

The Government Printing Office

Keeping America Informed

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The Government Printing Office (GPO) keeps America informed. For nearly 140 years, GPO has produced and distributed Federal Government information products. Whether providing public access to Government information online, or producing or procuring printed publications, GPO combines conventional technology with state-of-the-art methods for supporting nearly all the information needs of the Congress, Federal agencies, and the American public.

Role in Government

GPO is part of the legislative branch of the Federal Government. The Public Printer, who serves as GPO's chief officer, is nominated by the President and confirmed by the Senate. GPO operates under the authority of the public printing and documents chapters of Title 44 of the U.S. Code.

Created primarily to satisfy the printing needs of Congress, GPO today is the focal point for printing, binding, and information dissemination for the entire Federal community. In addition to Congress, approximately 130 Federal departments and agencies rely on GPO's services. Congressional documents, Federal regulations and reports, IRS tax forms, and U.S. passports—all are produced by or through GPO. At one time GPO's mission was accomplished through the production and procurement of

traditional ink-on-paper printing. Today, after more than a generation's experience with electronic printing systems, GPO is at the forefront in providing Government information through a wide range of formats, including printing, microfiche, CD-ROM, and online technology through **GPO Access** (www.access.gpo.gov).

Facilities and Personnel

Carrying out GPO's mission takes the skills and dedication of a workforce of approximately 3,200 employees nationwide. Most are based at GPO's central office facility in the Nation's Capital, making GPO the largest industrial employer in the District of Columbia. Also located in the National Capital area are two warehouses, one for paper and the other for publications. Across the country, a printing plant in Denver, 20 regional and satellite procurement offices, a distribution facility and bookstore in Pueblo, CO, and 23 other bookstores—each located in a major metropolitan area—complete GPO's overall structure.

Funding

Unlike most Federal agencies, GPO operates just like a business—it is reimbursed by its customers for the cost of the work it performs. However, GPO receives two small appropriations, one to pay for the cost of congressional printing, and the other to fund the distribution

of Government documents as required by law. These funds are provided through the annual legislative branch appropriations act, and together they comprise about 4 percent of total legislative branch appropriations. In FY 1999, GPO's revenues totaled \$765 million. GPO's finances are audited every year by an independent auditor, and every year they have received an "unqualified" opinion—the best that auditors can issue.

Procurement Services

More than 70 percent of GPO's printing revenue is from agencies for work procured by GPO from the private sector printing industry. GPO has a long-standing partnership with America's printing industry to provide for the Government's printing needs. GPO competitively buys products and services from more than 10,000 private sector firms nationwide in one of the Government's most successful procurement programs, assuring the most cost-effective use of the taxpayers' printing dollar.

In-Plant Operations and Information Technology

GPO's in-plant facility provides sophisticated electronic information systems and state-of-the-art production technologies to fully support the information product needs of Congress and Federal agencies. GPO produces the *Congressional Record* overnight when Congress is in session, and

bills, hearings, documents, reports, and committee prints are all produced in time to support Congress' legislative needs. Also produced in-plant are the *Federal Register*, the Government's official listing of final and proposed rules and regulations, as well as the *Code of Federal Regulations* and other key Government documents, such as the annual *U.S. Budget* and more than 6.7 million U.S. passports and nearly 230 million postal cards each year.

GPO either uses or sells more than 55 million pounds of paper each year, and more than an estimated 100,000 tons of paper are used annually by private sector contractors performing work for GPO. All paper used by GPO and its contractors meets Federal recycled paper requirements and all GPO printing inks utilize vegetable oil.

Beginning in the 1960's, GPO was one of the first printing organizations nationwide to pioneer the use of electronic typesetting systems in place of traditional practices. Since then, successive generations of technology have been deployed by GPO to develop electronic databases of Government information products from which publications in both print and electronic formats are produced. New computer-to-plate technology has further updated GPO's capabilities. GPO has also been a leading producer of CD-ROMs for more than a decade.

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The Government Printing Office (continued)

Through the Superintendent of Documents' programs, GPO disseminates the largest volume of U.S. Government publications and information in the world.

Today, GPO uses electronic information technology to increase efficiency in its print production processes, facilitate e-commerce in its printing procurement and documents sales programs, improve administrative and communications capabilities, and expand public access to Government information via the Internet and other electronic means. In both 1998 and 1999, GPO was named the top in-plant operation in the country by *In-Plant Graphics* magazine. Also in 1999, GPO was named by *PC Week* magazine as one of the top technology innovators in the Nation.

Superintendent of Documents

While the original job of GPO was to handle printing, responsibility for the sale and distribution of Government publications was added in 1895, when Congress passed the comprehensive printing act, which became Title 44 of the U.S. Code.

Today, through the Superintendent of Documents' programs, GPO disseminates the largest volume of U.S. Government publications and information in the world. GPO's documents carry an average price of about \$16, although many are low-cost consumer publications. Approximately 10,000 titles are available for sale to the public at any given time. These are sold principally by mail order and through 24 bookstores located in

the Washington, DC, area and around the country. Publications are also sold through the Consumer Information Center in Pueblo, CO. More than 2,500 sales orders are processed every day.

Government information in both traditional and electronic formats is also made available by GPO to more than 1,300 Federal depository libraries nationwide for the free use of the public. These libraries are designated by Members of Congress or by law as official depositories. In FY 1999, GPO distributed 16.1 million copies of approximately 40,000 tangible products in print, microform, and CD-ROM formats to depository libraries. Virtually every depository library also has access to the vast range of information made available online via **GPO Access**.

In addition, GPO distributes U.S. Government publications to more than 50 nations around the world through an International Exchange Program administered by the Library of Congress. Superintendent of Documents' programs also catalog and index Government information, distribute publications as required by law, and provide a reimbursable distribution service for other Federal agencies.

GPO Access

At the forefront of GPO's electronic information dissemination capabilities is **GPO Access**. **GPO Access** is one of the few Government Web sites established by law and one of

the longest running, beginning operation in 1994. It is virtually the only Government Web site that provides easy, one-stop, no-fee access to information from all three branches of the Government.

Today, **GPO Access** links the public to nearly 105,000 individual titles on GPO's servers and an additional 68,000 titles on other Federal Web sites. Overall, more than 520 million documents have been retrieved by the public from **GPO Access** since 1994. Monthly document retrievals today average more than 21 million, or about 924 gigabytes of information.

In 1999, **GPO Access** was selected as one of the top 50 legal research Web sites for the year by *Law Office Computing* magazine, and was named best research site for laws and best Government site overall by the newsletter *legal.online*. It was chosen as the first recipient of the American Association of Law Libraries Public Access to Government Information Award. Also in 1999, GPO and the Department of Energy jointly won a Hammer Award from Vice President Gore's National Partnership for Reinventing Government for an innovative partnership that makes thousands of DOE scientific and technical reports available to the public free of charge over **GPO Access**.

In 1998, **GPO Access** was named one of the 15 "Best Feds on the Web" by Vice President Gore and

Government Executive magazine. *Federal Computer Week* magazine said, "the GPO site stands out as an unassuming, information-rich offering." The internationally recognized management firm of Booz-Allen & Hamilton, Inc., called **GPO Access** "one of the Federal Government's largest and most active Web sites" and said that the site "has been highly successful in making Government information easily available to the public."

In 1997, **GPO Access** and the Commerce Department jointly earned a Hammer Award for creating the electronic *Commerce Business Daily*, known as *CBDNet*. Other awards have included a 1994 Technology Leadership Award and the prestigious 1995 James Madison Award from the Coalition on Government Information.

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magazine, and
was named best
research site for laws
and best Government
site overall by the
newsletter legal.online.*