

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



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In September 2005, GPO issued three related documents on new models for selection of tangible and online titles. The Federal depository library community was asked to review the documents and share their comments. GPO is now releasing revised briefing papers that incorporate feedback received during the comment period. No changes were made to Depository Selection: History and Current Practice. The original papers and a summary of the comments are available at http://www.access.gpo.gov/su_docs/fdlp/selection/index.html. The revised documents are available at:

- Depository Selection: History and Current Practice
http://www.access.gpo.gov/su_docs/fdlp/selection/history_revised.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_revised.pdf

GPO has begun work on documents that will address both the proposals for the online and tangible models in more detail. These more detailed papers will be released prior to the Spring Depository Library Council Meeting to be held in Seattle, April 2-5, 2006.

SUMMARY

As directed by Congress, the Federal Depository Library Program (FDLP) is continuing its transition to a primarily electronic program. While a significant number of titles will continue to be distributed in a tangible format, 92% of new publications 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 publications. 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 classes¹.

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

¹ Chapter 2 of the *Classification Manual* defines fourteen category classes: .1 Annual Report, .2 General Publications, .3 Bulletins, .4 Circulars, .5 Laws .6 Regulations, Rules, Instructions, .7 Press Releases, .8 Handbooks, Manuals, Guides, .9 Bibliographies and Lists of Publications, .10 Directories, .11 Maps and Charts, .12 Posters, .13 Forms, .14 Addresses. Two additional category classes have been established, without reserved numbers, since the last revision of the Manual. These are Electronic Products and Ephemera.

review of the current item number system and examined possible alternatives for online publications.

Given the accelerating shift to primarily online dissemination, the difficulties inherent in managing a rapidly increasing number of item numbers seem to outweigh the benefits of the specificity provided by having a one-to-one relationship between an item number and a title for online publications. GPO believes the development of collection development tools and the increased search functionality of GPO's new online public access catalog (OPAC) will offer depository libraries the specificity and flexibility needed to select online publications that meet the needs of their users without the continued use of item numbers.

However, GPO believes a simplified version of the item number system can play a secondary role in assisting some depositories with the selection of online publications. For example, the inclusion of an item number in a bibliographic record by GPO indicates that a publication has been made available for permanent public access through the FDLP and added to the National Bibliography. Larger depositories and those that collect heavily in certain areas may also wish to continue using item numbers. Additionally, some depository libraries use item numbers to create profiles with bibliographic records vendors in order to obtain records for their catalogs.

PROPOSED NEW MODEL

GPO envisions two selection mechanisms for online publications. This would allow depository libraries to select the mechanism that best suits their collection development needs or use a combination of the two. GPO would continue to create unique Superintendent of Documents classification (SuDoc) numbers for online publications.

SELECTION USING THE OPAC AND OTHER COLLECTION DEVELOPMENT TOOLS

GPO would develop several collection development tools to assist with selecting online publications. A new electronic notification service would be created to replace *New Electronic Titles* that libraries would use to determine if any online publications 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. 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 would also create online subject bibliographies using the functionality of GPO's new integrated library system (ILS). Bibliographies would be created for new publications for each of the 50 states and major regions of the United States in order to facilitate selection by geography. Additional bibliographies on specific topic areas, such as terrorism and health care, would be created to assist depositories that collect in those areas. As with the new electronic notification service, the subject bibliographies would contain brief bibliographic information as well as the PURL. The intent is to archive all the notification services and make them available on the FDLP Desktop.

GPO's new OPAC will offer several options that would assist with selection as well. Librarians will be able to conduct subject, geographic, and agency-based searches in the logic base for online publications while limiting the searches by date. The OPAC will also have depository library only services. 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.

Currently selection of an item number notifies GPO that a depository library has agreed to assist users in locating and using that publication and others on that subject. GPO then uses this information to populate the “Locate Libraries” feature in the OPAC. Replacement of item numbers as the primary tool for selection of online publications would necessitate adding additional information to “Locate Libraries”. Depository libraries would be asked to outline their collection strengths as part of their depository library profile. These profiles would be incorporated into the “Locate Libraries” feature.

SELECTION USING AGENCY-BASED ITEM NUMBERS

Those depository libraries that know they want every online publication from a particular agency have the option of selecting the online publications item number for that agency. GPO would create one item number for all online publications issued by an agency. Item numbers would also 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 number². This item number would be very similar to the electronic products (E) item number for tangible electronics. For example, the Department of Agriculture has 23 bureaus listed in the April/October 2005 *List of Classes*. Each of these bureaus will have an item number for online titles.

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 and through the collection development tools. 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 and through the collection development tools. As bibliographic records are updated as part of the normal cataloging workflow, the new agency-based item numbers will be added to the record. The inclusion of an item number in a bibliographic record will continue to indicate that a publication has been made available for through the FDLP

As with the selection of item numbers for tangible publications, depository libraries would be able to add online item numbers to their selection profile twice a year while continuing to be able to drop item numbers at any time. Agency-based item numbers for online publications will continue to be included in the “Locate Libraries” feature.

IMPLEMENTATION

GPO envisions a phased implementation. The first phase will focus on the development of the electronic notification services, the incorporation of collection strength information into “Locate Libraries”, and the depository library only services available from the OPAC. After the implementation of the notification services and the related OPAC services, GPO will allow for a

² 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.

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 of 60 days, GPO will begin creating the agency based item numbers for online publications and canceling the existing online only item numbers.