Please stand by for realtime captions.

Hello everyone this is Ashley at GPO. I'm just giving you a moment to check the volume on your speakers, we will be getting started in just about eight minutes.

Hello everyone this is Ashley again that GPO. Just letting you know we will get started at 2:00, that is in about two minutes.

Good afternoon and welcome to the FDLP Academy webinar, "The United States Government Manual: Loose-leaf to Digital". My name is Ashley and with me here today are John Hiram Martinez and Jason Marlin who both work in the register of national archives and federal administration. If you have any questions you would like to us the presenters, or you have any technical issues, please use the chat box in the lower corner of your screen. I will track questions coming in and at the end of the presentation we will respond to each of them. We will email a link to the recording and slides to everyone who registers for the webinar. We will send you a certificate of participation using the email you used to register with for today's webinar. If you need multiple certificates please email fdlpoutreach@gpo.gov. If you need to zoom in you can click on the full-screen button on the bottom right side of your screen. To exit mouse over the blue bar at the top of the screen so it expands, and finally at the end of the session we will share a satisfaction survey with you. We will let you know when the survey is available in the URL will appear in the chat box. We appreciate your feedback on the session and comments on the value of the webinar. I will hand the microphone over to John who will take it from here.

Good afternoon, or good morning, everyone. This is John Martinez I am the -- at the office of the Federal Register.

Hello everyone, I'm Jason Marler, I'm supervisor of the daily issue unit, which despite its name is also unit at the Federal Register in issuing the U.S. Government Manual.

We will be talking to you today, I, John, will start with some background and history, and Jason will talk about where we are today and how we get the information and how we put it online. So, to begin with, I want to talk about the initial purpose of the U.S. Government Manual , and it was so that people would know the government. What was there, what was available. There were many attempts through the 1800s to try and get a handle on what is the government? In 1935 we had the very first government manual, we will talk about the name and just a little bit. On your screen you will see the forward and instructions from the very first issue in 1935. It initially was a looseleaf notebook and the pages were held in Page by three metal rings. As we go along we will talk about how it has changed over time.

To give you a little history of this, 1935, the very first government manual was published by the federal information service, which was part of the national emergency counsel. In 1939, the information service was moved to the office of government reports and that was part of a major reorganization that happened because of the reorganization after 1939. One of the

changes to the manual in 1939 is started being produced three times a year. They had realized when it was published just once a year, by the time it was published, many facts inside were already outdated. They were trying to be proactive and have more current publications, so it was to be published three times a year. And, over the next few years there were varying degrees of success with how often they were able to get it out, three times a year.

In 1941, that office was merged into the office of war information, the division of public inquiries. It was considered part of the war effort. It remain there until the end of the war in 1945. There was an executive order that moved it to the government information service which was part of the Bureau of budget. And then in 1947, it was changed to the government information service in the office of government reports, kind of where it was back in 1939.

And then the next year, 1948, it moved to the division of the Federal Register which was in the national archives. One of the changes at that time was it also went back to an annual publication. So, it has been with the Federal Register since 1948, we are now called the office of the Federal Register and we are part of the national archives and records administration. The name of our parent agency has changed a few times.

Say you will notice in the title, sometimes it says U.S. Government Manual and other times it says United States government organization manual. At its inception the publication was formally known as the United States government organization manual, so, that was its official name. However, from the beginning it had somewhat of an identity crisis, because the very first volume in 1935, on the front cover said United States government manual without the word organization. You also see in 1948, no organization, just U.S. Government Manual. It kind of went back and forth every few years of what they would call it, whether it had organization in the title or not. That was until 1949 when it went to the Federal Register, and then it stayed -- organization stated in the title until 1973, when it was dropped to be the United States government manual on the cover. Finally, in 1985, the administrative committee of the Federal Register, that is the committee that makes the rules about the Federal Register another locations produced by the office of the federal register. So they officially changed the name in regulation. The formal name now is the U.S. Government Manual. That is how it has been and all the cover since 1973 have had that as the name.

In 1948, when this publication was brought to the Federal Register, it was determined that the government manual would be considered a special edition of the Federal Register. So is not the daily Federal Register, but it is considered a special edition of it. As I mentioned, it has been that way since June 30, 1948, and the reason why this is important is because the administrative procedure act which came out in 1946, mandated that all agencies had to publish, in the federal register, descriptions of their organization, later, contact information, those kind of things. So, when agencies published -- or their information is published in the United States government manual, it is considered formally published in the Federal Register to meet the requirements of the federal procedure act. It was surmised at some point in the past, there was talk of, well, do we really need the manual? Should it go away? If it went away, another mechanism would be needed to meet this act. For many decades the government

manual was one of GPO's bestsellers, very popular in the bookstore, and through the mail. Public demand for the print edition, however, began to decline in favor of more current information found on the Internet. One problem with the annual update, as we mentioned before, was that frequently the information inside is outdated I the time he goes to press. So there has been effort over the years to make it more correct, make it more current, so the information people are getting is more correct.

And part of that was placing it online, so the first appearance of a comprehensive, accessible digital format of the U.S. Government Manual was the 1995-1996 edition. Electronic texts had been available earlier online but it had not been the complete, comprehensive version of it. This required substantial changes to formatting and production, and so even with that, we could consider this the first modern era of the United States government manual where it was available online and people could see it immediately when they needed it.

The U.S. Government Manual website which is U.S. government manual.gov change the process, so actually how we make the book, changed it from paper to electronic. Regulations in 2011 to clarify that a print copy no longer need to be issued. We issued them through the 2013 book and in 2015 it was decided there would be no more paper. The website itself would be considered the official.

So, as part of an ongoing project to make historical content available and archive it electronically for preservation, the United States government manual has been digitized in its entirety, that is part of the reason why we are having this presentation today. And just as a side note this is part of an ongoing effort with the federal depository library program and GPO with the office of the Federal Register to digitize a lot of our publications. So the Federal Register has already been digitized already back to its beginning in 1936, also all the public papers, back to Hoover -- excuse me, public papers of the president back to President Hoover have been digitized, and we had presentations similar to this about those digitization's.

Some interesting facts about the digitization processes prior to digitization GPO staff and contractors reviewed each volume to create an inventory. This was different than some of the other projects where they used an existing library. And part of the reason why a new library, a new collection, was established was because it was destructively digitize. That means the books were broken apart so they could be scanned totally flat and they could get the best scan possible. They acquired copies from depository libraries and then those digitized files were preserved as JPEG 2000 they were scanned at 400 dpi. And the access files which are available on government info are embedded with optical character recognition, so that means there is text behind it, so they are fully searchable. So when you're looking at the front, it is a picture of what the page look like when it was scanned, but underneath that there is embedded text so that they can search it. XML metadata for each volume includes descriptive metadata and technical metadata so they can be better searched and preserved. And with that I will transfer over to Jason so that he can tell you about the U.S. Government Manual today.

Thank you John. So to discuss a little bit about the modern process of the U.S. Government Manual it has been a constant effort to keep our information updated as quickly as possible, as currently as possible. By regulation each agency appoints a liaison officer, -- existing Federal Register liaison or they can ask someone else to do it. Those are the agency officers responsible for complying with all the requirements and regulations. As mentioned before, the APA is extensively covered by publication and the USGM. To do so the agency liaisons prepare statements, and these statements will update the USGM information. And also we can also proactively do it, many times we've been able to update it with results of elections for example, indicating someone who might be coming in even before we hear from a congressional liaison. The entries in the USGM are to cover all of these major categories which agencies must cover by publication in the Federal Register. The first, and the most important one in many aspects, is the organization of the agency itself. This covers major positions, their occupants, and oftentimes an organizational chart will be on the USGM. We've been moving away from that lately though, agencies tend to make organizational charts available on their own websites, which are updated more regularly, and frankly, much easier for us to reference then constantly updating the USGM on our own site. Similar agencies do that whenever they so choose. That way it will break down everything, oftentimes we have to truncate because the agencies do love to list everybody with a position of any importance. We kind of pare that down just a bit for the sake of the sanity of the reader.

After that we move into the program activities which is the agency's statement of purchase. Not necessarily a mission statement but a very direct and concise statement of what the agency does. And what they are providing to the United States as a whole. From there we go into descriptions of major activities and programs of the agency, the sort of things they are doing that you want to know about. And at the bottom we enter into the sources of information section, which include some of the most important information for the public. Namely FOIA. Since they have to publish that information the USGM serves that very keep purpose. This is one of the most important purposes of the USGM , it provides a clear, universal, comprehensive site where every agencies FOIA request information can be listed. Something easy for the public to find, they know exactly where to go if they come to the USGM , or anybody in the federal government. We also include a lot of useful resources the organization may offer. Most commonly we will see careers, news, and press activities. We often reference their social media down there, twitter, Facebook, Instagram, wheresoever they might be.

Interesting articles or publications the agency has made, important business opportunities and other resources they have available on their website. Oftentimes this is the sort of thing that would be very interesting, very valuable, but is comparatively of little interest to the gross public. But very interesting to a specific niche. So we can include resource they are that they might otherwise have trouble finding. On the other hand some of their most famous programs could be easily located here directly from the USGM , rather than going to the agency's website.

Now come on let's actually take a look at the USGM. I will turn on my screen share here, and we can take a look at the U.S. Government Manual website in all its fine glory. This is the front page of it, with our very valuable links to the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution,

the organizational chart, inks that are not necessarily updated on a regular basis, but nonetheless, are absolutely critical to the functioning of our government and everything within it. And from here we have access to a search as you would expect, but also the opportunity to browse by different categories, depending on what you are looking for in here. It is important to note that the USGM does not cover solely the executive branch, but we also have a piece for legislative, judicial, and even more of the esoteric agencies you don't often see, like the Smithsonian, the legal services Corporation, the Holocaust Museum, all of those are listed in here. You can get information on all of them.

Heading to an agency's entry itself, you can see a very standardized, for each agency, layout, where we have the agency, their address, their website, and directly into the organization and list of key personnel. One of the values the USGM really offers the public is to put all of this information in a standardized, easy to read format. So something you might be hunting for on an agency website, or they may have laid out in a way that is aesthetically pleasing but certainly not consistent from agency to agency. So the USGM provides an alternative that is clear and very easy to read. What we are looking at here is the department of the interior, you can see how it is broken down, starting with the secretary, the deputy secretary, the assistant secretaries and other officers that are equally common, such as the office of the Inspector General, their solicitor or chief information officer. These are the sort of things we try to include for every agency we have. Points of common interest as well as leaders of various subdivisions, because those will be of great public interest.

And you can see here, as I referenced earlier, the statement of the agency's purpose. Department of the Interior protects America's heritage and national resources. Titles, communities, -- energy for power in its future. A lot of times we rewrite the mission statement to more clearly reflect for the average reading public what it is. Something new we have been adding, that are not necessarily part of the standard format, but we are including now to provide greater utility to the public, is a section on the establishment and organization of the agency in question. Covering as much of the agency, or we can find, on the long and winding history of the agency. Also the statutory of regulatory authorities that govern the agency. This is often of use to people when they want to see, well, where exactly are these people created in statute? Where do they have authority to pass the legislation? The missionary is, again, we are talking about purpose of the agency as well as their activities, covers the different things they do as well as links to them, which we consider very important to add. It's not just enough for us to tell you what they're doing but we want to show you where they are doing it as well. The sources of information down here cover additional resources, and you can see some of the examples of things that we think, or the agency thinks, are of great interest and value provided by that agency. For example abandoned mines, a very unusual thing to come across but definitely a service that is of unique interest to people out there, and something they will look for on USGM. Archived records, blogs, as noted before, business and career opportunities. Business of the Department of Interior, we referred to the Deepwater Horizon incident which many people are curious about. FOIA, of course, one of the most important sections, and on word and so forth.

Then we get into the subsections, and I actually pulled up a different one over here. To show you a little bit about how we go about organizing the USGM. Because you get to see how the sausage is made. The USGM website is in reality a database, and it is built like a database, where we have different entries , different fields, and everything we can put on. Right here were covering the Department of the Interior and it seems like there is very little on the front page, that is because this is broken down into many different categories.

For example, here we create several tables based on the secretary, the assistant secretary, the other officers, the office of the Inspector General, and you can compare back here and see that each of these is in fact its own little entry within the government manual. You can see we have mission statement options, organization statement options, a different program information. All of these are not created in one single list, but each of these is an individual entry suited for modification or editing within the Dep of the USGM website. So it's an interesting way to do it. It does have its limitations unfortunately but it also does not a great deal of value with us being able to quickly and accurately update the information without destroying an entire entry. Now, if we look onwards, this is the official snapshot of the USGM. You will find this on gov.info.gov. Once a year we publish snapshots of the entire website once per year. As you can see it really is just a snapshot of the website. The website is absolutely our most accurate and up-to-date source of information. And, in fact, doing this has not only allowed us to greatly accelerate the updating of the USGM , but it has also saved us a lot of money. And on U.S. Government info you can see as John mentioned, we have digitized back and back all the way back to the first one of 1935. Now we did say that these later issues where the ones that were provided in a comprehensive and accessible manner, and that's because on the guv info website these are braked up by category. You can look at the text of the front matter or any individual section of the judicial, executive, anything.

As you can see going back further to the 94-95 edition, it is just one big PDF. These were editions where we started entering the modern age, and till now, even though we have a snapshot of the website, you can pretty much do the same thing here and look for whatever you want. In the and ultimately the best resource for the U.S. Government Manual is our website. Now, I believe, do we have any questions?

We do not have any questions so far. If you have those please enter them in the chat box.

We are willing to entertain your questions at this time.

Well I am waiting to see if any questions come in. We do have a question from Eric. How do you keep track of new, active and defunct agencies?

We are fortunate, in that, being in the office of the Federal Register we have a very good finger on the pulse of how government organizations flow, even outside the current daily activity of the USGM. Often times when a government agency is proposed, we will have a heads up of it, and certainly when they come into existence, we at the Federal Register hear about it by virtue of needing to accommodate it for the Federal Register publication. And being in our position of

the daily issue unit, we don't only produce the U.S. Government Manual, but also deal with most of the publication issues whenever they come up . So we can begin adapting immediately.

The website itself can keep --

Yes, we keep the older ones on the website. They are available.

From Kim, does the date in the footer for the last update reflect the last time the agency provided information? Or the last time it change? I noticed the nuclear regulatory commission for example has a date of six/2017.

Yes, that information we do try to update it more frequently than that. Sometimes that is in fact when we were last able to get information from the agency and updated. We are undergoing many processes as of now to improve our agency engagement. We have a new system that we intend to implement soon, that we are very confident we will see results. Until then, some of them unfortunately are a little bit outdated as we try to get information from the agency. Many of them, we have taken our own initiative on. Especially the larger ones such as the Department of the Interior that we just show. If we know they are slacking a bit, we will take on that one and updated as thoroughly as we can with the resources we have available to us.

From Eric, that is similar to another question I had, how do you enforce compliance?

The difficult part of this for us is that the owners of the update is on the agency. So there is a lot of friendly persuasion and getting to know people very well, and that is also part of the reason why agencies should have a USGM liaison that we can work with, who is familiar. We are putting into effect a newer program where if an agency doesn't have a liaison assigned, that we can go to their Federal Register liaison which everybody has or they cannot publish in the Federal Register kind of thing. And say, okay, you are now this as well. We are working on that, it is actually in the regulation that we can do that. So we are working to -- but that is one of our most difficult aspects of keeping this updated, is that we don't really have means to force agencies to update. Some agencies are very, very good, very mindful, they understand the importance of it. Others, not so much.

So we do keep an eye out, we reach out to agencies, and of course once a year we reach out and say, hey, we are going to be taking a snapshot. So at least once a year they are hearing from us but usually more frequently. Even with that, if we don't hear from them we can't stop -- we can't delay our snapshot from happening. In the past we used to delay some of the publication we were still doing it in paper to get it more up-to-date, but we finally had to decide we can't do that. Ultimately the onus is up to the agencies to keep it updated. We will work with them as best as we can. Unfortunately that means that the information might not be updated as it should.

So I have a question, social media, when I use the government manual when I worked at a depository library, I would go to older versions of the government manual to find out what was going on back in the day. So, I see for the need to track overtime social media -- that agencies partook of overtime? Because these things are fluid and they change, are you guys tracking that?

We do include the social media, anything we can identify the agency tells us about or that we know, down in the sources of information section. We try to keep those as updated as possible. In an ideal world we would be able to include things such as the twitter feed right at the top. But as I showed with our website organization, the fact that it is highly templated makes it easy to edit but it will be difficult to change the template for the entire USGM. So we do make our efforts to include that at the bottom and we are continuing to reach out to our GPO contracts to see what we can update without breaking the entire site.

Good point.

We should mention that the government manual website is hosted and maintained by GPO, as far as the technical side of it , since we are in a partnership. The Federal Register bylaw is in a partnership with GPO.

Another random question, photos? Do you guys have any plans to take over, like pulling and photos of people?

I don't think so. In part, that is because of the hosting strategy we employ which has a internal site that pushes our information to the external site. Which is very good for security, as it means only people with access to the internal site can make any changes to the government manual. But it also means that it is very difficult sometimes to get information from the internal site to the external site, that it was not designed to carry over.

All right, well we are waiting for some additional questions to come in. I will quickly push out the webinar survey. I would appreciate it if you could right-click on that and open it up in a separate browser window and fill it out when you get a chance after we are done here. We do take a look at the surveys and try to craft future webinars based on the training needs that you express.

So we will hang on here for just a little longer. We do have one more question hear from Mark, are there any tricks to searching the manual?

Not really, it is clearly straightforward. If you enter anything in it is pretty much all text, there isn't anything fancy, no underlying metadata. It is really a what you see is what you get sort of publication.

Nina points out that the links to archives of USGM additions don't work. I'm not sure, Nina, can you clarify where you are seeing links? I'm not sure what you mean by archives of USGM additions. --

I think I know what she is looking at. We found that happened this morning, not quite certain why.

Because we are giving a presentation.

That's why, yeah.

Half an hour before we came down to begin the presentation one of my editors contacted me and said, something is broken. So, we are going to get that fixed.

Good spotting, Nina.

We do have an interesting little quirk of the website, which is that much of the front matter we provide is listed in PDF format, which is actually not easy for us to update. That is why it is restrained from mostly things like the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution, things that are fortunately not changing on a daily basis. But there are a couple of things that we would like to update more frequently, but are constrained by our difficulty in shipping new PDFs from the internal site to the external site. I should mention the system was not initially designed for that, it was added as an additional security measure in the interest of proper website protocols. So that's a little bugaboo we have spoken about overtime.

All right, well I am not seeing any more questions, so again if you could fill out our webinar survey I would appreciate it. Thank you to both of our presenters for coming all the way downstairs, they work at GPO is building. We have one more comment here.

It is too bad the agencies don't have all the org charts.

That is something, a source of particular outreach as we have moved from providing our own organization charts that we generate from agency information and what is available to the agency organization charts themselves. The honest truth is that there is no standardized org chart format. Every org chart they supplied needed to be heavily modified and heavily worked on. I once spent, literally an entire month updating organization charts for the USGM. Sad to say we can't justify that amount of time when we have that resource available from the agencies. So this is a case where rather than inserting them directly, and also again, struggling with the current limitations of the website to provide PDFs in a quick and effective format, we do rely on the agency. And we are going through getting as many agencies as possible to sign onto our initiative to host links to their org charts on the USGM.

All right, we are getting a lot of shout outs, a lot of thank you , very helpful comments and things like that. So, thank you all for attending our webinars. Stay tuned for more webinars later in the month, and thank you for joining us again. Have a nice day everyone.

Thank you everyone.