



Federal Depository Library Program  
Marketing Plan – Phase II

# Easy As FDL

FEDERAL DEPOSITORY LIBRARIES  
*Free Information, Dedicated Service, Limitless Possibilities*



FREE | DEDICATED | LIMITLESS

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# I. Project Background & Phase II Objectives

## Project Background

In the summer of 2008, GPO disseminated the FDLP Marketing Plan and launched the “Easy as FDL” marketing campaign. The main goal in this initiative is to assist depositories in marketing their unique and valuable services to the widest audience possible, as well as to provide depositories with the tools necessary to market their own services to both the general public and non-Federal depository libraries. The full campaign slogan and tagline are: “Easy as FDL: Free Information, Dedicated Service, Limitless Possibilities.”

GPO embarked upon the creation of a FDLP Marketing Plan for several reasons. The services provided by FDLs and administered by GPO are unique and essential to the American public, yet there is a large portion of the American public that is unaware of their existence. There is no, one audience for the services provided through the FDLP, and that makes marketing a challenge.

In late 2006, the Depository Library Council prepared *“Knowledge Will Forever Govern: A Vision Statement for Federal Depository Libraries in the 21st Century.”* One of the goals proposed for the library community and GPO to help transition into the electronic world effectively was to:

*“Expand awareness of both the Federal Depository Library Program and Government information generally via excellent public relations and marketing.”* (#7, page 10)

In response to this critical call, GPO put forth the FDLP Marketing Plan and the Easy as FDL marketing campaign.

As part of the new campaign, eight new Easy as FDL promotional products were [made available](#) for ordering from the FDLP Desktop. These are:

- “Ask Me” buttons for depository staff
- Easy as FDL bookmarks
- Easy as FDL brochures that focus on what can be found in a depository and GPO online resources
- Easy as FDL pocket cards with space for library customization
- Table tents promoting depository resources
- Large poster promoting depositories
- Small version of the large poster
- Spanish information cards directing Spanish-speaking patrons to depository resources

Additionally, GPO debuted its first FDLP promotional video in October 2008. The video focuses on describing the wide range of information products that can be found in a depository, the expert assistance that is available, and the convenience of using the materials. It can be [viewed and downloaded](#) from the FDLP Desktop. Another [small set of promotional videos were released](#) on the FDLP Desktop in April 2009. GPO staffers took to the streets of DC to gauge what the public knows about the FDLP. These “Person on the Street” videos are both informative and entertaining and really highlight how important it is for GPO and depositories to market the FDLP.

A final activity for Phase I of the Plan involves the use of Public Services Announcements (PSAs). In May 2009, GPO embarked upon a campaign to inform students about depositories using college radio stations across the country. An audio PSA has been created, and a number of college stations around the country whose campus libraries have a depository have been contacted to pioneer this PSA.

## **Phase II of the FDLP Marketing Plan serves as an expansion of Phase I.**

### **Phase II Objectives:**

1. Provide FDLs with additional methods to increase awareness of the FDLP.
2. Provide FDLs with additional ways to utilize the Easy as FDL marketing campaign.
3. Provide FDLs with ideas for different and unique aspects of the depository services to promote.

### **Phase II Communication Objectives:**

1. Expand awareness of the unique aspects and services of FDLP libraries.
2. Emphasize GPO and FDLs as the trusted sources for Federal Government information.
3. Emphasize FDLs as easy to utilize, one-stop shops, for free information, excellent service, and a tremendous range of resources to explore.
4. Emphasize that FDLs contain vast and unique collections of information, as well as numerous research and other services.

## II. Key Messages

In striving to inform the American public about the FDLP, there are specific audiences and message components on which the Easy as FDL campaign and Phase II marketing plan focus.

### Who are the key audiences?

- Students
- Educators
- Legal and business professionals
- General public
- Foreign language groups

### What are the key message components?

- What FDLs are
- What FDLs do
- What services FDLs offer
- What types of information products FDLs offer
- Ways to easily use the information found at FDLs
- Ways to reach FDLs
- Ways to empower groups to easily and effectively promote FDLs

### III. Marketing Tips & Strategies

As in Phase I of the FDLP Marketing Plan, Phase II brings a new set of marketing tips and strategies that can be utilized to promote your depository. GPO encourages you to keep using the Easy as FDL promotional products and videos in new and creative ways with the strategies outlined below.

#### Ideas for Depositories

- **Communication Plans** - First and foremost, depositories should develop a short Communication Plan detailing your goals and objectives for marketing your collections and services. This will help focus your efforts and keep all staff on track. Chapter 4 of this document, “Think Beyond,” is the place to start when trying to focus your goals and objectives within the Communication Plan. If the library already has a communication plan, consider modifying it to incorporating the Easy as FDL campaign and “think beyond” objectives.
- **Patron Welcome Kits** - Create small packets for patrons that can be displayed near the library entrance and include items such as the Easy as FDL brochure; Easy as FDL bookmark; Easy as FDL pocket card personalized with depository information such as hours of operation, phone number, etc.; and additional information about depository services and offerings.
- **Digital Patron Welcome Kits** - Duplicate the patron welcome kits on the depository Web site by scanning the contents of the packets mentioned above. Create a link on your library’s Web site for new patrons. Link the Easy as FDL promotional video from this page.
- **Depository Guides** - Create a basic visual map of the depository labeling specialized services and collections on the map. This can include the library’s floor plan and map of the collections. Take the opportunity to list examples of topics of information available, i.e. health, science, art, history, etc. Make these available in the library and on the library’s Web site as well.
- **Calling all Bloggers** - Talk to your depository staff and regular patrons about the value of blogging about the value of the depository. Blogs offer up instant and free promotion.
- **Media Outreach** - Send promotional materials and letters to local journals and media about the depository and the benefits for the community.
- **Monthly Newsletter** - Create a monthly newsletter for the depository to highlight any new publications that are acquired or new services available or to reinforce existing collections and services. Make the newsletter available on the library’s Web site. If the depository is part of an academic institution, e-mail it to school administration, students, and faculty.
- **FAQs** - Develop lists of frequently asked questions and post them around the library in different areas, perhaps as 8.5 X 11 handouts or as large posters. Post them on your library’s Web site as well.
- **Public and Student Workshops** - Develop monthly or quarterly workshops for the community and for students on using the resources within the depository. Advertise the workshops through community newspapers/newsletters and university announcement services/newspapers. These workshops can be done in the library and via webinars and posted on the library’s Web site.
- **Library Tours** - Offer monthly or quarterly library tours to acclimate the public or student population with the depository and the services and resources available. Film a tour and put the video on the library’s Web site. If there are existing tours of the library as a whole that do not include depository tours, work to have the depository added.

- **Postcards** - Creating your own postcards, especially for libraries on college campuses, is an easy and cost-effective way to use direct mail. Cardstock is fairly inexpensive, and the cards can be created right on the computer. Use postcards to advertise services available at the library and online. For libraries not associated with an academic institution, develop a mailing list at the reference desk, and have staff encourage patrons to sign up.
- **Promote your Promotion** - Create a Web page for the depository Web site that features all of the unique things your library has done to promote itself, i.e. anniversary celebrations, contests, special displays, special events, etc.
- **Track Positive Feedback** - Develop an online form on the library Web site where users can submit feedback about resources, services, etc., and review feedback on a regular basis. This will set the groundwork for future improvements to the library.
- **FDLP Community** - Utilize the new FDLP Community site in order to receive or share ideas on marketing and promoting your depository. Post your success stories so that others may benefit from your unique ideas.

## IV. Think Beyond

Marketing tips and strategies are important in guiding how depositories promote the FDLP. Another very important aspect of promotion is to consider what is being promoted.

### **What are some aspects, services, or collections that FDLs offer that are not well-known?**

From GPO’s field research, as evidenced in the “Person on the Street” videos, there are several common conceptions that the public has about libraries in general. When asked, “What comes to mind when you hear the word “library?” the vast majority of interviewees responded with the word, “books.” “Library of Congress” was also a popular response. When asked, “Can you name a Federal Government publication?” the most common answer was, “the Constitution.” When the same group of individuals was asked, “What is a Federal depository library?” only two of the interviewees could answer the questions correctly. One of those was a librarian.

### *What comes to mind when you hear the word “Library”?*

This question gives a general idea that the word “library” is still synonymous with the word “books.” While true, depositories have so much more to offer in the way of products and services.

Conduct a brainstorming session with library staff and talk about this topic: “What makes this library unique?”

Below are a few examples.

- Virtual Reference
  - Online chat
  - Text message services
  - Reference through social networking
- Library Events
  - These do not have to be library-related. The important part here is to get the patron in the door. Once they are there for another reason, use the opportunity to “sell” the library. A few examples are:
    - Movie Showings - These are a fun way to gather a crowd at the library with relatively low overhead. You will need a license to show films, but these can be obtained easily online.
    - Club Meetings - Encourage campus or community clubs to use meeting space in the library.
    - Receptions and Lectures - Offer up library space to host receptions and lectures.
    - Kids Day or Family Fun Day with games and contests.
    - Story time (utilizing the many children’s books in the FDLP)
- Study Groups
  - Scheduled study groups
  - Quiet study space (a valued commodity on college campuses in particular)

- Games/Contests
  - Win a personal reference assistant for X period of time.
  - Enter to win a research assistant at finals week. (special IM chat name, etc.)
  - Trivia
  - Publication of the month contests
  - Contests for children
- Hidden Perks
  - Café
  - Silent rooms
  - Multi-media labs

In addition, place emphasis on the formats of information at the library. Let the public know depositories offer more than just books.

Below are a few examples.

- Periodicals
- Pamphlets
- Microfiche
- CD-ROMs
- Internet access
- Electronic resources

### ***Can you name a Federal Government publication?***

This question dictates that the public has somewhat of a rigid view of what constitutes a Federal Government publication.

Many interviewees mentioned historical documents, court documents, laws, etc. These are commonly known to be Government documents.

Conduct a brainstorming session with library staff, and talk about these topics: “What topics and publications do we offer that are unique?” “What do we have to offer that the public would find to be a surprising Government document?”

Consider promoting types or categories of publications.

Below are a few examples.

- Health & Nutrition
- Military & U.S. History

- Travel
- Maps
- Business & Statistics
- Pictorials
- Careers
- Science

Also consider highlighting and promoting some unique or fascinating titles.

A few notable and unique titles, as examples, are:

- Do you Know Oatmeal? (US Department of Agriculture)
- The Meat Handbook (Department of the Navy)
- Distinguishing Bolts from Screws (Department of Homeland Security)
- I lost \$350 in Two Weeks. Ask me How! (Federal Trade Commission)
- Patents in Space (Congressional Hearing from 1989)
- “Slam” your way to good health by eating five fruits and vegetables a day! (National Cancer Institute)
- History of Air Training Command, 1943-1993 (Department of Defense)
- Sprocketman comic book (U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission)

The most important thing to remember about “thinking beyond” is to use your imagination. Depository librarians are the utmost experts in Government information products. Find those unique aspects of collections and services, and bring those to the forefront.

### **How can we highlight the unique aspects of depository offerings?**

There are many ways by which to bring the unique aspects of the depository to the forefront.

- Create displays or poster presentations within the library featuring a different unique publication each month. Each month could feature the choice of a different documents staff member, student, or patron.
- Create displays or poster presentations within the library featuring a different topic each month. This will allow for many publications to be put on display at once that all relate to the same genre. As an alternative to topics, displays could also focus on college majors, occupations, or hobbies.
- Create displays or poster presentations within the library featuring current events. Display publications, legislation, periodicals, etc. that focus on a topic that is currently featured heavily in the news. For example, create a display of some of the depository resources available that would be beneficial in difficult economic times, such as resources for careers, education, health issues, saving money, etc.

- Develop a holiday calendar with corresponding Government documents that apply to the holiday in question, i.e. Constitution Day, Presidents Day, Earth Day, etc. Make this resource available on your library Web site.
  - Create these same types of displays outside of the library, i.e. student unions, community centers, the local police station, etc. Utilize images of the publications and resources in the displays.
- For educational institutions, work with professors and create quick reference lists of Government documents and publications that would be beneficial for specific courses or areas of study.
- For all libraries, create informational sheets or guides based on topics, and offer them on display. For example, prepare lists of Government documents and publications that apply to specific subject areas, such as art, health, employment, financial planning, agriculture, etc. These can be offered in paper at the library and online via the library's Web site.
- For youth patronage, create displays, games, and contests based on children's book in the FDLP, i.e. fun reading lists, coloring contests, story time, etc. Print out Ben's Guide activities and makes them available. Feature Ben's Guide on one of the public access stations. Additionally, search the Catalog of U.S. Government Publications to find children's books to highlight in displays or utilize at story time.
- Involve patrons by getting them involved in contests and game centering around unique Government publications, i.e. factual scavenger hunts for interesting facts in Government publications, contests for whoever can find the craziest or most humorous publication title, etc.
- Re-create all of these features on your library's Web site or on the various social networking sites to which your library belongs.

## V. Staff Buy-In

The single most important resource that a library has in promoting its valuable resources and services is the staff. Below are some tips to get the library staff involved in and excited about promoting the library.

### Get the staff on board.

- Develop best practices for promoting the library and coach the staff at regular intervals. Examples include addressing patrons by name, asking follow-up questions, etc. This training should include staff members at all levels.
- Develop scripts or fact sheets about the benefits of the library, the services available, and the reasons why the depository should be the first stop for research purposes, or utilize the new FDLP Promotional Sheets provided by GPO.
  - These scripts or fact sheets can also be converted to digital presentations that libraries can use as screen savers at public access stations or in presentations to library administration, boards of directors, etc.
- Provide the staff with and discuss the [value proposition for the FDLP](#), located on the FDLP Desktop. Ensuring that all staff are on the same page with the value of being a depository will only help them as they promote the depository.
- Encourage staff to join the FDLP Community site to share ideas on promoting the depository and more.
- Encourage staff to talk about promotional displays, flyers, contests, etc.
- Provide staff with updates on current events that have touchpoints to the collection. Encourage patron dialogue on such resources.
- Order the [Easy as FDL “Ask Me what depository libraries can do for you” buttons](#) from the FDLP Desktop, and distribute to all staff to wear each day.
- Hold refresher training courses on customer service best practices for all staff. Within the courses, make sure to discuss “worst practices” as well. When the staff develops relationships with its patrons, the patrons will remember that personal interaction and revisit the library more frequently for their information and research needs.
- Ensure that staff members are well-versed in the library vision and mission.
- Involve the staff in campus or community events where there is an opportunity to promote the library
- Ensure that the GPO promotional items and handouts offered at the library are the most up-to-date. Refer to the FDLP Desktop for the [most current items available](#) for order. Recycle obsolete handouts, posters, etc.
- Let the Easy as FDL tagline be your guide: Free Information, Dedicated Service, Limitless Possibilities. Reinforce these key ideas when talking to library staff about promotion:
  - What does the library have that the public doesn’t know about?
  - Do they know they can access it all for free?
  - How can the expertise of depository staff enhance the patron’s experience?
  - What other unique products and services does the library offer?

## VI. Information Sharing is Key

Feedback and information sharing from depository libraries is key in measuring the success of these promotional endeavors.

### Inform GPO and Each Other

There are a number of ways to provide GPO with comments and input regarding these and other marketing ideas.

- askGPO: A new category has been set up within askGPO titled, “Marketing Strategies/Radio Spots.” GPO is encouraging all depositories to submit feedback and marketing ideas. As GPO collects marketing ideas, they will be shared out with the community as a whole.
- FDLP Community: GPO encourages all members of the depository community to register with the FDLP Community site and share and receive marketing ideas through that venue.
- DLC Meetings: GPO encourages depository staff to present their unique marketing ideas to the community through educational sessions at the Fall and Spring DLC Meetings.

### Feedback for GPO

GPO is looking for a wide range of feedback regarding marketing efforts:

- Are the promotional products valuable to your endeavors?
- Of the products you have ordered, are they attracting the attention of patrons?
- Of the products you have ordered, are depository staff members working to distribute them to patrons?
- Are there tips and strategies provided in either Phase I or Phase II of the FDLP Marketing Plan that have worked particularly well or poorly?
- Is there any quantitative evidence that the promotional endeavors are working, i.e. increased depository use/traffic, increased hits on depository Web pages or social networking sites, results from contests, etc.?
- What additional marketing tools should GPO be developing?

### Information Sharing with the Community

There are many valuable aspects of promotion to be shared with the community.

- Marketing ideas for specialized services
- Marketing ideas for collections
- Marketing ideas for unique services/aspects of the library
- Techniques from the past that have proven successful
- Examples of successful library campaigns

- Unique ways to promote depository anniversaries
- Low cost promotional products/handouts created by libraries

Keeping GPO informed about marketing successes and ideas will help ensure that GPO is on track with its promotional efforts and help to shape further efforts for the future.

Collaborating with the FDLP community on marketing successes and ideas will help spread the knowledge of and excitement about marketing such an invaluable program as the FDLP.