Tech Watch Column: Digital Deposit Documents to the People!

Sonnet Ireland, University of New Orleans
Rebecca Blakeley, McNeese State University

Available at: https://works.bepress.com/sonnetireland/1/
Tech Watch

Digital Deposit Documents to the People!
Rebecca Blakeley and Sonnet Brown

Have you ever wanted to start your own digital depository collection? Have you ever felt frustrated by merely selecting and "pointing" to online government information stored somewhere else and not in your own collection for you to possess, control, and preserve? Do you want to select, retain, and mashup digital government information based on particular file formats such as XML, raw data, and/or PDFs? Do you want to build your own, unique, digital collection focused on your own user community? The answer to these questions lies in the concept of "digital deposit"!

The concept of digital deposit has often been discussed, published, and advocated for by members of the Free Government Information (FGI) website, and they provide a formal definition of a digital depository as "a library that accepts digital files distributed by the GPO and builds its own unique digital collections that, in conjunction with its physical and other digital collections, meets the needs of its users."¹ Since GPO has discussed the idea of digital deposit but has yet to implement a formal program, we can begin now by taking the initial steps to create our own digital depository by collecting, preserving, and disseminating digital government information using various resources and technologies that already exist.

There are a variety of technologies available that may be of interest in regards to building a digital depository. A digital FDLP should have room for libraries of all sizes and levels of technical experience, resources, and budgets.² The technical requirements for any given library will depend on the level of service and the collection profile that the library selects. The technical infrastructure can be whatever you already have—from a big server farm to a small server or hard drive, to a single PC or your existing LAN—or something more that you will add over time.

The FGI website provides a growing list of technologies and concepts to explore "that will be of interest and importance as we move toward a digital FDLP".³ Various technologies focus on the basic needs of digital preservation, such as the collection or as the collection or capture of digital
information, metadata creation, dissemination, and preservation. Some examples include:

- **Archive-IT** (www.archive-it.org), a web archiving service from the [Internet Archive](www.archive.org), that allows institutions to build, manage, preserve, and search their own collections of born-digital content through a user friendly web application. Many libraries and institutions use Archive-IT, including state and university libraries. Visit the Archive-IT website to view a full list of partners under the heading "Browse our Partners" to explore a library's archived collections.

- **Capturing Electronic Publications** (www.isrl.illinois.edu/pep/#CEP), or CEP, is an open source website archiving system that makes it possible for an institution to download and preserve archival copies of an evolving website. CEP uses software packages to create-and maintain historical data and provides summary statistics about the website's content.

- **CONTENTdm®** (www.contentdm.org) is OCLC’s digital collection management software that "makes everything in your digital collections available to everyone, everywhere. No matter the format — local history archives, newspapers, books, maps, slide libraries or audio/video — CONTENTdm can handle the storage, management and delivery of your collections to users across the Web." The State Library of Louisiana archives born-digital Louisiana State Documents with CONTENTdm, in order "to provide permanent electronic access to this content and ensure that state agencies can fulfill their statutory obligation to participate in the Depository Program with electronic-only formats".

- **Delicious** (delicious.com) is a social bookmarking site that lets users bookmark and share websites. It is also a great tool for collaborative digital collection projects, such as FGI's IAdeposit project, where digital government documents that are tagged "IAdeposit" in Delicious are then uploaded to and preserved in the Internet Archive's [US Government Documents Collection](www.archive.org/details/USGovernmentDocuments). For example, the Earl K. Long Library at the University of New Orleans and the Frazar Memorial Library at McNeese State University use Delicious for collecting and linking to digital documents that
can be preserved for the IAdeposit project.6

- **DSpace** (www.dspace.org) is an open source software that enables sharing of content and is "the software of choice for academic, non-profit, and commercial organizations building open digital repositories. It is free and easy to install 'out of the box' and completely customizable to fit the needs of any organization. DSpace preserves and enables easy and open access to all types of digital content including text, images, moving images, mpegs and data sets."

- **EPrints** (www.eprints.org) is "the most flexible platform for building high quality, high value repositories, recognised as the easiest and fastest way to set up repositories of research literature, scientific data, student theses, project reports, multimedia artefacts, teaching materials, scholarly collections, digitised records, exhibitions and performances."

- **Fedora Commons Repository** (www.fedora-commons.org) software "has been installed by institutions, worldwide, to support a variety of digital content needs. The Fedora Repository is extremely flexible and can be used to support any type of digital content. There are numerous examples of Fedora being used for digital collections, e-research, digital libraries, archives, digital preservation, institutional repositories, open access publishing, document management, digital asset management, and more."

- **Greenstone** (www.greenstone.org) is a suite of software for building and distributing digital library collections whose aim is to "empower users, particularly in universities, libraries, and other public service institutions, to build their own digital libraries."

- **Lots of Copies Keep Stuff Safe (LOCKSS)** (lockss.stanford.edu/lockss/Home) is a low cost digital library tool using open source software to collect, store, preserve, and provide access to local copies of electronic documents.7 Depository libraries might be interested in joining the **U.S. Government Documents private LOCKSS network** (lockss.org/lockss/Government_Documents_PLN). Many libraries and institutions participate in the LOCKSS and the U.S. Government Documents private LOCKSS network programs,
including Stanford, the University of Alabama, and the Alaska State Library. Tutorial pages for learning how LOCKSS works and how to install your own "LOCKSS box" are available, including a link to a tutorial video on YouTube.

- **Open Archives Initiative** (www.openarchives.org) develops interoperability standards that aim to "facilitate the efficient dissemination of content." Projects include the Protocol for Metadata Harvesting (OAI-PMH) and the Object Reuse and Exchange (OAI-ORE) standard.

Other resources to include in your digital depository toolkit include Terry Reese and Kyle Banergee's *Building Digital Libraries: A How-to-Do-it Manual*, Ian H. Witten and David Bainbridge's *How to Build a Digital Library*, Katherine Skinner and Matt Schultz's *A Guide to Distributed Digital Preservation* and Cornell University's *Digital Preservation Management Workshops and Tutorial site* (www.library.cornell.edu/iris/tutorial/dpm/eng_index.html). Also, whether you already have a digital depository, are planning to start one, or are just curious to learn more, be sure to visit the Digital Deposit Documents to the People! Group (tinyurl.com/ykf2wth) at the FDLP Community website to share advice, resources, and ideas.

Repositories play a vital role in the collection, dissemination, and preservation of digital government information. Any depository library that wishes to remain vital to its user community will inevitably, unavoidably, have to provide digital collections. Doing anything less would be shirking our responsibility to them. After all, we often champion “Documents to the People”… why not also advocate for "Digital Deposit Documents to the People!"

**References**


5. Delicious FGI, freegovinfo.info/delicious; "IAdeposit" Tag, delicious.com/freegovinfo/IAdeposit.


2nd ed. (San Francisco: Morgan Kaufmann, 2009); Katherine Skinner and Matt Schultz, *A Guide to Distributed Digital Preservation* (Atlanta, GA: Educopia Institute, 2010),
http://www.metaarchive.org/GDDP.