

# Depository Selection Mechanisms: New Model for the Selection of Online Titles



U.S. GOVERNMENT  
PRINTING OFFICE  
KEEPING AMERICA INFORMED

September 8, 2005

This is one of three related documents issued to obtain comments from the Depository Library Community on new models for selection of tangible and electronic titles. The documents are:

- Depository Selection: History and Current Practice  
[http://www.access.gpo.gov/su\\_docs/fdlp/selection/history.pdf](http://www.access.gpo.gov/su_docs/fdlp/selection/history.pdf)
- Depository Selection Mechanisms: New Model for Selection of Online Titles
- Depository Selection Mechanisms: New Model for Selection of Tangible Publications  
[http://www.access.gpo.gov/su\\_docs/fdlp/selection/tangible.pdf](http://www.access.gpo.gov/su_docs/fdlp/selection/tangible.pdf)

Comments on these documents should be submitted to Superintendent of Documents Judy Russell ([jrussell@gpo.gov](mailto:jrussell@gpo.gov)) not later than Monday, October 31, 2005<sup>1</sup>.

## SUMMARY

As directed by Congress, the Federal Depository Library Program (FDLP) is in the eighth year of a transition to a primarily electronic program. While a significant number of titles will continue to be distributed in a tangible format, 95% of new titles are available in an online format to the depository libraries, whether or not they are also available in tangible form. Since the beginning of the transition to a primarily electronic FDLP, GPO has used the same system, item numbers, for the selection of online as well as tangible titles. As titles were converted to online access, they retained their item numbers, and new online publications were assigned new item numbers or placed into one of the existing sixteen category classes.

As the number of available online publications continues to grow, GPO raised questions about the continued utility of item numbers in its initial planning statement on the National Bibliography. As a result, and in response to a request from the Depository Library Council, GPO conducted a review of the current item number system and examined possible alternatives for online publications.

GPO continues to believe that item numbers are needed to assist with the selection of online titles. By selecting an item number for an online title, depository libraries notify GPO they are agreeing to provide service to that title. The inclusion of an item number in a bibliographic record by GPO also indicates that a publication has been made available for permanent public access through the FDLP and added to the National Bibliography. Additionally, some depository libraries use item numbers to create profiles with bibliographic records vendors in order to obtain records for their catalogs. However, after reviewing current procedures and alternatives, GPO no longer believes item numbers alone are the most effective mechanism for selecting online titles.

---

<sup>1</sup> This is a corrected version of this document. The original version had an incorrect deadline for comments.

## **PROPOSED NEW MODEL**

GPO envisions a tiered selection mechanism for online publications. This would provide for the dissemination of information about online titles in two categories, based on the prioritization of titles by depository libraries. Item numbers would still be assigned to online titles, but, rather than assigning item numbers at the title level, GPO would group online titles together based on issuing agency.

### **PRIORITY ONE TITLES**

When a depository library knows an agency publishes material of interest to their users, they would select the online publications item number for that agency. GPO would create one item number for all online titles issued by an agency. Item numbers would be created at the bureau level so that all agencies and bureaus listed in the *List of Classes* would receive an online publications (EL) item number<sup>2</sup>. This item number would be very similar to the electronic products (E) item number for tangible electronics.

If a title were available in multiple formats, such as *Agricultural Decisions* (P) (EL), the tangible version would be distributed under the existing item number while the online version would be made available under the new item number for online publications from the Department of Agriculture. Existing item numbers for online only titles would be cancelled and information about the availability of those titles would be disseminated under the online item number for the agency. As titles are converted to online only access, existing item numbers would be cancelled and notification of online access would take place under the online item number for the agency. GPO would continue to create unique Superintendent of Documents classification (SuDoc) numbers for online publications.

### **PRIORITY TWO TITLES**

GPO would create a new electronic notification service to replace *New Electronic Titles* that libraries would use to determine if any publications from non-selected agencies should be included in their collections. All online titles would be listed on the notification service after cataloging has been completed. The notification service will be in SuDoc order so librarians may quickly scan the list for their non-selected agencies. When a notification list is disseminated, depositories would be able to review the publications before acquiring the bibliographic records for their collections. It is envisioned that this notification service would contain brief bibliographic information as well as the PURL to allow the depository librarians to examine the publication before deciding whether or not to include it in their collection.

GPO's new online public access catalog (OPAC) will also offer several options that would assist with selection. Librarians will be able to conduct subject and agency based searches in the logic base for online publications while limiting the searches by date. Once the OPAC's depository library only services are available, depositories will be able to set-up predefined searches, such as all new publications on a specific topic or from a specific agency, which can be run as frequently as the librarian desires.

---

<sup>2</sup> Format designations currently in use are: (P) for paper, (MF) for microfiche, (CD-ROM) for CD-ROM series or serials that are always in CD-ROM format, (DVD) for DVD series or serials that are always in DVD format, (EL) for online publications, (E) for miscellaneous tangible electronic products, such as CD-ROMs, DVDs, or VHS tapes, that may not have standard formats.

## IMPLEMENTATION

If adopted, GPO will implement the new model for online selection in phases. The first phase will focus on the development of the electronic notification service and the depository library only services available from the OPAC. After the implementation of the notification service and the related OPAC services, GPO will allow for a review period so depository libraries may become familiar with the new services and determine how best to incorporate them into the library's workflow. Following this review period, GPO will begin creating the agency based item numbers for online publications and canceling the existing online only item numbers.

## ASSUMPTIONS

- The nature of online publications is different from tangible publications and therefore requires a different selection mechanism.
- A selection mechanism for online publications is still needed.
- Continued use of item numbers for online titles can enable libraries purchasing vendor records to continue receiving records for items selected. Vendors may be able to develop methods of profiling by SuDoc class stem to profile record selection where more specificity is desired.
- Revision to the selection and dissemination mechanism for information about online titles can occur while GPO is working to develop a new system for tangible selection and distribution as described in Depository Selection Mechanisms: Future System for Tangible Publications. <http://www.gpoaccess.gov/selection/tangible.pdf>.
- New technologies can be utilized to enable more efficient processing and dissemination of information about online titles.

## QUESTIONS

- Does the Depository Library Community agree with these assumptions? If not, what changes are necessary?
- Does the phased approach to implementation seem logical? How much time would be needed to review the new notification services before implementing the proposed changes in item numbers?
- Is using agency and bureau level item numbers to profile depository libraries' online selections an acceptable approach to providing "locate libraries" information for users of online publications? If not, what alternatives should GPO consider?
- Should the update cycle for online titles continue to be annual, or on a more frequent schedule?
- GPO should be able to identify online only titles for which libraries have agreed to provide service. Are item numbers an appropriate mechanism for accomplishing this? If not, what alternatives should GPO consider?
- Are there other requirements of a new tangible selection and distribution system that GPO should be considering?