

## GOVERNMENT INFORMATION REFORM MOVES FORWARD

Discussions between Congressional and Executive branch staff regarding how best to reform government printing and procurement, including updating the federal depository library program to meet the challenges of the digital age, continue to progress in positive directions.

Those participating in the discussions have agreed upon six key elements as the basis for a future legislative proposal. These dovetail with the principles proposed by the library community. The elements provide an opportunity to move beyond the current impasse, particularly the Executive branch's belief that it is unconstitutional for the Government Printing Office (GPO), a Legislative branch agency, to provide printing and procurement services for another branch of Government.

The points of agreement for a future legislative proposal are:

- The GPO will continue to operate in the Legislative branch and will handle the production and procurement of Congressional printing. In addition, GPO will be available to Executive and Judicial branch agencies as an optional agent through which agencies may procure printing and publication services.
- The Superintendent of Documents will continue to be a Legislative Branch employee, responsible for the Depository Library Program, and for the cataloging and sales program.
- Executive and Judicial branch agencies will be permitted an increased choice in how they acquire printing services. They may choose to buy from or through the GPO—as they do today. They may procure through one of a handful of Executive or Judicial branch “Executive agents” or, based on the nature of the work to be performed, they may contract directly with a private sector printing source. Agency in-house printing—in all three branches—will be greatly limited.
- By operation and contract regulation, agencies will be required to notify the Superintendent of Documents prior to the production of information products that are likely to be of interest to the public so that the Superintendent may “ride” or have access to the production order for the Depository Library Program.
- Failure by agencies to make timely notification to the Superintendent will be prevented, and if necessary, corrected by a variety of safeguards, including the requirement that the agencies provide copies of the fugitive documents to the Superintendent at their own expense.
- Provisions will be made for long-term access to electronic documents.

Washington, DC: Association of Research Libraries.

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