GPO

Style Manual

An official guide to the form and style of Federal Government publishing | **2016**

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AUTHENTICATED U.S. GOVERNMENT INFORMATION GPO

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The Director of the Government Publishing Office shall determine the form and style in which the printing or binding ordered by a department is executed, and the material and the size of type used, having proper regard to economy, workmanship, and the purposes for which the work is needed.

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AMENDMENTS

2014—Pub. L. 113–235 substituted "Director of the Government Publishing Office" for "Public Printer".

About This Manual

The GPO Style Manual, as it is popularly known, is issued under the authority of section 1105 of title 44 of the U.S. Code, which requires the Director of the GPO to "determine the form and style in which the printing . . . ordered by a department is executed, . . . having proper regard to economy, workmanship, and the purposes for which the work is needed." The Manual is prepared by the GPO Style Board, composed of proofreading, printing, and Government documents specialists from within GPO, where all congressional publications and many other key Government documents are prepared.

The first GPO Style Manual appeared in 1894. It was developed originally as a printer's stylebook to standardize word and type treatment, and it remains so today. Through successive editions, however, the Manual has come to be widely recognized by writers and editors both within and outside the Federal Government as one of the most useful resources in the editorial arsenal. And now in the 21st century, writers and editors are using the Manual in the preparation of the informational content of Government publications that appear in digital formats.

Writers and editors whose disciplines have taught them aspects of style different from those found in the GPO Style Manual will appreciate the difficulty of establishing a single standard. Users of this Manual should consider it instead as a general guide. Its rules cannot be regarded as rigid, for the printed word assumes many shapes and variations in final presentation, and usage changes over time as language evolves. Periodically the Manual is updated, as this edition has been, to eliminate obsolete standards, update form and usage, and adjust the guidance for document preparation and appearance to current custom.

Comments and suggestions from users of the GPO Style Manual are welcomed. All such correspondence may be emailed to the GPO Style Board at gpostyle@gpo.gov.

A digital version of this Manual appears on GPO's **govinfo** at https://www.govinfo.gov/gpo-style-manual. Revisions and updates are made to the online version of this Manual periodically. Accordingly, that document rather than the printed edition should be consulted as the most up-to-date version available.

For the purposes of the GPO Style Manual, examples provided throughout both the printed and digital versions are to be given the same weight as the enumerated rules.

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GPO's Digital Information Initiatives

In the digital age, GPO is responsible for providing public access to the digital versions of many of the official documents it prints, as well as—to the greatest extent possible—the digital versions of Government publications that are not printed but are otherwise made available on other Federal websites. GPO recognizes that a Federal author today often begins the content creation process at a computer, and frequently publishes the final document to the web without creating a print version that will make its way to a user's hands or a library's shelves.

GPO Access

To accommodate this transition in Federal publishing strategies while preserving GPO's core responsibility for ensuring public access to Government publications, Congress enacted Public Law 103–40, the Government Printing Office Electronic Information Access Enhancement Act of 1993, which required GPO to establish access to key Government publications in digital format and provide a system of storage to ensure permanent public access to the information they contain. Opened to the public in 1994, the resulting website, *GPO Access*, was GPO's entrance into the digital age. In 2003, the National Archives and Records Administration formally recognized GPO as an affiliate archive for the digital content on the *GPO Access* site. *GPO Access* operated for 15 years before it was retired following the introduction of GPO's Federal Digital System (FDsys).

Federal Digital System (FDsys)

To meet continued public demand for access to digital Government publications, provide for an increased range of search and retrieval options, and ensure the preservation of official Government information content in the 21st century, GPO embarked on the construction of a more comprehensive online capability, called the Federal Digital System, or FDsys, available at www.fdsys.gov.

FDsys was launched as a beta website in 2009 and permanently replaced *GPO Access* in 2011. FDsys provides free access to hundreds of thousands

of official Federal Government publications in digital format from all three branches of the Federal Government, including congressional bills, the Congressional Record, the Federal Register, the Compilation of Presidential Documents, the U.S. Code, the Code of Federal Regulations, and opinions from more than 100 Federal courts. In 2016, GPO reached a milestone of two billion retrievals of digital Government information from FDsys (the equivalent of nine retrievals per second over seven years of operation).

govinfo beta website

In February 2016, GPO launched the next generation of digital public access, **govinfo** (at www.govinfo.gov) as a public beta website to eventually replace the FDsys public website. **govinfo** is a redesign of FDsys featuring a modern, easy-to-use look and feel that syncs with the need of today's Government information users for quick and effective digital access across a variety of digital platforms. It was developed with a focus on implementing feedback from users and improving overall search and access to FDsys content. The redesigned, mobile-friendly website incorporates state-of-the-art innovative technologies and includes several new features for an overall enhanced user experience. **govinfo** is the new front door to accessing the same official, preserved content that GPO has made available through *GPO Access* and FDsys for more than two decades.

The key new features of **govinfo** include the capability to link related content, new ways to browse content, a new open-source search engine, enhancements to the search filters, and more options for sharing pages and content on social media.

Digital preservation

Content in FDsys and **govinfo** is preserved to ensure permanent availability in electronic form. As a preservation repository, GPO follows archival system standards to ensure long-term preservation and access to digital content. GPO's digital stewardship vision is to operate a standards-based preservation repository and to implement user-friendly, responsive, and innovative technologies to ensure that all archived content information can be obtained, rendered, used, and understood by the designated community into the future.

In 2015, GPO began pursuing certification of its flagship system as a Trustworthy Digital Repository for Government information under ISO 16363: Audit and Certification of Trustworthy Digital Repositories.

Authentication of digital documents

The increasing use of documents in digital format poses a special challenge in verifying authenticity, because digital technology makes such documents easy to alter or copy in unauthorized or illegitimate ways. GPO assures users that the publications available from GPO websites are as official and authentic as publications that have been printed by GPO for many years. GPO digital systems operate with established trust relationships between all parties in digital transactions. A visible digital signature, viewed as the GPO Seal of Authenticity signified by an eagle, verifies document integrity and authenticity on GPO online Federal documents. The visible digital signature on PDF documents on FDsys and **govinfo** signifies a guarantee that the information in the document is official, authentic, and secure.

XML bulk data repository

Since the launch of FDsys, GPO has worked with partners in the legislative and executive branches to expand the availability of Government information content in support of an open and transparent government. One such effort involves making content available in machine-readable Extensible Markup Language (XML) format for bulk download. The effort began in 2009 and has grown to nine collections now available through GPO's bulk data repository at www.gpo.gov/fdsys/bulkdata. The repository features data collections including text, summary, and status information for bills introduced in the House of Representatives and the Senate, the annual official and unofficial digital versions of the Code of Federal Regulations, the Federal Register, the U.S. Government Manual, and the Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States.

Information available on GPO's XML bulk data repository helps maximize the ways this data can be used or repurposed by users. Making information available in XML permits data to be reused and repurposed for mobile web applications, data mashups, and other analytical tools by third-party providers, contributing to efforts supporting openness and transparency in government.

Catalog of U.S. Government Publications (CGP)

GPO is responsible for creating a catalog and index for all public documents published by the Federal Government that are not confidential in character. This work serves libraries and the public nationwide and enables people to locate desired Government publications in all formats. The public interface for accessing these cataloging records is the Catalog of U.S. Government Publications (CGP), which is available in digital format at http://catalog.gpo.gov. Using the CGP, anyone can freely access descriptive information for historical and current Government publications as well as digital links to their full content. Print versions of U.S. Government publications may be found by contacting a Federal depository library: https://catalog.gpo.gov/fdlpdir/FDLPdir.jsp.

Ben's Guide to the U.S. Government

Ben's Guide, available at http://bensguide.gpo.gov, provides learning tools for K–12 students, parents, and educators. The site provides age-specific explanations about how the Federal Government works, explains the use of the primary source materials available on FDsys and **govinfo**, and explains GPO's role in the Federal Government.

Online U.S. Government Bookstore

Government information users may also locate and order publications available for sale in both print and digital—including eBook—formats through GPO's Publication and Information Sales Program. Orders may be placed online securely at https://bookstore.gpo.gov.

Applicability of the GPO Style Manual to digital publications

The rules of grammar, spelling, punctuation, and related matters, as stated in this Manual, will serve well when preparing documents for digital access. Most of the documents on FDsys and **govinfo** are derived from databases used in the printing of Government publications. As the availability of Government publications in digital formats continues to grow, the rules as stated in this Manual will continue to be GPO's standard for all document preparation, whether for conventional printing or digital access.