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3 different releases
of documents by the
Office of Manage-
ment and Budget in
FY 2001 in both
print and online
formats.***

Declining publications sales have resulted primarily from the public's increased ability to access Government publications free of charge over the Internet, including most prominently nearly 225,000 Government titles available on *GPO Access*. Nearly 31 million documents are being retrieved by the public every month from *GPO Access*. *GPO Access* features a number of regulatory information titles, such as the *Federal Register* and the *Code of Federal Regulations*, that once were the mainstays of bookstore sales. While a number of bookstores continue to generate net income, there are others whose sales have been declining and which have been operating at a loss.

The San Francisco, Boston, and Philadelphia bookstores were selected for closing due to their financial profiles. Although generating net income, the McPherson Square bookstore's sales were declining and Washington, DC, was the only city in the Nation with more than one bookstore. The McPherson Square bookstore began operations in 1987, the Boston bookstore began in 1970, the San Francisco bookstore in 1969, and the Philadelphia bookstore in 1977.

The employees at the McPherson Square bookstore and one employee from the San Francisco bookstore were transferred to GPO's Central Office. A Boston employee was transferred to GPO's Boston regional procurement office, and two Philadelphia employees were transferred to the Philadelphia regional procurement office. One employee each in San Francisco and Boston retired. The remaining

San Francisco employee found another Federal job through the hiring preference provided by Federal reduction-in-force (RIF) procedures, while 2 Philadelphia employees faced RIF procedures. GPO personnel staff provided assistance to these employees.

GPO has worked closely with the congressional delegations for each bookstore area, and with the local media, to point out that the bookstore closings will not deprive local citizens of access to Government information. In addition to *GPO Access*, information can still be purchased from GPO by phone, fax, mail, and online, and there are multiple Federal depository library collections in San Francisco, Boston, Washington, DC, and Philadelphia that provide public access to Government documents.

GPO Hosts Release of Federal Budget Documents

GPO hosted 3 different releases of budget documents by the Office of Management and Budget in FY 2001 in both print and online formats.

The first publication was the *FY 2002 Economic Outlook, Highlights from FY 1994 to FY 2001, FY 2002 Baseline Projections*, released on January 16, 2001. Issued in the last week of President Clinton's administration, the publication summarized historical data and provided estimates of the economy's direction. The second publication was *A Blueprint for New Beginnings: A Responsible Budget for America's Priorities*. It was released on February 28, 2001, to provide general information about the

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budget being prepared by President Bush's administration. The full, traditional *Budget of the U.S. Government* was published on April 9, 2001.

Fourth Biennial Report on GPO Access Released

The fourth *Biennial Report to Congress on the Status of GPO Access* was released by GPO in December 2001. The report was transmitted to Congress in accordance with section 4103 of Title 44, U.S.C., and was made available on *GPO Access*.

According to the report, the information resources on *GPO Access* cover all three branches of Government, and include the *Congressional Record* and all major congressional publications, the *Federal Register* and *Code of Federal Regulations*, the *United States Code*, and other key Government documents. The databases also include such noteworthy publications as the *Budget of the United States Government*, *Countering the Changing Threat of International Terrorism -- The Report of the National Commission on Terrorism*, the *Public Papers of the Presidents*, and the *Energy Citations Database*.

As of December 2001, *GPO Access* provided public access to approximately 225,000 titles through links to more than 130,000 titles on GPO servers and more than 94,000 additional titles on other Federal agency Web sites. Recent statistics indicate that *GPO Access* fulfills approximately 31 million document retrievals per month, with a total of more than 355 million retrievals during fiscal year 2001 alone.

Since the last *Biennial Report* in 1999, *GPO Access* has added new applications and publications, and improved several existing applications. Numerous system enhancements have also been made, including the implementation of a distributed caching service, the monitoring of referrals from other Web sites, and improvements to the GPO's Online Bookstore. In addition, a LISTSERV mailing list server has been brought online, with *GPO Access* offering automated e-mail notification service for a range of publications carried by the Superintendent of Documents Sales Program. Since September 11, initial steps have been taken to develop a *GPO Access* mirror site in a geographically removed location.

The report notes that the cost of *GPO Access* has been significantly lower than was originally estimated by the Congressional Budget Office (CBO) in the legislation creating the system (Pub. L. 103-40). CBO estimated that creating and operating the online system would cost approximately \$6 million in appropriated funds over the first 5 years. In addition, CBO said the provision of free online access to Federal depository libraries would cost another \$2 million to \$10 million per year in appropriated funds and that, beginning in FY 1995, GPO would incur annual costs of \$750,000 to keep the directory of publications current and to maintain the electronic storage facility. In fact, the total cost of *GPO Access* has been \$19 million since it began operations in 1994, 61% less than the high range of the estimate.

The report cites high levels of customer satisfaction with *GPO Access*, noting that in