

SUPERINTENDENT OF DOCUMENTS

PUBLIC POLICY STATEMENT

4-2026

EFFECTIVE: XX/XX/2026

Supersedes

SOD-PPS-2016-4

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SUBJECT: Permanent Public Access to U.S. Government Public Information through Preservation

PURPOSE

This policy statement asserts the U.S. Government Publishing Office's (GPO) responsibility to preserve and ensure public access to the National Collection of U.S. Government Public Information¹ for future generations.

BACKGROUND

The Government Publishing Office (GPO) has been the U.S. Government's agent for providing free public access to Federal Government information for more than 130 years. The mandates of Chapters [17](#), [19](#), and [41](#) of Title 44, United States Code establish GPO's responsibility for providing publications of the Federal Government to the general public through the Federal Depository Library Program (FDLP), comprehensive indexing to tangible and digital Government publications through the Cataloging and Indexing Program (C&I), and online access to and preservation of deposited, harvested, and reformatted digital Government publications through GPO's system of online access, GovInfo.

The digital stewardship vision of GovInfo is to operate a standards-based preservation repository and to implement technologies so content can be obtained, rendered, and understood by the Designated Community and the general public into the future.

¹The National Collection of U.S. Government Public Information is a geographically dispersed collection of the corpus of Federal Government public information. It is accessible to the public at no cost from Federal depository libraries and online through the [Catalog of U.S. Government Publications](#), [GovInfo](#), and [DiscoverGov](#).

There cannot be permanent public access without the preservation of the resources, whether tangible or digital. Under [44 U.S.C. §1909](#), library collections are required “to be maintained so as to be accessible to the public.” Maintenance is the proper care of collections, taking preventive measures to protect them from decay and deterioration. Preservation includes activities such as conservation treatment, replacement, or reformatting to address existing damage or to increase access. Preservation and maintenance of collections, together, will ensure access to digital and tangible U.S. Government public information for future generations.

As GPO does not have a tangible collection to preserve, reliance on partnerships with depository libraries, Federal agencies, and other institutions with Government publications is a necessity. In today’s environment where the number of tangible publications distributed through the FDLP has decreased significantly in favor of online dissemination to depositories, and the preference for agencies to publish to their websites, the responsibility for the storage, preservation, and access to Government digital content rests with GPO and official hosting partners.

Library Services and Content Management collaborates with Federal depository libraries to preserve the National Collection by employing lifecycle management and preservation best practices, including preservation partnerships, digital reformatting, and preservation services.

The National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) recognizes GPO as an official Affiliate Archive. The [affiliate agreement](#) establishes mutually agreed upon standards for the permanent preservation of and public access to the digital content on GPO’s system of online access, GovInfo.

POLICY

A Preservation Program will address the preservation needs of the digital and tangible content of the National Collection of U.S. Government Public Information. The Preservation Librarian will lead the Preservation Program.

Through preservation services for Federal depository libraries, GPO will ensure future generations have free permanent public access to tangible Government information that is within the scope of the Federal Depository Library Program and the Cataloging & Indexing Program.

GPO is committed to the digital stewardship vision of GovInfo. To support this vision, GovInfo is CoreTrustSeal and ISO 16363 certified Trustworthy Digital Repository.

The Affiliate Archive Memorandum of Understanding with NARA serves as a contingency and succession plan per the ISO 16363 Trustworthy Digital Repository standard.

GPO partners may host and preserve digital content in accordance with agreed upon terms. Content hosted by partners is considered “official” but will not be digitally signed or authenticated by GPO.

An inventory of preservation copies of record will be maintained. The inventory will include condition statements and where the holdings are located.

Those publications that cannot be made permanently accessible through the application of this policy will be handled on a case-by-case basis.

APPLICATION

The Superintendent of Documents is responsible for ensuring permanent public access to the National Collection of U.S. Government Public Information. The Preservation Librarian is the spokesperson and subject matter expert for preservation activities and the lifecycle management of content in the National Collection.

The Superintendent of Documents, through the LSCM Managing Director or, as appropriate, the Chief Technology Officer, must authorize any exceptions to this policy.

APPROVED:

SCOTT MATHESON
Superintendent of Documents

Date