

SEARCH THE GPO CATALOG OF GOVERNMENT PUBLICATIONS

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Resource of the Week: A Fresh Look at the GPO Catalog of Government Publications

By Shirl Kennedy, Senior Editor

Been to the Catalog of Government Publications (CGP) lately? If you're a documents librarian well, maybe. But the rest of us might not visit it so often, so we thought it would be useful to provide a fresh overview of how to use it and what you can find there.

The CGP Basic Search page, which is the default entry point, provides a nice, clean interface and a no-brainer search function.

Welcome to the Catalog of U.S. Government Publications (CGP)! The CGP is the finding tool for federal publications that includes descriptive records for historical and current publications and provides direct links to those that are available online. Users can search by authoring agency, title, subject, and general key word, or click on 'Advanced Search' for more options.

The catalog offers you the option to find a nearby Federal depository library that has a particular publication or that can provide expert assistance in finding and using related U.S. government information. Click on the title of interest from your search results list. Then click on the Locate in a Library link within the displayed record.

Click on the Preferences link above the keyword search box, and you can specify how many brief records you want to see on a results page (3, 10, 15 or 20) and how you'd like them displayed - brief, extended, short, standard, or just the document title and a link to its full text on the Internet. If you want more options, click the Advanced Search link. Dropdown menus allow for diverse field searching and Boolean options, and you can limit your search chronologically, by format, and by language. Perhaps the most intriguing dropdown menu is the one at the very bottom of the form page that allows you to choose which catalog you wish to search:

- * National Bibliography of U.S. Government Publications (e.g., 'everything')
- * Congressional Serial Set Catalog
- * Congressional Publications
- * GPO Access Publications
- * Internet Publications
- * Periodicals
- * Serials

Not sure what these various catalogs contain? Visit the detailed Catalog of U.S. Government Publications (CGP) Search Tips/Help page, where you'll also find detailed information on the various search options - basic, advanced, expert, and browse searches, which are all available via tabs at the top of the catalog page.

This page offers a way to limit your search to one or more of these catalogs via check boxes.

Note that you can add items to a 'bookshelf' as you search, and then display this collection of items during your search or when you're finished. And you can e-mail items from your search results list, your bookshelf or within a specific item record. You do not have to register to take advantage of these options.

Along with the various search options at the top of the page, there is also a New Titles tab. This is a government documents junkie's delight.

New Titles predefined searches, a new feature, returns dynamic results from the Catalog of U.S. Government Publications (CGP) for new titles, both electronic and tangible, which have been cataloged during the specified period of time. These predefined searches only contain new, not updated titles. As dynamic results, they have the same sort and view options and features as the CGP. Search results will change based on GPO's cataloging activity.

Scroll down the page to access New Electronic Titles Monthly Archive Reports:

New Electronic Titles monthly archive reports are static reports generated from data retrieved from the Catalog of U.S. Government Publications (CGP). Reports will be made available in the succeeding months by the middle of the month following.

Since April 2005, we have used the data from the CGP to generate these reports, while we continued to refine the process. With the September 2006 report, our methodology to generate these reports changed. Reports contain only new, not updated records, from the CGP. Development to refine the report format is ongoing.

The current reports will be made available in HTML format with links in the titles to the bibliographic records. These access links to the bibliographic records will remain in the reports for approximately six months, after which time the reports will be archived as PDF files, retaining only the links to the full text of the publication.

Having trouble finding what you want or need the advice of an expert? The Government Information Online (GIO): Ask a Librarian service may be just what you need - especially if, for whatever reason - you do not have ready access to a library with a specialized government documents department.

GIO is a free online information service supported by nearly twenty public, state and academic libraries throughout the United States. All participants are designated Federal depository libraries in the U.S. Government Printing Office's Federal Depository Library Program. Many are also official depository libraries for their other types of governments and public agencies.

This service - sponsored by the Committee on Institutional Cooperation (a consortium of 12 research universities, including the 11 members of the Big Ten Conference and the University of Chicago), the Government Printing Office, and the University of Illinois at Chicago - operates by chat (Monday through Thursday, 8am to 6pm; Friday 8am to 5pm; CST) or e-mail. You can direct your question to one of about 20 different libraries (academic, public, state) scattered across the country, or let it go out to all participating libraries. Obviously, if you need state or local government information, you would want to pick a participating library in your state, if one is available. Not every state is represented here.

For more information about this service, see this recent posting on the Free Government Information weblog.

This post, including live links, can be found online at: <http://digbig.com/4wjjr>

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NYS Department of State

OFFICE OF
**FIRE PREVENTION
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phone 518.474.6746
fax 518.474.3240
email fire@dos.state.ny.us

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