

**The House Subcommittee on Legislative Appropriations and the Senate Subcommittee on Legislative Branch Appropriations** (Committees on Appropriations) held their annual hearings on GPO's funding request for Fiscal Year (FY) 1998, in February and June 1997, respectively. GPO presented information to Congress related to its state-of-the-art electronic prepress systems, characterized by a complex of direct linkages to a variety of Congressional offices for data interchange. Once considered only the by-product of the print production process, digitized electronic databases of Congressional information are now the primary product: they are the databases from which the official versions of documents are produced in print, CD-ROM, and online access mediums.

GPO's electronic systems provide Congress and the taxpayers with a number of advantages. They provide a standardized system for use by both Houses of Congress, resulting in compatibility of production processes and uniformity in the resulting products. They provide for the interchangeable use of databases to produce different congressional publications. Finally, they facilitate both production and dissemination. Our use of electronic information technologies has substantially reduced the real cost of congressional products. In FY 1978, GPO's appropriation for Congressional printing was \$84.6 million, the equivalent in today's dollars of \$209.5 million. By comparison, GPO's approved FY 1997 funding was \$81.7 million, a reduction of nearly two-thirds in real economic terms. This has yielded savings to the taxpayer of well over \$100 million per year.

In March 1997, the **Joint Committee on Printing** (JCP) conducted its annual oversight hearing. A significant issue for GPO is the effort to revise Title 44, U.S. Code, *Public Printing and Documents*, the statute that governs Federal printing; the JCP has undertaken a major role in the process to update this law. GPO addressed some of the core issues during the oversight hearing. Of critical importance is the lack of complete information about all Federal printing and publications activities and costs. A significant portion of printing bypasses the GPO, which can lead to higher printing costs to the taxpayer. The benefits of procuring printing through GPO are that Federal

agencies will have the advantage of a cost-effective centralized printing procurement operation, Federal publications are disseminated to Federal depository libraries, and substantial savings occur. GPO provided comments to the JCP during the year on various proposed revisions.

The **Senate Committee on Rules and Administration** held a hearing in April 1997 regarding the proposed revisions to Title 44. GPO, in its testimony, supported the four revision objectives: (1) resolving the constitutional separation of powers issue; (2) establishing an effective compliance mechanism; (3) ensuring public access and protecting the Federal Depository Library Program (FDLP); and (4) dealing with new information technologies. In its testimony, GPO also expressed views opposing the transfer of the agency to the Executive Branch and other issues that would undermine GPO's viability as an agency if transferred. The constitutional issue is not where GPO is located, but rather what is the appropriateness of the JCP's control of Executive Branch and GPO operations. Transferring JCP's authorities to the Public Printer would leave GPO's operations intact, and continue to require that all Government printing be performed through GPO.

The **House Subcommittee on Government Management, Information, and Technology** (Committee on Government Reform and Oversight), in May 1997, discussed GPO's role in Federal information dissemination. GPO provided information on its support function, including its use of electronics to support a print-on-demand system located in the Senate Document Room that has reduced the requirement for printing extra copies of Senate documents for storage. This system is networked to Congressional databases resident at GPO.

Federal agencies are turning more to GPO for assistance in the management of their publications and related information products through all stages of the information life cycle: the creation and/or collection of information, processing it into a product, dissemination of the product, use and storage of the product, and product disposition through archival management. Resources have been committed to assist agencies with the WWW and Internet services. GPO provides expert publishing services to support the increase in elec-

tronic publishing submissions from Federal agencies. The services include one-on-one desktop publishing consultation for correct file creation techniques; customer outreach by way of on-site digital publishing seminars; researching industry trends in digital publishing and disseminating pertinent information to agency editors/writers, printing personnel, project designers, publishers and information management personnel; and creating official publications and forms designed to make digital publishing more consistent, cost effective, and customer friendly.

The **Interagency Council on Printing and Publications Services** regularly confers with the Public Printer on matters of importance to Federal agency printing and publishing issues. Throughout FY 1997, the Council met with representatives of the JCP, GPO, and other Federal agencies. Over 25 different agencies sent representatives to Council sessions throughout the year. The advice provided by the Council and other meeting participants included matters dealing with improved customer relations, communication of agency needs, Congressional activities, and information dissemination.

The Public Printer and the Superintendent of Documents met twice with the **Depository Library Council**, which advises GPO on issues relating to the public access to Government information through the FDLP. The Council consists of 15 representatives of the Government information community, who serve for a term of 3 years. The Council recommended, and GPO adopted, the concept of a Collection Management Plan for electronic products within the Office of the Superintendent of Documents. The Council further endorsed the concept behind development of the Core Documents Collection, now available for free, permanent, public access via **GPO Access** service. The Council praised GPO for creating the GILS application on the **GPO Access** system. This application provides a single point of access for users to search the records of 26 executive branch agencies. GPO was further praised for developing a partnership with the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) to fulfill the Privacy Act provisions of the GILS mandate for all Federal agencies. The impressive user statistics for this application and the very positive

public comments demonstrate that this centralized point of access is a valuable means of locating electronic Government information.

In conjunction with the Spring Depository Library Council meeting, GPO conducted the Sixth Annual Federal Depository Library Conference, April 14-17, 1997, with over 550 attendees and 50 speakers. The conference featured programs on many aspects of FDLP, had numerous speakers from Federal publishing agencies, had a focus group on **GPO Access**, and facilitated networking among depository librarians. GPO's Library Programs Service (LPS) coordinated the Tenth Annual Interagency Depository Seminar held May 28-June 4, 1997. Sixty-five librarians with three or fewer years' experience as documents librarians attended the seminar. This seminar is designed as "basic training" for new documents librarians. The Regional Librarians Conference, sponsored by GPO, August 11-13 in Minneapolis, brought together regional librarians and one representative from each state without a regional library within its border to this one-time program. The conference strengthened the ability of regional libraries to provide services and to improve their own performance as "field coordinators" for the conference in their service areas.

The Public Printer, the Superintendent of Documents, and LPS staff attended and made presentations at the winter and summer conferences of the American Library Association (ALA). LPS staff also participated in ALA meetings in Maryland, Florida, and Nebraska.

With the approval of the Chairman, JCP, the **U.S. National Commission on Libraries and Information Science** entered into an interagency agreement with GPO under which the Commission will conduct an assessment of electronic Government information products. The assessment will be used to help improve public access to Government information made available to the FDLP and the general public, and will assess the cost-effectiveness and usefulness of various electronic formats. The Commission is an independent executive branch agency with the responsibility to advise the President, Congress, State and local governments, and others on national and international policies and plans for library and information services.

GPO continued its program to have **consultants** fill temporary positions within GPO's LPS to work on projects relating to GPO's transition to a more electronic FDLP. Incumbents in these positions assisted in the design, development, and enhancement of locator services in GPO's suite of Pathway Services on the GPO/Superintendent of Documents' World Wide Web site. In addition, they coordinated FDLP activities with other Federal agencies responsible for dissemination of Government information products. The incumbents, who are generally drawn from the library community, also develop policies and procedures to facilitate the transition from a paper-based program to the electronic environment.

GPO maintains close contact with the **printing industry** through its representatives. The industry's input is essential for the successful operation of GPO's printing procurement operations. GPO convened a seminar for Federal agency personnel featuring representatives of printing firms who discussed the capabilities of the industry in providing for the agencies' information product needs. As with the libraries, GPO views its relationship with the printing industry as a part-

nership in which GPO works cooperatively to achieve the lowest possible cost for Government printing for the taxpayer.

An effective liaison exists with the **information industry** through its representatives. One of the hallmarks of Government information is that it cannot be copyrighted, and GPO is a long-standing resource for the provision of Government information products to which various businesses can add value. Until the Copyright Revision Act of 1976, GPO's statutes were the first in the Federal Government that contained a prohibition on copyrighting Government information products, and for years GPO has utilized its authority to sell reproducibles from the printing process as well as provide discounts for volume purchasers of Government publications to respond to the needs of information companies.

GPO maintains communication with widely diverse information user groups, including the scientific and technical communities, academia, legal groups, public interest groups, and others, frequently receiving input and suggestions on ways to improve public access to Government information products through its programs.