Federal Information Preservation Network

Report of a National Dialogue

Co-Sponsored by
U.S. Government Publishing Office
UC Hastings College of the Law Library

San Francisco, CA
June 25, 2015
1:00pm – 4:30pm

Executive Summary

GPO's **Federal Information Preservation Network (FIPNet)** is a strategic initiative to expand Federal Depository Library Program (FDLP) library collections and the content for GPO's Cataloging and Indexing Program (C&I) comprehensive index of Government information, or the National Bibliography, while at the same time guaranteeing the public long-term access to the Government's publications and information from libraries, Government entities, coalitions, and organizations working to ensure free access for future generations. GPO in collaboration with its FIPNet partners will contribute to the preservation of both tangible and digital Government information.

To build a sustainable preservation model GPO took into consideration the parameters included in the National Academy of Public Administration (NAPA) 2013 report, *Rebooting the Government Printing Office: Keeping America Informed in the Digital Age,* and recommendations; what was learned from depository libraries during the 2012 FDLP Forecast Study; and preservation best practices. FIPNet resulted from a model that had to have the following attributes:
- Collaborative;
- Leverage activities already undertaken;
- Flexible/Scalable;
- Partners beyond the FDLP; and
- Within GPO's statutory and regulatory guidance.

GPO's plan to preserve tangible and digital Government information had been discussed with the depository library community since the spring of 2014. Superintendent of Documents Mary Alice Baish saw the 2015 Annual Meeting of the American Library Association as an opportunity to have a discussion and obtain feedback on the plan from stakeholders representing the broader library community and convened a meeting June 25, 2015 at the University of California Hastings College of Law Library in San Francisco, California.

John Palfrey, Head of School at Phillips Academy in Andover and founding chairman of the Digital Public Library of America, provided opening remarks for the National Dialogue, and discussion was facilitated by Joan Lippincott of the Coalition of Networked Information (CNI). There were twenty people in attendance who are leaders of, or who have had experience with, collaborative networks; attendees were knowledgeable professionals who represented various libraries and library-related organizations. A list of organizations represented at the National Dialog is included in this report.

One of the most important outcomes from the day's discussion was the validation of GPO's assumptions and FIPNet framework for preserving Government information for future generations. Recurring themes for suggested actions or approaches for a successful preservation network were identified:
- Collaboration and Need for Inclusiveness;
- Map the Preservation Landscape;
- Inventory and Bibliographic Control;
- Strategy for Acquiring Born Digital content;
- Develop and Promote Guidelines and Best Practices; and
- Develop Success measures.

GPO will implement FIPNet with the above strategies and actions in mind.

"What you're doing in the form of FIPNet, and leading a national dialogue around it, strikes me as exactly the right metaphor for the moment in history that we're at."

~ John Palfrey

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Setting the Stage

The **Principles of Government Information** guide GPO's work for the Public Information Programs of the Superintendent of Documents. They were developed by GPO in 1996 as part of the *Report to Congress: Study to Identify Measures Necessary for a Successful Transition to a More Electronic Federal Depository Library Program*. The first principle is, "The public has the right of access to Government information." The other four principles are Government obligations that ensure and support the public's right:

- Government has the obligation to disseminate and provide broad public access to its information.
- Government has an obligation to guarantee the authenticity and integrity of its information.
- Government has an obligation to preserve its information.
- Government information created or compiled by Government employees or at Government expense should remain in the public domain.

The National Dialogue focused on the principle that it is the Government's obligation to preserve its information. The historic collections of tangible Federal Government publications held by libraries of the Federal Depository Library Program (FDLP) and Federal agencies, and the born digital Federal information of today are a priceless information asset for the American people. This information tells the story of our Republic through Government works produced during the more than two hundred years of our history. Accessible Government information is a public good that can improve the quality of life for the American people. It advances government efficiency, improves accountability, and fuels private sector innovation, scientific discovery, and economic growth. Yet, this information asset is vulnerable to decay, neglect, obsolescence, damage, theft, and content degradation. A network of partners working cooperatively to preserve Federal Government information will ensure that this information asset remains freely accessible to the American citizenry both now and for future generations.

In January 2013 after a ten month study, of the then Government Printing Office (GPO), the National Academy of Public Administration (NAPA) issued its report, *Rebooting the Government Printing Office: Keeping America Informed in the Digital Age*.[1] It provided recommendations to strengthen GPO and its transformation for the digital age. Among the recommendations NAPA made was for GPO to develop a comprehensive plan to preserve the historical print collection of Government documents through digitization and ingest into FDsys, a preservation repository. FDsys conforms to ISO 14721, the Open Archival Information System Reference Model for preservation and access. GPO accepted the NAPA recommendations and is committed to implementing them.

At the time the NAPA study was undertaken, GPO was already in the midst of the FDLP Forecast Study.[2] The Forecast Study, now complete, was an important research initiative to gather data in order for GPO to better understand the pressing issues, goals, and viewpoints of depositories;

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[1] The full NAPA report is available from: http://www.gpo.gov/pdfs/about/GPO_NAPA_Report_FINAL.pdf.
[2] In 2012 a study of libraries in the Federal Depository Library Program (FDLP) was undertaken to assess the needs of depository libraries and to determine how they viewed the future and ideal FDLP. More information about the study, including the final report, is available from: http://www.fdlp.gov/project-list/fdlp-forecast-study.

document the needs, vision, and environment in which individual depositories exist at the state level; and obtain a clear vision, based on consensus, about the FDLP's future direction. One of the major findings of the Study is that many libraries look to preservation to ensure that access is reliable and that content remains available into the future. And depositories want GPO to coordinate and lead this effort.

To build a sustainable preservation model GPO took into consideration the parameters included in the NAPA report recommendations, what was learned from depository libraries during the FDLP Forecast Study, and preservation best practices. The model had to have the following attributes:
- Collaborative;
- No additional responsibilities for FDLs;
- Leverage activities already undertaken;
- Flexible/Scalable;
- Partners beyond the FDLP; and
- Within GPO's statutory and regulatory guidance.

The result, GPO's **Federal Information Preservation Network (FIPNet)**. FIPNet is a strategic initiative to expand FDLP library collections and the content for GPO's Cataloging and Indexing Program (C&I) comprehensive index of Government information, or the National Bibliography, while at the same time guaranteeing the public long-term access to the Government's publications and information from libraries, Government entities, coalitions, and organizations working to ensure free access for future generations. GPO in collaboration with its FIPNet partners will contribute to the preservation of both tangible and digital Government information.

The distributed collection of Government information to be preserved is referred to as the National Collection of U.S. Government Information and its scope is the corpus of Federal Government information dissemination products, regardless of format or medium, that have been paid for with Federal funds. Declassified materials and materials whose privacy considerations have expired are included within scope of the National Collection. In developing the preservation plan GPO made several assumptions:
- The Principles of Government Information adopted by GPO in 1996 remain valid for the digital age.
- Government information is a national asset and library collections of tangible and digital Government content are valuable to ensuring an informed citizenry.
- The Federal Depository Library Program continues to be relevant in the digital age.
- No one library or institution can do all that is required to preserve the entire corpus of Government information.
- GPO will lead and coordinate a government-wide strategy for managing the life cycle of the comprehensive collection of tangible and digital Government information.
- Collaboration and partnerships with Federal depository libraries, Federal agencies, and with additional public and private sector entities are necessary to accomplish lifecycle management of tangible and digital Government information.
- Geographically dispersed collections of tangible publications and redundancy of digital files are necessary to ensure local access to Federal Government information.

The Dialogue

While GPO's plan to preserve tangible and digital Government information had been discussed with the depository library community since the spring of 2014, the summer 2015 Annual Meeting of the American Library Association provided an opportunity to have a discussion and obtain feedback on the plan from stakeholders representing the broader library community.

The National Dialogue was co-sponsored by GPO and the University of California Hastings College of the Law Library. Joan Lippincott of the Coalition of Networked Information (CNI) facilitated the three and a half hour discussion. The afternoon's program began with welcomes by Provost and Academic Dean of UC Hastings College of the Law Elizabeth Hillman, and Superintendent of Documents Mary Alice Baish, and opening remarks by John Palfrey, Head of School at Phillips Academy in Andover, MA and former executive director of the Berkman Center for Internet and Society. There were twenty people in attendance who are leaders of, or who have had experience with, collaborative networks; attendees were knowledgeable professionals who represented various libraries and library-related organizations.

SUMMATION OF JOHN PALFREY'S OPENING REMARKS

It's on all of us – we as citizens in the broadest sense, "to support libraries as they make this crucial transition from predominantly an analog era to a digital era" Palfrey began. He asked, how do we keep doing all the wonderful things libraries have done for so long, while adding new and wonderful things that can and should be done in the digital era? Though optimistic he cautions, that if we don't do this right, in the digital age we could end up with less access. Palfrey referred to the challenges of privacy, first-sale doctrine and copyright, shedding (what will you stop doing?), and sustainability of a volunteer network.

Palfrey went on to say that this national dialogue on preservation is important because it is addressing exactly the core work that all of us think is so important. He doesn't believe the Federal depository system ought to go away; it has worked so well in a collaborative way and historically it has been so effective. In fact Palfrey said, the FDLP "needs to be bolstered and continued. It's not sufficient for the digital era. It's not enough, much as the existing library statute is not enough or the existing activities of any of our individual libraries …"

We're here today to figure out the conceptual work and how "to bring forward this program that's been so successful for so long and let's do it in a way that it's going to be highly networked and highly digital and highly attuned to the opportunities and the challenges of the digital age."

Palfrey's quick reaction to FIPNet was, "I think it's awesome!" And the right direction. He identified three important positive aspects of FIPNet:
- The premise of collaboration;
- It advances both access and preservation for the long run; and
- It provides for mass amount of digitized content accessible for children to learn to be good citizens – bedrock work that is necessary for a democratic society.

DISCUSSION

The discussion was organized into three topics: Making the Case for FIPNet, Preservation of and Access to Federal Information, and Identifying Preservation Solutions.

DISCUSSION TOPIC 1: MAKING THE CASE FOR FIPNET

Dr. Martin Halbert, Dean of Libraries and Associate Professor at the University of North Texas, introduced this discussion topic by asserting "the information of the United States government will always be of enduring importance and significance culturally, economically, historically and scientifically because of the sheer scale of the government, its unique centrality to our nation, its simultaneously singular and plural institutional character, and our enormous and ongoing shared social investment in it as a country and a people."

Halbert noted that making the case for FIPNet begins with three broad issues that are simultaneously challenges and opportunities:

Challenge 1:   Funding and the priorities that libraries face in making the transition from print to digital.

Challenge 2:   Building and maintaining digital expertise and infrastructure.

Challenge 3:   Organizing collective action and scale.

To begin the first discussion topic, participants were asked about gaps in preservation and access to Federal information that add to our risk levels, and what they were doing to mitigate this risk. It was noted that significant risk factors exist for both tangible and digital Government information. The first risk mentioned was the absence of a comprehensive bibliography of U.S. Government publications. This presents a variety of problems and challenges including identifying the corpus of Government information for which preservation is needed, determining the condition of the materials, setting priorities for digitization, and collaboratively managing the national collection to ensure access.

Another identified risk was "not necessarily having an agenda or a sense of a map of the various efforts that all contribute to solving the problem." A related risk mentioned was the lack of identification of the most critical content to address first. One attendee put it this way, "We cannot digitize everything at once. Not everything has equal value ... to make this successful, we have to have some kind of process to prioritize as we move forward."

It was pointed out, and there was much agreement, that while we know that digitizing the historical collection of Government documents and information products is very important, a bigger risk is the loss of born digital content. This content is not distributed in any coherent manner; it goes up on an agency's website, and it goes away. To prevent a "digital black hole" and to create a sustainable access and preservation program we need to figure out "how to retools our organizations and our collaborations around the notion of moving from print to digital."

Collaborative digitization projects, shared best practices for digitization among stakeholder partners, and leadership from GPO and others working collaboratively to set priorities for developing digital collections of Government information are needed as well.

DISCUSSION TOPIC 2: PRESERVATION OF AND ACCESS TO FEDERAL INFORMATION

The aim of the second topic of discussion was to gain a better understanding of the priority of preservation of and access to Federal information from the perspective of the institutions and organizations represented by attendees.

Representatives from University of California System, Committee on Institutional Cooperation (CIC), HathiTrust, Association of Southeastern Research Libraries (ASERL), Center for Research Libraries (CRL), and OCLC described their collaborative preservation efforts. All have made a commitment to preservation of the print publications, though the levels of commitment vary.

Issues with Google scanning were raised as was the need for an inventory or catalog—the need to track who has what, how many copies there are, what has been digitized, who can discard, and what can be put into remote or centralized storage. This lead to a discussion of the need for national policies and standards for digitization and metadata and the need for collaboration with various stakeholders in their development. And this circled back to the need to map the preservation landscape.

The observation was made that "there is not anywhere near the same level of systematic efforts to try to preserve digital information in the Federal sphere like there is in the print sphere." The desire to see preservation of Federal digital assets made a national priority was expressed, along with the need to leverage our efforts and coordinate. The need to identify the best way to orchestrate this was conveyed. Involving the agency publishers in the collaboration was suggested.

Most of the day's discussion related to preservation. We're preserving for public access. It was pointed out that it is often difficult to justify the value of these efforts if their use cannot be seen or understood. The suggestion was made to employ case studies of how digitized materials are used. Many organizations have longstanding policy statements about access to Government information. The value of the distributed model of Federal depository libraries was recognized and viewed as a feature not be lost in the digital age. A willingness was expressed to request or seek Federal or private funding to support access and preservation of Government information.

DISCUSSION TOPIC 3: IDENTIFYING PRESERVATION SOLUTIONS: OPPORTUNITIES FOR COLLABORATION AND PARTNERSHIP

Chuck Eckman, Dean of Libraries at the University of Miami, introduced this discussion topic by describing some of the collaborative preservation efforts in which his library participates. He finds the collaborative model quite compelling, stating "ongoing collaboration can really streamline the ways in which we get access to content, making it discoverable and useable and doing it in a sustainable way." From the administrator viewpoint, collaboration reduces the risk of failure, reduces institutional investment, and creates a context for inspiring support from management, and acts as a bridge that "ties institutional imperatives," which Eckman believes is really important as libraries transition to digital. "We know how to preserve digital information. It requires active professional engagement at regular intervals to migrate, refresh and back up the content. And many partner hands are required." The "many partners model" of FIPNet lends itself to a promising successful future.

Discussion began by responding to a question about recognizing existing collaborative preservation efforts and if they might benefit from additional partners or resources – could they be "low-hanging fruit" and further collaboration be encouraged? It was noted that a key word there was *resources* – and the continual cry of the need for more. "But until you really know what the resource need is, it's hard to talk about that." It was suggested that funding Federal agencies be looked at to determine if there are any funding collaborations for them. It was further suggested that the few Federal agencies that provide grants and other funding for preservation collaborate to "build an argument to Congress for additional funding."

While there currently is collaboration in a variety of preservation areas, many local efforts are not known outside of their regions. Conversation circled back to the need to map the preservation landscape as it would provide a way of assessing what's being accomplished and by whom. This mapping effort would also identify gaps and potential opportunities for collaboration and future growth. Federal agency collaboration was raised once again, with the possibility of determining the landscape and developing principles and priorities for preservation put forward.

Collaborative partnerships can and should start small and provide opportunities for participation and incremental growth. Participants warned that attempts at a large-scale, one-size-fits-all, national effort will likely fail. A recommended approach to move forward is to test the model on a small scale, show successes, and then expand the model.

A number of different collaborative models were mentioned, including ASERL's (Association of Southeastern Research Libraries) Centers of Excellence, the University of California System, Digital the Public Library of America, and the End-of-Term Crawl. Participants in the National Dialogue asserted that a key part of the success and sustainability of FIPNet would be through keeping the governance of FIPNet so that the widest possible number of stakeholders can participate and "operate at the level or the way that fits all these other models they are trying to cope with at their own institutions ... we should create an environment that allows for and accepts all that difference."

Leadership will be required from GPO to facilitate partnerships and work with stakeholders within academia, government, and the public to make the case for preserving Government information and that the lack of preservation and access to government information is a barrier to the vision of open government. As a part of its leadership, GPO should promote best practices and develop the means for how partners can contribute to digitization, web harvesting, cataloging, content hosting, and other FIPNet preservation roles.

"In addition to working with the community groups, I think it's really important to tell a story that the public can understand ... ultimately, for this to take hold, it has to be a public issue and the public has to understand what is at risk." It's not enough for just librarians to fight the preservation battle, preservation of Government information has to be on the public's agenda.

Attendees believed the National Dialogue was beneficial and that additional dialogue sessions with other stakeholder groups similar to this one should be held to gain additional perspectives and support.

Outcomes

VALIDATION

One of the most important outcomes from the day's discussion was the validation of GPO's assumptions and FIPNet framework for preserving Government information for future generations.

MAJOR THEMES

Recurring themes for suggested actions or approaches for a successful preservation network were identified:

Collaboration:

The preservation and access challenge is too great for one institution or organization to do it alone. Resources and knowledge are multiplied when many stakeholders participate together. Just as collections of Government information are geographically spread across the United States, the people who manage these collections and the user communities they serve must have a voice in the success of current and future plans for maintaining permanent public access to the collection in all formats.

Map the Preservation Landscape:

Many libraries across the U.S. are engaged in a variety of strategies to maintain permanent public access to Government information collections. Mapping the landscape of these local level efforts is a way to elevate an awareness of the contribution of local institutions, join like-minded libraries together in collaborative partnerships, assess gaps in the preservation of the national collection, and set cost-effective plans for preserving tangible publications, digitizing publications for preservation and access, and harvesting and preserving Federal Web content.

Inventory and Bibliographic Control:

Government information has been recognized by a variety of stakeholders and noted by President Obama as a "national asset." It is impossible to manage valuable information assets without first being able to account for what they are, describe them, know where they are held, and how they are being managed. Bringing the national collection inventory under bibliographic control is of the utmost importance.

Born Digital Content

A huge risk is the loss of born digital or web-based Government content. It goes up on an agency's website, and it goes away. We must collaborate in a strategic manner to prevent a "digital black hole" of Government information.

Develop and Promote Guidelines and Best Practices:

"We have to figure out ways of assisting other organizations through FIPNet by broadening the base of digital library expertise … and jump starting their progress more quickly and affordably." This can be facilitated by the development and promotion of guidelines, standards, best practices, and responsibilities for the various FIPNet partnership opportunities.

Need for Inclusiveness:

Participants noted the success of FIPNet will require providing a way for local preservation efforts to contribute to the national preservation effort without constraints of trying to decide which collections or information formats are the highest priority for preservation. Participants

noted that there are many differing perspectives and opinions about whether tangible publications, collection digitization, or harvesting web content should be the priority focus of preservation. However, what everyone does agree upon is that Government information is an asset; there is a shared goal that it needs to be preserved for future generations.

Appendices

Federal Information Preservation Network (FIPNet):
A National Dialogue

Co-Sponsored by the U.S. Government Publishing Office (GPO)
and the UC Hastings College of the Law Library

San Francisco, CA
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1:00　　　**Welcome and Overview**
- Welcome
  Elizabeth Hillman, Provost and Academic Dean
  UC Hastings College of Law
  Mary Alice Baish, Superintendent of Documents
  Government Publishing Office (GPO)
  Joan Lippincott, Facilitator
- Participant Introductions
- Opening Remarks
  John Palfrey, Director
  Berkman Center for Internet & Society

1:20　　　**Setting the Stage (GPO)**
- Purpose of Meeting
- Vision of the Federal Information Preservation Network (FIPNet)

1:40　　　**Making a Case for FIPNet**
- Introduction
  Martin Halbert, Dean of Libraries and Associate Professor
  University of North Texas
- Addressing Risk Factors
- Identifying Gaps
- Supporting Key Stakeholders

2:30　　　**Break**

2:45　　　**Preservation of and Access to Federal Information**
- Where does this fit with your organization's priorities?
- Building community support for FIPNet as a national priority

3:15　　　**Identifying Preservation Solutions: Opportunities for Collaboration and Partnership, etc.**
- Introduction
  Maura Marx, Acting Director
  Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS)
- Benefits and Challenges of a Collective Effort
- Success Stories
- Other approaches

4:00　　　**Wrap Up and Next Steps**

Organizations Represented at the National Dialogue

American Library Association Washington Office, Office for Information Technology Policy

Association of Southeastern Research Libraries

Berkman Center for Internet & Society

California Digital Library

Center for Research Libraries

Chief Officers of State Library Agencies

Coalition for Networked Information

Committee on Institutional Cooperation

Depository Library Council

Digital Public Library of America

Institute of Museum and Library Services

Ithaka S+R

Library of Congress

OCLC Research

University of California Hastings College of the Law

University of Georgia

University of Miami

University of North Texas

U.S. Government Publishing Office

To ensure access to Federal Government information for future generations

A national network dedicated to the preservation of both tangible and digital Federal Government information that elevates public awareness of Government information collections and their governing agencies and institutions.
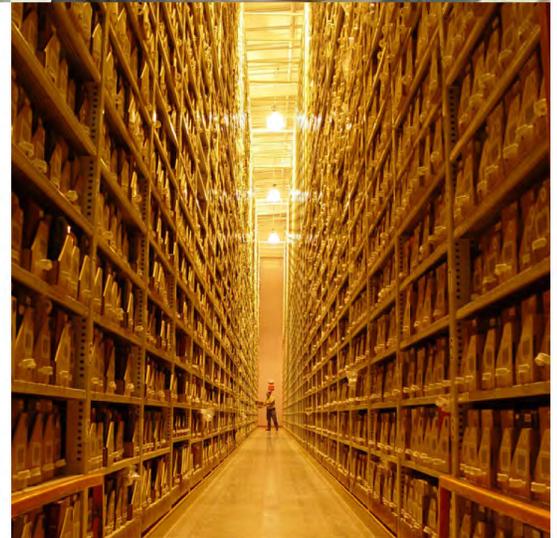
To ensure access to Federal Government information for future generations

What is the Federal Information Preservation Network (FIPNet)?

The U.S. Government Publishing Office's (GPO) **Federal Information Preservation Network (FIPNet)** is a strategy for a collaborative network of information professionals working in various partner roles to ensure access to the national collection of Government information for future generations. **FIPNet** contributes to the preservation of both tangible and digital Government information, and elevates the public awareness and prestige of local initiatives, specific collections of Government information, and the institutions and agencies that have stewardship over them.

Why is FIPNet necessary?

The historic collection of tangible Federal Government publications and the born digital Federal information of today are a priceless information asset for the American people. This information tells the story of the work of our democracy in action over the more than two hundred years of our history. Yet, this information asset is vulnerable to decay, neglect, obsolescence, damage, theft, and content degradation. A network of partners working cooperatively to preserve Federal Government information will ensure that this information asset remains freely accessible to the American people both now and for future generations.

Who can participate in FIPNet?

The FIPNet is open to participation from:

- Federal depository libraries
- The Library of Congress
- National Archives and Records Administration
- U.S. national libraries
- Federal agencies
- Library consortia
- Associations
- Public and private sector enterprises
- Others interested in Government information preservation

Participants will work in partnership with GPO to ensure access to Federal Government information for future generations.

What roles will partners play?

There are numerous opportunities for interested stakeholders to participate in and contribute to the preservation of Government information. These partners may elect to work with GPO on one or more of the following preservation activities:

- Cataloging and metadata creation
- Digitization and content conversion
- Harvesting Web content
- Hosting digital content
- Storing physical copies
- Condition assessment
- Conservation
- Other innovative activities that support preservation

How will the collaboration work?

GPO will provide leadership and expertise, leveraging local preservation efforts already underway. GPO will assist stakeholders in finding partners and help develop or expand local preservation initiatives. GPO will provide the necessary coordination and the context needed to integrate these projects into a national preservation network. Local participation and decentralization are key to the success of the **FIPNet**.

How will FIPNet be governed?

Leadership, direction, and coordination of **FIPNet** will come from the U.S. Government Publishing Office with advice and guidance provided by an advisory board of FIPNet's participants.

Where are we now?

GPO is planning and developing important components of the **FIPNet**, and implementing strategies. **FIPNet** is an investment to protect a national asset. This is a significant long-term collaborative effort. We seek potential partners looking for opportunities to work with GPO in various roles. If you have a project already underway or are planning a project that meets the objectives of the **Federal Information Preservation Network**, please contact us at the email address below.

GPO

For additional information, visit **www.gpo.gov/PreserveFedInfo** or contact us via email at **PreserveFedInfo@gpo.gov**.

4/2015