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An abiding commitment to public access to Government information is deeply rooted in our system of Government. The Government Printing Office (GPO) is one of the most visible demonstrations of that commitment. For more than a century, GPO's mission under the public printing and documents statutes of Title 44, U.S. Code, is to fulfill the needs of the Federal Government for information products and to distribute those products to the public.

Formerly, GPO's mission was accomplished through the production and procurement of traditional printing technologies. However, a generation ago we began migrating our processes to electronic technologies, and in 1993 Congress amended Title 44 with the GPO Electronic Information Access Enhancement Act of 1993 (Public Law 103-40), which requires us to disseminate Government information products online. This Act is the basis of *GPO Access*, our Internet information service.

Today, GPO is dedicated to producing, procuring, and disseminating Government information products in a wide range of mediums: print, microfiche, Compact Disc-Read Only Memory (CD-ROM), and online. In GPO, the Government has a unique asset that combines a comprehensive range of conventional production and electronic processing, procurement facilitation, and multi-format dissemination capabilities to support the information life cycle needs of Congress, Federal agencies, and the public:

- We provide print and electronic information products and services to Congress and Federal agencies through in-plant processes and the procurement of information products from the private sector. For Congress, we maintain a capability to fully support the information product needs of the legislative process, working in close cooperation with leadership offices, committees, Members, and staffs in each Chamber.
- We disseminate Government information to the public in tangible and electronic mediums through a sales program and a reimbursable program, and to Federal depository libraries nationwide where the information may be used by the public free of charge. We catalog and index Government information products so they can be identified and retrieved by users.

- We disseminate a massive volume of information online via the Internet with *GPO Access*. By September 1997, about 6.5 million documents were being downloaded monthly by the public using this system. We have strongly supported the increased dissemination of Government information in electronic formats, and *GPO Access* today is one of the leading Federal sites on the Internet. Our home page on the World Wide Web (WWW) provides free public access to more than 70 Federal databases from all three branches of the Government, a growing number of agency Government Information Locator Service (GILS) sites, and associated locator and Pathway Services. GILS is a Federal Government-wide effort to direct users to relevant information resources, and includes electronic information resources.

We provide all of our services in a non-partisan, service-oriented environment that emphasizes the primacy of the customers' requirements for timeliness, quality, security, and economy. We are committed to achieving the greatest access and equity in information dissemination through printed publications, microfiche, CD-ROM, and online information technologies. Our electronic and traditional technologies simultaneously enable us to facilitate the re-engineering of information products to satisfy the Government's changing information requirements, and to preserve and protect public access to Government information for all of our citizens.

GPO's programs reduce the need for duplicative production facilities throughout the Government, achieve significant taxpayer savings through a centralized production and procurement system, and enhance public access to Government information, which is increasingly valuable to all Americans in the Information Age.

More than a century ago, Congress in its wisdom designed a system in GPO for keeping America informed. That system continues to serve a vital purpose today.

  
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