



America's Operating System—It's the Law!

The Government Printing Office

An accompanying 1-page vision statement on "Rebooting .Gov" takes a top-down approach, asking where the Government Printing Office (GPO) should be in a few years and setting long-term goals. By contrast, this 1-page policy analysis starts with GPO as it is today and identifies areas that will potentially require auditing, reorganization, or other corrective actions.

The Printing Business

GPO had \$930 million in revenues in FY2007. A \$90m appropriation for congressional printing is supplemented by a 7% surcharge levied on executive branch print jobs. There are 3 distinct printing operations at GPO:

- The official journals of government are produced at their 1.5 million square foot plant, the largest industrial facility in the District. There are significant issues of outdated plant and equipment, failure to meet performance metrics, environmental concerns, safety and security issues, and a significant reduction in staffing over the last decade with only relatively minor workforce development efforts.
- Passports are printed by the secure printing unit, which maintains a secure printing facility in Mississippi. There are significant issues with security in the process, and GPO has been instructed to report on those issues to the Appropriations Committee. In addition, there was a well-publicized incident of over-charging the State Department for passports after volume exceeded expectations.
- The great bulk of the printing volume at GPO is for procured jobs, where GPO manages the procurement process using private industry, performing quality checks, job management, and other functions in return for a 7% overhead fee. There is an on-going process of granting exceptions to allow agencies to manage their own printing, as well as a series of programs to allow small print jobs to be done by the client.

Getting and Distributing Content

There are two related initiatives that are used to gather content from users (e.g., the Congress and others contributing to the official journals of government) and distributing that content to the various stakeholders of GPO:

- The "Future of Digital System" (FDSys) is the flagship automation effort at GPO. It is well behind schedule and over budget. The system is scheduled to enter "beta" in late 2008 and is scheduled to include authoring and content management by late 2009.
- The Superintendent of Documents supervises the Federal Depository Library Program (FDLP), which received a \$35 million salary and expense appropriation, and is also responsible for the GPO web sites. The Depository Program reaches 1,280 libraries and is based on outdated legislation from 1962. The GPO web sites are based on technology from the early 1990s. The GPO operates a chain of bookstores.

Transparency and Oversight

GPO has not posted any congressional testimony since 2004, nor have there been any GAO or other outside studies. The agency does not report financials on a quarterly basis, and based on the State Department incident, an examination of the accounting, reporting, and independent auditing mechanisms is in order. Related to financial transparency is functional transparency. The process of consulting stakeholders, in particular the Congress, libraries, and other major users can be drastically improved.