# Evolution of A Digital Federal Depository Library Program: A Brief History

## A Seismic Shift in Information Access

On June 8, 1993, President Clinton signed the [Government Printing Office Electronic Information Access Enhancement Act of 1993](#). The law allowed the Government Publishing Office (GPO) "to establish in the Government Printing Office a means of enhancing electronic public access to a wide range of Federal electronic information." The launch of the website *GPO Access* quickly followed in 1993. In 2010, GPO greatly expanded its ability to disseminate and preserve Federal Government information with the creation of the Federal Digital System (FDsys).
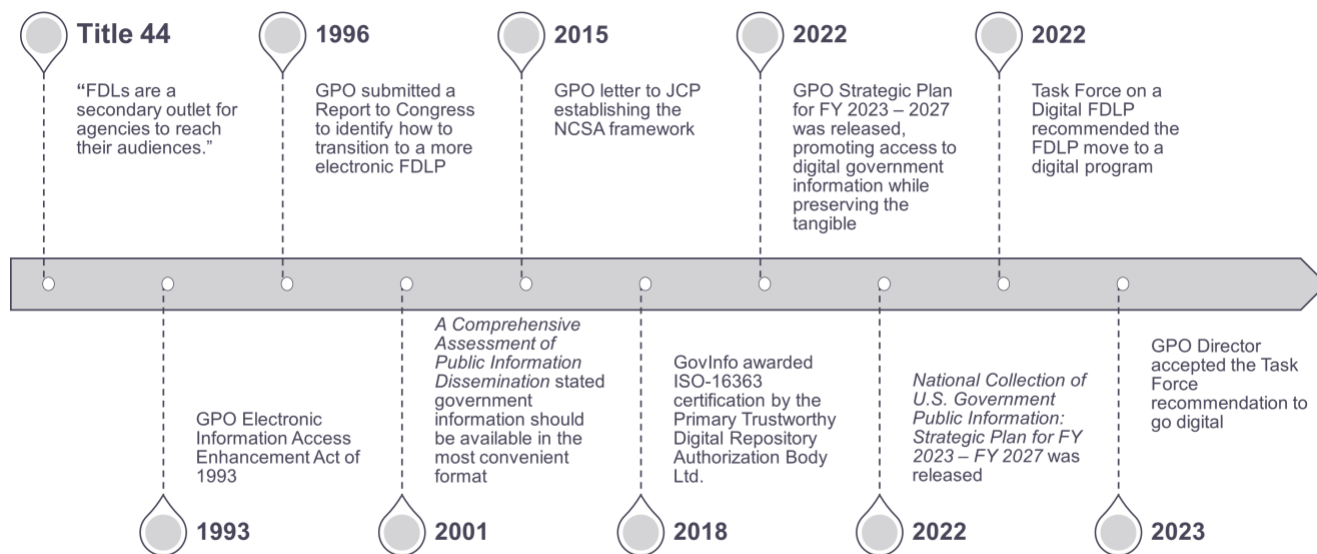
## GPO's Digital Mission Expanded

The interest of Congress to shift the Federal Depository Library Program (FDLP) to a digital program prompted the GPO to conduct and release the 1996 [Study to Identify Measures Necessary for a Successful Transition to a More Electronic Federal Depository Library Program](#).

In 2013, a [report to the U.S. Congress](#) from the National Academy of Public Administration (NAPA) determined that GPO had a critical role to play in ensuring public access to digital materials. Regarding the FDLP, NAPA recommended that "GPO continue to collaborate with depository libraries and the library community to develop a national strategic plan for the program that gives libraries the flexibility and tools they need to provide permanent public access to government information in the digital age." Further, the report recommended reevaluating "the geographic structure of the depository library system in an era where access is not tied to state and congressional district boundaries."

In 2015, [the GPO letter to the Joint Committee on Printing and Response](#), enabled the creation of a framework where regionals could discard specific titles. The evolving framework eventually led to National Collection Service Areas (NCSAs).

In 2017, [GovInfo](#) was announced as the replacement for FDsys, and in 2018, it became the first digital repository in the United States to pass the stringent ISO-16363 Trustworthy Digital Repository (TDR) standard and has been continuously audited and certified since.

Timeline:

**Title 44** — "FDLs are a secondary outlet for agencies to reach their audiences."

**1993** — GPO Electronic Information Access Enhancement Act of 1993

**1996** — GPO submitted a Report to Congress to identify how to transition to a more electronic FDLP

**2001** — *A Comprehensive Assessment of Public Information Dissemination* stated government information should be available in the most convenient format

**2015** — GPO letter to JCP establishing the NCSA framework

**2018** — GovInfo awarded ISO-16363 certification by the Primary Trustworthy Digital Repository Authorization Body Ltd.

**2022** — GPO Strategic Plan for FY 2023 – 2027 was released, promoting access to digital government information while preserving the tangible

**2022** — *National Collection of U.S. Government Public Information: Strategic Plan for FY 2023 – FY 2027* was released

**2022** — Task Force on a Digital FDLP recommended the FDLP move to a digital program

**2023** — GPO Director accepted the Task Force recommendation to go digital

## Transformation to a Digital FDLP

In 2022 three documents all recommended a pivot to a digital FDLP:

- America Informed: GPO Strategic Plan 2023 – 2027
    - Directed GPO to work with depository libraries to digitize and ingest content into GovInfo, expanding access to digital Government information, while assisting libraries in the preservation of tangible historic materials in their collections.
- The National Collection of U.S. Government Public Information Strategic Plan
    - Focus on building and curating the National Collection and the transformation of LSCM to a primarily digital-content organization.
- The Task Force report on the Feasibility of a Digital FDLP
    - Recommends that the FDLP move to a digital program, with select titles continuing distribution in print format to libraries.

In 2023, the GPO Director agreed in his response to the Task Force report, signaling a move to a digital program with select titles continuing in print format to a few libraries.

Ongoing updates to GPO's work on a Digital FDLP Implementation can be found on the FDLP website.