



FDLP FACT SHEET

The Federal Depository Library Program A Service of the U.S. Government Printing Office

www.access.gpo.gov/su_docs/fdlp/libpro.html

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The American public's primary source of free access to Federal Government information is the Federal Depository Library Program (FDLP). Administered by the Government Printing Office (GPO), the FDLP provides for the distribution of U.S. Government publications to a network of more than 1,300 public, academic, law, Federal, and other libraries in virtually every congressional district, where they can be used by the public free of charge.

The FDLP includes a vast range of Government information made available online, primarily through the GPO Access Web site (www.gpo.gov/gpoaccess). Libraries in the FDLP are equipped and staffed to assist the public in locating and using online Federal Government information.

FDLP ORIGINS

The FDLP's roots date to 1813, when Congress first began regular distribution of Government documents to libraries. Originally vested in the Secretary of State and later the Secretary of the Interior, the responsibility for distributing publications was transferred to GPO by the Printing Act of 1895.

The FDLP has been called "America's first freedom of information" program. The FDLP is based on the principle that citizens should have free, unimpeded, local access to official information produced by their Government.

THE FDLP TODAY

There are currently more than 1,300 Federal depository libraries throughout the Nation, with an average of about 3 libraries per congressional district. Participating libraries serve an estimated 9.5 million people each year in the

libraries, by phone, and electronically, an average of more than 7,000 patron visits per year per library. With an average of 3 libraries per congressional district, more than 21,000 people per district receive services from their depository libraries each year, while even more access FDLP electronic information directly from their homes, schools, and offices.

Most depository libraries have been designated as Federal depositories by Members of Congress. Many depositories are in colleges and universities, making the FDLP a key component of the Nation's higher education system. Most law school libraries are depositories, as are other key sector libraries, such as the National Library of Medicine, the National Agricultural Library, and the National Library of Education.

AN ELECTRONIC COLLECTION

Electronic information dissemination, a key component of the FDLP, now makes it possible to deliver more products to the libraries than ever before. In FY 2000, 53% of the new FDLP titles were disseminated electronically. In FY 2001 to date, more than 60% of new titles have been disseminated as online documents. **GPO Access** provides more than 202,000 Federal titles to FDLP users and the public, who download more than 30 million documents each month.

TANGIBLE DISTRIBUTION

Although electronic information is now the primary delivery format for the FDLP, there is still a significant demand for a large number of Federal titles in print. Print provides a level of authenticity, permanence, portability, as well as a familiarity and ease of use that have yet to be matched by electronics.

In FY 2000, the FDLP disseminated 12.2 million copies of more than 29,000 titles in paper and microfiche to libraries. Approximately 15,000 titles were issued in both electronic and print formats (e.g., *Congressional Record*, *Federal Register*). These formats are required by the libraries and the communities they serve. For the remaining tangible titles, there are no known electronic equivalent – either the electronic equivalents are not produced or not readily locatable.

The FDLP disseminates tangible copies (paper, fiche, CD-ROM) efficiently. In FY 1999 (the most recent period for which this data is fully available), the cost to print, catalog, ship, and provide support services for each tangible copy distributed to the libraries was only \$1.57.

FDLP SUPPORT SERVICES

In addition to distributing documents, the staff of GPO's Library Programs Service provides a wide variety of support services to libraries and their patrons. The program:

- acquires publications in all formats, including electronic (which involves evaluating whether a given product belongs in the program), and tracks down fugitive (missing) documents;
- classifies the products, which allows libraries to tailor their collections to the needs of their constituents;
- performs format conversions, typically print-to-microfiche, which save money and is the single best solution to the fugitive document problem discovered so far;
- inspects depository libraries to ensure that they are meeting their

public access (and other) requirements under Title 44;

- conducts continuing education events and training initiatives to strengthen the ability of depository library personnel to serve the public;
- provides a channel for users to direct their comments about information products and services to the publishing agencies;
- consults with and advises agencies on product design issues that may effect the public's ability to use the agency information products;
- ensures that electronic Government information products disseminated through the FDLP remain permanently accessible to the public, either through partnerships or by archiving digital copies on GPO servers;
- answers thousands of inquiries per year from librarians and the public about what's available in the program; and
- develops a range of services, many of them online, to assist libraries in managing their depository collections.

FDLP COUNCIL

FDLP librarians are involved participants in FDLP program administration. The Depository Library Council, composed of 15 Government documents librarians and other professionals appointed by the Public Printer (the head of the GPO), advises GPO on the operation of the FDLP. The Council holds public meetings twice a year, in the spring at various U.S. locations, and in the fall in Washington, DC.

FUNDING

GPO receives an appropriation to fund the operation of the FDLP. These funds are provided through the annual Salaries and Expenses appropriation of GPO's Superintendent of Documents, itself a part of the annual legislative branch appropriations bill. The Salaries and

Expenses appropriation for FY 2001 is \$27.9 million.

GPO ACCESS

At the forefront of GPO's electronic information dissemination capabilities is **GPO Access**, virtually the only Government Web site that provides one-stop, no-fee access to information from all three branches of the Government. **GPO Access** is one of the few Government Web sites established by law and one of the longest running, beginning operation in 1994.

Today, **GPO Access** links the public to more than 200,000 individual titles on GPO's servers and on other Federal Web sites. Overall, more than 1 billion documents have been retrieved by the public from **GPO Access** since 1994. Monthly document retrievals today average more than 30 million, the equivalent of 1.3 terabytes of information, or about 637 million pages of typewritten documents.

In 2000, GPO assisted the Supreme Court in the development and release of its widely-heralded Web site. The site, which resides on **GPO Access** servers, was hit for a total of 1.1 million page views in the hours just before and just after the Court's historic decision in the Presidential election case in December. Early in the year, GPO drew praise from educators and others for making the popular *Ben's Guide to U.S. Government for Kids* available on **GPO Access**, at bensguide.gpo.gov.

AWARDS AND RECOGNITION

In 2001, **GPO Access** received a Trailblazer award from E-Gov 2001 for its response to the public need for immediate access to Federal information.

In 1999, **GPO Access** was selected as one of the top 50 legal research Web sites for the year by *Law Office Computing* magazine, and was named best research site for laws and best Government site overall by the newsletter *legal online*. It was chosen as the first recipient of the American Associa-

tion of Law Libraries' Public Access to Government Information Award. In 1998, **GPO Access** was named one of the 15 "Best Feds on the Web" by *Government Executive* magazine. The internationally recognized management firm of Booz-Allen & Hamilton, Inc. called **GPO Access** "one of the Federal Government's largest and most active Web sites" and said that the site "has been highly successful in making Government information easily available to the public."

Other awards have included the prestigious 1995 James Madison Award from the Coalition on Government Information and a 1994 Technology Leadership Award.

To find the Federal depository library closest to you, visit GPO Access at: www.gpo.gov/su_docs/locators/findlibs.

To contact GPO's Library Programs Service, call 202-512-1114 or email asklps@gpo.gov. Mail to the Library Programs Service should be addressed to: Director, Library Programs Service, U.S. Government Printing Office, Mail Stop: SL, Washington, DC 20401.