



ASSOCIATION OF RESEARCH LIBRARIES

ARL Statement of Principles on the Federal Depository Library Program

October 2010

As ARL directors managing both regional and selective Federal Depository Libraries, we affirm that the federal documents collections are valuable assets of the individual libraries, the states and regions where the collections are located, and for the nation as a whole.

We also affirm that the best means of providing broad public access to these collections is through online access to digital and digitized copies. Therefore, the management of our tangible collections should include efforts to support or participate in initiatives to create a comprehensive digital collection in the public domain.

There is a strong consensus that the Superintendent of Documents should support management of federal depository library collections by identifying or creating cataloging records for the retrospective (pre-1976) publications that are included in the Federal Depository Library Program (FDLP). Combined with the records already available in the *Catalog of Government Publications*, this would provide an official definition of the contents of a comprehensive FDLP collection, both for management of tangible collections and for digitization.

In addition, we affirm the following principles regarding the Federal Depository Library Program:

1. Federal Depository Libraries may choose to do more than is required under Title 44 but they are not obligated to provide services beyond those required by the law.
2. Although Regional Federal Depository Libraries are not required by law to build retrospective collections or to replace items that are lost, stolen or damaged by a disaster, individual Regional Libraries may seek to replace missing items or build their retrospective collections to meet institutional, local, state, regional, or national needs.
3. State Plans for management of Federal documents collections should be reviewed and, where necessary, modified so that the plans do not require more services or collections than those identified in Title 44. State Plans may also identify voluntary actions that will be taken to improve access to and preservation of Federal information in the state or through regional or national collaboration.
4. Federal Depository Libraries are not required by law to provide long-term storage for digital Federal documents. GPO should identify and have certified

one or more trusted third party repositories that are not part of the Federal government for preservation of and, when necessary, access to digital Federal documents.

5. To facilitate the management of print and digital collections, cataloging records for pre-1976 documents that are part of the FDLP should be created by GPO and shared at no cost with documents libraries. Federal Depository Libraries could augment this set of records by creating records for relevant items they have obtained from other sources, though these would not necessarily become part of the official comprehensive FDLP collection.
6. There should be a distributed system for storage of print legacy collections that involves no more than 15 regionally distributed comprehensive print collections. This does not necessarily mean that there will be only 15 Regional Federal Depository Libraries. Some Regional Federal Depository Libraries may choose to remain Regionals, retaining their current print collections as required by law, and voluntarily accepting responsibility for retrospectively collecting a portion of the comprehensive legacy print collection. Selective Federal Depository Libraries, including those that were formerly Regional Federal Depository Libraries, may voluntarily accept responsibility for a portion of the comprehensive legacy print collection. By distributing this responsibility for the no more than 15 legacy print collections, many Federal Depository Libraries will participate in housing and providing access to a portion of the no more than 15 comprehensive print collections.
7. Regional Federal Depository Libraries should simplify the withdrawal process to relieve Selective Depository Libraries from the obligation to create extensive title-by-title lists in order to withdraw Federal documents. Selective Federal Depository Libraries should be able to provide a statement of the intention to weed, indicating the SuDoc Classification Stem(s) to be weeded, the date range, and the approximate number of volumes to be weeded. Processes may vary by region, but should be cost effective and efficient and further the objective of providing broad public access to these collections through online access to digitized copies. Ideally, best practices will be developed and adopted to provide consistency. This will facilitate digitization and the establishment of no more than 15 regionally distributed comprehensive print collections.

**Endorsed by the Association of Research Libraries Board of Directors on
October 14, 2010.**