



ENGAGE | INNOVATE | TRANSFORM

FEDERAL DEPOSITORY LIBRARIES & GPO

## FOCUSED DISCUSSION

### Resolving Anticipated Barriers to Digital Access

Wednesday, December 11

1:00 - 1:45 PM (Eastern Time)

#### FRAMING THE DISCUSSION

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The impetus for discussion of anticipated barriers to digital access stems from responses to FDLP Forecast Study questions. Library Forecast, Q16 asked, *“As government information is increasingly produced and distributed in digital-only formats, what barriers to access, if any, do you anticipate in the next five years?”* A parallel question, Q5, was asked on the State Forecast, *“As Government information is increasingly produced and distributed in digital-only formats, what barriers to access, if any, do libraries in your state anticipate in the next five years?”* Fifty two percent (52%) of respondents to the Library Forecast and 87% of respondents to the State Forecast indicated they anticipated barriers to access.

Observations for questions 16 and 5 were grouped into major themes. The top five themes, in order of observation frequency, are below. As the themes are described below, they convey the parameters for which an FDLP Forecast Study observation is included in them.

**Access** refers to the issues and problems relating to accessing digital collections such as the need for quality cataloging and metadata. Examples of responses include: a concern about incomplete cataloging; lack of metadata standards; poor indexing; and poor, unwieldy, and inconsistent search interfaces.

**Digital Divide** refers to all issues regarding any inequality in the ability to afford and own the computers and Internet access necessary to use digital content. It also refers to the lack of related technical skills to use such equipment and services. Examples of responses include: reference that in rural parts of the US, users have reduced access to Internet connection speeds, and the distance between libraries limits the ability of users to travel to a library to use computers and the Internet.

**Technology** refers to all the technical issues related to obtaining, maintaining, and updating equipment and services related to accessing and maintaining digital collections, whether in libraries or at GPO. Examples of responses include: the need for specialized, supplemental software; limited number of printers in the library; changing technologies; the proliferation of new access devices; bandwidth issues; and the ability to migrate collections to new software and systems.

**Funding** refers to responses expressing concern that financial resources and budgets will be insufficient, thus causing a negative impact on access and digital collections. Examples of responses include: expressed concern that cuts to budgets may shift publications at agencies from free to fee-based subscriptions and that libraries in the FDLP will fall further behind due to their limited funding.

**Preservation** refers to all related preservation issues surrounding permanent access to digital collections. Examples of responses include: the need to harvest and archive Web-based Government publications; the need for an increased capability to harvest content; and the need for preservation plans and standards.

## EXPECTED OUTCOMES

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- Options to resolve the anticipated barriers to accessing digital Federal Government information; or
- Options to minimize the anticipated barriers to accessing digital Federal Government information.

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

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These questions will be asked of each of the five barrier topics identified above.

- To what extent do you view [this topic] as a barrier to accessing digital Government information? Major barrier to digital access; Minor barrier to digital access; Not a barrier to digital access (poll for virtual attendees)
- What can GPO do to mitigate each of these anticipated barriers to digital access?
- What can depository libraries do to mitigate each of these anticipated barriers to digital access?
- Are there potential partnership opportunities between FDLs and GPO that could mitigate or resolve some of these anticipated barriers?