection requires standard library collection management policies and techniques, such as selection, acquisition, bibliographic control, access, organization, maintenance, deselection, and preservation for access.

Portions of the Collection, other than the core legislative and regulatory GPO Access products, may be maintained at partner institutions, including other Federal agencies, depository libraries, consortia, or other institutions, such as OCLC.

Ensuring the permanent availability of the remotely accessible electronic Government information products which GPO identifies, describes, and links to but which remain under the control of the originating agencies is a critical concern to GPO and the FDLP. The short- and long-term resource implications of ensuring permanent access in general, and of accomplishing the latter goal, are as yet insufficiently defined. GPO will coordinate with other FDLP and public information stakeholders to develop plans and agreements for keeping this part of the Collection permanently accessible.

There are numerous electronic Government information products that are not included in one of the four components of the FDLP Electronic Collection because GPO has not yet brought them under bibliographic control. This "first-level" collection management activity depends upon knowledge that the products exist. Even though GPO is engaged in information discovery on the Internet in order to bring more products into the Collection, this activity is by itself insufficient. In order to include the broadest range of products into the FDLP, and thereby ensure current and permanent access, GPO will employ a range of strategies. These include reliance on notification from and outreach to other agencies and notification from the depository library community. Electronic products available via the Internet will be identified and recommended by LPS or other stakeholders. After evaluation of the product, contact will be established with the producing agency, a selection decision made, bibliographic control established, steps taken to include the product in the Collection; and, with ongoing agency contact, measures put in place to ensure permanent access.

Building the Collection

GPO resources will be used to manage products in the Collection, link users to other Federal Internet sites through locator services, and ensure permanent access to Government information products through coordination with other agencies, FDLP partners, and FDLP depository libraries.

Electronic Government information products may become part of the Collection in various media, which will establish the path by which their acquisition takes place. A variety of bibliographic or locator applications will provide links to Government information products not residing on GPO servers, but such links will be established only for products which otherwise meet criteria outlined in this plan.

In an attempt to represent the broadest possible range of information, GPO will, in some cases, link to products for which other measures of bibliographic control and permanent access may not be immediately attainable. Every effort will be made to incorporate such products into the Collection by bringing them under bibliographic control and by establishing formal relationships with the issuing agencies. However, it must be recognized that the level of support for products in the Collection is in part dependent upon the cooperation of the originating agencies. Products in the Collection will be selected and acquired under policies and procedures that encourage and facilitate the sharing of resources. This will include reliance on expertise within GPO, other agencies, and the depository library community, and the development of a support environment that maximizes the strengths and abilities represented within the FDLP to the benefit of all.

Electronic products available via the Internet will be identified and recommended by LPS or other stakeholders. After evaluation of the product, contact will be established with the producing agency, a selection decision made, bibliographic control established, steps taken to include the product in the Collection; and, with ongoing agency contact, measures put in place to ensure permanent access.

The experience of the FDLP with tangible products demonstrates that obtaining full compliance by the originating agencies with the requirements of the FDLP has been an elusive goal. The electronic environment differs from the print environment in that there is no clear statutory requirement that agencies include their electronic products in the FDLP, nor even to notify GPO about such products. At the same time, GPO's responsibility for disseminating information is ongoing. Recognizing that one of the outcomes of the electronic information environment is to increase the overall number of information products, and to displace the notion of the "fugitive" or noncompliant document, the management of the Collection will encompass active practices to discover and include all products which meet the criteria for inclusion in the FDLP, and to encourage agency cooperation in the FDLP.

Outreach to Federal agencies concerning the issue of permanent access and the role of the Collection, including partnerships, will be integrated into other GPO efforts to increase agencies' awareness of the scope and value of GPO information replication and dissemination services. Agencies will be encouraged to participate proactively by recommending products for inclusion in the Collection, by notifying GPO about significant changes, initiation or termination of products, or by identifying possible partners for their dissemination efforts.

The implementation of this Plan is resource dependent, and must proceed in a prioritized manner. The near-term scope of the Plan is focused upon Government information disseminated via the Internet, particularly those products that are under GPO's control. This includes the products maintained on GPO servers and those products maintained at institutions with which GPO has

established formal partnership agreements, and then to the remotely accessible products that remain under the control of the originating agencies. This Plan will eventually be extended to address the preservation of and permanent access to the information content disseminated to FDLP libraries in CD-ROM and other tangible electronic media. This role may include refreshing data or software, or migrating content to a different media, in order to avoid technological obsolescence or physical deterioration.

User Community

The primary user community for the Collection is composed of end users gaining access to the Collection through the facilities and resources of the FDLP, including its geographically dispersed network of depository libraries. In the networked environment, a wide array of access options is available, and the public will routinely use the Collection directly, without the depository library as intermediary. GPO will strive to accommodate the needs of as broad a range of users as possible within the constraints of time and resources. Collection planning and the effective use of GPO's appropriated funds will focus on depository libraries and depository users as definable, known groups representing the public's need for access to Government information.

User Access and Retrieval

User access and retrieval of Government information products included as part of the Collection will be in accordance with one of the fundamental principles underlying the FDLP -- that the public has a right to Government information that has been prepared and published at public expense. In a distributed information environment, users will identify, locate, and retrieve Government information products from multiple sources or providers, rather than from a single source such as a library collection of tangible products.

GPO will strive to accommodate the needs of the broadest possible range of users who possess a wide range of technical capabilities within the constraints of time and resources. Even though the emphasis of Collection development is toward depository libraries and their users, GPO will enable access to both technologically high-end and low-end users interested in searching and retrieving Government information products. In the context of the FDLP, accessibility includes the degree to which Government information is accurately identified and described bibliographically, the information's availability is made known to the public, and technological, social, economic, political, and physical barriers to gaining access are minimized. Information products will be made available using World Wide Web or successor technology, in formats which enable usage by those who require assistive technologies.

Users are also able to locate and retrieve Government information products through public access workstations available at Federal depository libraries. All depositories are expected to offer public users access to workstations with a graphical user interface, CD-ROM capability, Internet connections, and the ability to access Government information via the World Wide Web.

Evaluation of Products for the Collection

Selection of materials to be included in the pre-electronic FDLP was based primarily on the requirements and exclusions of 44 U.S.C. chapter 19. Because of the huge increase in the amount of information available in the electronic environment and the absence of the printing and procurement process as an organizing force, there is an increased need for careful evaluation of potential additions to the collection, made against well-formulated criteria. Three major questions will guide the evaluation phase of the selection process for the Collection:

- Does the product meet the criteria of 44 U.S.C. §1901-1902?

- What is the value and importance of the product to the user community, i.e. depository libraries and their clientele?

- What priority does the product have in relation to available resources or other products in the FDLP?

Many additional questions must be asked to fully answer these first three questions. A checklist illustrating a broad range of possible questions constitutes Appendix II of this Plan.

Media and Formats of Products in the Collection

Government information products may be included in the Collection and maintained for permanent access at GPO or through FDLP partners in a variety of media and formats. Whenever possible, GPO will encourage the use of open-system standards and formats for Government information products that compose the Collection.

GPO will provide a text-only interface for Government information products made available through GPO servers whenever technologically feasible and cost-effective. This will not only allow GPO to maintain compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) but also will ensure access to users with limited technological and communication capability. GPO will also encourage partnering institutions to comply with ADA requirements, but is not in a position to mandate this action by partners. Similarly, GPO cannot guarantee that every agency Internet site to which links are provided is ADA-compliant.

GPO has already identified a limited range of product standards that are in general use in the Government. These include ASCII, SGML, and HTML for text, and TIFF and PDF for images. However, given the rapid pace of technology, it is critical that GPO not only plan for future changes in media, formats, and standards, but establish a dialogue with potential FDLP partners and other agencies on the issue of product formats. For this reason, GPO has commissioned a study by the National Commission on Libraries and Information Science (NCLIS) to help determine the range of media and formats publishing agencies plan to use in the creation and dissemination of Government information products.

Locator Services

GPO is responsible for providing various locator services for a broad range of Government information products. Access tools and locator services include the Web *Catalog of U.S. Government Publications*, the creation of authoritative MARC bibliographic records, and most recently the creation of Government Information Locator Service (GILS) records and a suite of other locator tools that allow users to find information by title, topic, or key word search on selected Federal Internet sites.

Since data, text, and description are inextricably linked in the electronic world, the Collection will employ appropriate technology and practices to assure a level of control and access that meets or exceeds traditional expectations. Techniques and standards change, but at present it is anticipated that some combination of the following will constitute the array of locator tools and services:

- Standard library descriptive and subject cataloging records.

- GILS records.

- Metadata applications such as Persistent Uniform Resource Locators (PURL) or other persistent naming technology.

- Indexers and robots.

- Pathway/indexer browser applications, such as Browse Titles, Browse Topics, etc.

Security and Storage

Since electronic products on the Internet are equally available to any network user, the Collection infrastructure does not need to be replicated at a large number of multiple sites. However, some redundancy, including possible "mirror sites," is required to maintain uninterrupted service, provide for disaster preparedness, and ensure rapid response time to users of the Collection. Necessary mirror site attributes include backup data files, appropriate hardware, software, and telecommunications infrastructure. GPO may utilize its own resources, or may enter into partnerships for the operation of mirror sites. Such partnerships would be formalized through contractual or similar mechanisms to define and establish the responsibilities incumbent upon each participant.

By sharing the burden of storage and maintenance, GPO safeguards the continuing availability and accessibility of electronic Government information products included in the Collection. In the context of this plan, storage of digital information will be accomplished through various mechanisms:

- Legislative and regulatory material that has been managed by GPO in GPO Access; e.g., Congressional Record, Bills, Federal Register, will reside on GPO servers.

- Agency material may be resident on GPO servers, on agency servers, or be included in partnership arrangements whereby storage and access are managed cooperatively by partner institutions and GPO.

Organizational Roles and Responsibilities

a. Government Printing Office

Within GPO, responsibility for the FDLP Electronic Collection is vested in the Superintendent of Documents, using facilities managed by, and with technical support services provided by the Production Department. The Superintendent of Documents reviews purchases of hardware and software for the operation of GPO Access or the management of the FDLP Electronic Collection.

The Superintendent of Documents delegates to the Library Programs Service (LPS) responsibility for:

- Managing the transition to a more electronic FDLP;

- Approving the use of FDLP funds for electronic products that are to be made available through GPO Access and become part of the Collection;

- Establishing and maintaining formal partnership agreements with other institutions for the purpose of maintaining other remotely accessible FDLP products;

- Managing cataloging and locator services, including LPS-produced metadata and Pathway services; and

- Acquiring and distributing tangible electronic Government information products to the Federal depository libraries.

LPS is also responsible for current and permanent access policies for the FDLP Electronic Collection and for decisions concerning which products to include in the Collection. LPS establishes general policy direction for the Collection, and has specific responsibility for the elements of the collection which are maintained by partner institutions, as well as those distributed to depository libraries in tangible electronic format. LPS conducts liaison activities with the Production Department on matters related to the administration of the FDLP, the establishment and management of partnerships, and the information locator services. An Electronic Collection Manager position has been proposed to responsibility for many of these coordinating and liaison roles.

The Superintendent of Documents delegates to the Office of Electronic Information Dissemination Services (EIDS) responsibility for:

- Managing the portion of the Collection disseminated through GPO Access, including those electronic products approved by LPS to be funded by the FDLP;

- Supporting the electronic products sponsored by other agencies;

- Conducting, in coordination with other GPO organizations, the outreach and product development work necessary to obtain new online products approved for GPO Access and tangible electronic products for the FDLP;

- Managing the Federal Bulletin Board; and

- Promoting and developing Government Information Locator Service (GILS) applications for other Government agencies.

In addition, EIDS has responsibility for providing appropriate instruction and support to depository libraries and end users of GPO Access and for promoting use of GPO Access across the public and private sectors. EIDS will also be the Documents liaison with the Production Department on matters related to the hardware, software, and products and services of GPO Access.

Responsibility for recommending, initiating procurement actions for, operating, and maintaining the GPO Access system software and hardware, with the exception of the Federal Bulletin Board, is vested in the Production Department, based on requirements of the Superintendent of Documents. As stated in GPO Instruction 705.22, GPO Access System, (appendix III) the Production Department is also responsible for: formatting and loading data on GPO Access on schedules necessary to support user needs, and for modifying and enhancing system software and hardware based on requirements and priorities provided by and coordinated with the Superintendent of Documents.

b. Partnerships

One of the guiding principles for this plan is the assumption that the greatest benefit returned for resources invested will come from the development of partnerships that will share the tasks of building, storing, disseminating, and preserving the Collection. The partnership concept builds upon the successful model of the distributed collection of tangible FDLP products made permanently accessible through the regional depository libraries.

Portions of the Collection, other than core legislative and regulatory GPO Access products and other products maintained by GPO, are expected to be maintained at partner institutions. Partner institutions may include individual depository libraries, library consortia, or other institutions, such as OCLC. Partnerships share the common element of being formalized through an agreement between GPO and the library or agency. Partner institutions in content partnerships host part of the Collection for free use by the public.

c. Other Federal Agencies

Another Government agency, typically the originating agency, may enter into a content partnership to sponsor a portion of the FDLP Electronic Collection for the FDLP. In addition, GPO may enter into an electronic product content partnership with a Government information intermediary in order to expand the content available to the Federal depository libraries. In either case, as well as in "tripartite" agreements involving GPO, one or more agencies, and a library institution, the basic parameters outlined above must be represented.

d. National Archives and Records Administration

GPO's efforts to coordinate the development of the Collection are intended to complement the strategic goal of the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) to provide the public with access to the essential evidence of our Government. There are several useful distinctions in what is collected and maintained by NARA and GPO:

First, the FDLP Electronic Collection is not comprised of the record copies of electronic products. GPO's principal concern is with the information content of the product, not with the product's value as evidence of the activities of the originating agency. The Collection consists of permanent access reference copies maintained by GPO or its partners for the convenience of reference. GPO or its partners will initiate steps, whenever feasible and cost-effective, to migrate the content or refresh the operating software as necessary to make the content readily accessible to a broad spectrum of users. Inclusion of an agency electronic information product in the Collection is in no way intended to be a substitute for the issuing agency's disposition of that product to NARA in accordance with a records schedule.

Like all other Federal agencies, GPO has a responsibility to transfer to the National Archives those products that are scheduled as permanent records of GPO's operation. This has historically included a record set of the tangible agency publications distributed in the FDLP as well as record copies of GPO publications such as the Monthly Catalog of U.S. Government Publications. GPO will continue to work within applicable records schedules to ensure that its records management responsibilities are fulfilled in all media and formats.

Second, the content of the Collection is significantly narrower in scope than the full range of Federal records in the purview of NARA. Content of the Collection is limited to digital publications which have public interest or educational value, except for those that are administrative in nature, or for internal use by the agency, or restricted for reasons of national security.

Third, NARA intends to maintain electronic records in a format that is independent of any specific hardware or software requirements, and requires agencies to transfer such records to NARA in accordance with regulatory specifications that support that independence. It is critical for NARA to maintain the provenance of the records and other contextual information in order to document how the records were used to carry out the functions and activities of the creating entity. This contextual information enables the records to provide evidence and accountability, and must be preserved along with the content of the Government information products that are

archival records.

Funding

Ensuring current and permanent public access to Government information is a fundamental component of the FDLP, but with the transition to publishing and disseminating Government information electronically the responsibility for permanent access is shifting from the depository libraries to the Government. As the FDLP grows increasingly more reliant upon intangible, online electronic information, GPO is shifting its FDLP resources from the acquisition and distribution of tangible products to ensuring the current and permanent accessibility of FDLP electronic products.

The emerging model is that the costs associated with developing the FDLP Electronic Collection, and the costs of providing current and permanent access to that Collection, will be funded from the Superintendent of Documents Salaries and Expenses (S&E) appropriation. In addition, individual agencies may occasionally request that GPO provide current and permanent access services for their electronic products on a cost-recovery basis. In such cases the requesting agency would be charged the incremental costs associated with developing, storing, and maintaining their products for public use.

Appendix I

Definitions

Terms used in this paper are defined as follows:

Accessibility is the degree to which the public is able to retrieve or obtain Government information products, either through the FDLP or directly through an electronic information service established and maintained by a Government agency or its authorized agent or other delivery channels, in a useful format or medium and in a time frame whereby the information has utility.

Availability is the degree to which information is physically or electronically obtainable through the intentional or unintentional provision of Government information products to the public. In the context of the FDLP, availability is the measures taken by Government agencies and the FDLP to include Government information products in the program.

Collection Plan, or **Collection Management Plan,** means the policies, procedures, and systems developed to manage and ensure current and permanent public access to remotely accessible electronic Government information products maintained in the Collection.

FDLP Electronic Collection, or **Collection**, means the electronic Government information products that GPO holds in storage for permanent public access through the FDLP, or are held by libraries and other institutions operating in partnership with the FDLP. These electronic products may be remotely accessible online products, or tangible products such as CD-ROMs maintained in depository library collections.

FDLP partner means a depository library or other institution that stores and maintains for permanent access segments of the Collection.

Format means, in a general sense, the manner in which data, documents, or literature are organized, structured, named, classified, and arranged. For example: full narrative text in English language in the form of books or articles; abstracts of text; indexes and catalogs; maps; photographs; sound recordings, video tapes, statistical and other tabulations, etc. A screen format is the layout of text or fields on the computer screen; a record format is the layout of fields with a record; a file or database format is the layout of fields and records within a data file.

Government information means a work of the United States Government, regardless of form or format, which is created or compiled in whole or in part at Government expense, or as required by law, except that which is required for official use only, is for strictly operational or administrative purposes having no public interest or educational value, or is classified for reasons of national security.

Government information product is a Government publication or other work of the United States Government conveyed in a tangible physical medium such as a book or CD-ROM, or disseminated through an electronic information service established and maintained by a

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Government agency or its authorized agent.

GPO Access storage refers to GPO's capacity to maintain information products through their life cycles, from initial release as electronic Government information products through preservation for permanent access.

Media, or **Medium**, refers to the substrate used to create, organize, store, disseminate or permanently archive data, documents, or literature.

Metadata, literally data about data, refers to the content of a surrogate record that describes or characterizes an object.

Permanent access means that Government information products within the scope of the FDLP remain available for continuous, no fee public access through the program. For emphasis, the phrase "permanent public access" is sometimes used with the same definition.

Preservation means the activities associated with maintaining information products for use, either in their original form or in some other usable way. Preservation also includes substitution of the original product by a conversion process, wherein the intellectual content of the original is retained.

Remote site refers to the GPO storage facility in Kentucky, as opposed to storage at GPO's Central Office, to differentiate the physical site from functional issues relevant to storage.

Storage, or **Storage facility**, means the functions associated with saving electronic information products on physical media, including magnetic, optical, or other alternative technologies.

Appendix II

Evaluation of Products for the Collection

[Note: The following is a sample worksheet for collecting the basic information necessary to evaluate products for consideration for the Collection. It is intended to be illustrative of a flexible outline of questions, the answers to which will provide the basis of any proposal for inclusion of a particular product in the Collection.]

I.   Does the product meet the criteria of 44 U.S.C. §1901-1902?

    A.   Is the product a work of the U.S. Government, compiled or created in whole or in part or at government expense, or as required by law?

    B.   Is the product excluded from consideration because it is:

        1.   Required for official use only?

        2.   For strictly operational or administrative purposes, having no public interest or educational value?

        3.   Classified for reasons of national security?

        4.   A cooperative product, as defined in 44 U.S.C. §1903 which must be sold in order to be self-sustaining?

II.   What is the importance and usability of the product for the FDLP user community?

    A.   What is the product?

    B.   What is the issuing agency?

    C.   Is the product available in other formats or media?

        1.   Are those alternatives currently included in the FDLP?

    D.   What is the scope of the product?

        1.   Is its purpose clearly defined?

        2.   Is its intended audience stated?

    E.   Authoritative nature of the product

        1.   Is the issuing agency clearly discernible?

2. Is there any endorsement (or disclaimer) of the authenticity of the information? (e.g., an electronic watermark, or other authentication device; a statement of authenticity or waiver of responsibility)

3. Is the product being provided by the originating agency or by some intermediary?

F. Currency/Periodicity

1. What is the date or range of the information?

2. Is the information time sensitive?

3. Is the product serial?

a. What is the publication or update schedule

4. Does the information replace older information?

a. What happens to superseded information?

5. Are links within the site current and reliable?

G. Presentation/Utility

1. Is navigating the site intuitive?

2. Is software employed that is in use for other products in the FDLP?

3. Is use of the product bound by proprietary software?

a. Are there copyright or copyright-like restrictions?

b. Is there licensing in effect to provide for FDLP access?

(1) Who holds the license?

(2) Who pays for the FDLP license(s)?

4. If there are high-end features, such as audio, motion video, etc., are they essential to the use of the product?

III. What priority does the product have in relation to other products in the FDLP?

A. Would costs be incurred by GPO in adding the product to the FDLP Electronic Collection?

1. Licensing of access software

2. Other production costs

3. Special hardware or software requirements

B. How does the product relate to other media/formats?

1. Is there a paper or microfiche equivalent?

2. Is there an electronic equivalent?

3. Is the equivalent product identical in content?

4. Is there a clear preference discernible for one format or medium among potential users?

5. If an equivalent is included in the FDLP, how heavily is it selected by depositories?

Appendix III

Organizational Responsibilities

Organizational roles and responsibilities for GPO Access and permanent access policies are formally described in GPO Instruction 705.22, GPO ACCESS SYSTEM, dated November 17, 1994. The complete instruction is incorporated by reference.

Sections that are relevant to permanent access have been extracted below:

a. The Public Printer shall provide overall policy and direction to the GPO Access System.

b. The Superintendent of Documents shall:

  (6) Determine system requirements and priorities, and request modifications and enhancements, coordinating with Production to set delivery dates.

  (9) Determine new databases, additional products, and applications for all components of the system.

c. The Director of Production Services shall:

  (1) Build or procure hardware, software, and production systems (to include system documentation) based on requirements of the Superintendent of Documents.

  (2) Format and load data on schedules necessary to support user needs

  (3) Notify the Superintendent of Documents promptly of problems with scheduling, data accuracy, or the production system.

  (4) Make modifications and enhancements to software and systems based on requirements and priorities provided by and coordinated with the Superintendent of Documents.

  (5) Maintain and safeguard electronic data files.

  (7) Utilize, and encourage the use of, electronic database standards.