

**RESOLUTION ON MAINTAINING GOVERNMENT WEBSITES  
DURING A GOVERNMENT SHUTDOWN**

Whereas public online access to federal government information directly affects U.S. persons in areas as diverse as weather forecasting, natural hazards, immigration, health, and taxation;

Whereas federal government information has been paid for by the public through taxes and should remain freely available even during government shutdowns;

Whereas from October 1 through 16, 2013, the United States federal government shut down and curtailed most routine operations after Congress failed to enact legislation or interim authorization for appropriating funds for fiscal year 2014;

Whereas there have been 18 partial and total federal government shutdowns since 1980;

Whereas Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Circular A-11, OMB Memorandum M-13-22, and the Department of Justice Attachment to OMB M-13-22 do not provide sufficient guidance to agencies about government websites during government shutdowns;

Whereas during the 2013 government shutdown some federal websites became inaccessible, while others continued to function at full or limited capacities; and the public was not informed which agencies were in which category; and

Whereas Federal Depository Libraries were unable to provide alternative access to electronic information to the public during this shutdown; now, therefore, be it

*Resolved*, that the American Library Association (ALA), on behalf of its members:

1. urges the President to direct the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) and Department of Justice (DoJ) to develop guidance to federal agencies stating that, in the event of a government shutdown or other emergency, continued access by the public to essential information on agency websites is an “excepted” activity that would warrant the retention of paid personnel or the obligation of funds to assure access;
2. urges the Office of Management and Budget (OMB), in the absence of such a guideline, to direct each agency to communicate the status during a shutdown of its website to the Government Printing Office (GPO) or another appropriate agency, which would widely communicate to the public and update information about which agencies are maintaining their websites, which are updating them and which are closing them;
3. urges OMB to require each agency to determine what information is essential and should be available if a government shutdown or emergency should occur. For such an occurrence, develop a contingency plan for continued public access to information;
4. urges OMB to direct agencies to work with GPO in hosting their online publications and data in the Federal Digital System (FDSys) or other publicly accessible means;

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5. urges GPO to expand its automated harvesting of Federal agencies' websites and to redirect persistent uniform resource locators (PURLs) to GPO-harvested copies rather than agency websites; and
6. urges that GPO or another appropriate agency be directed to maintain a clearinghouse of web pages that provide alternate ways of accessing government information.

Adopted by the Council of the American Library Association  
Tuesday, January 28, 2014 in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania



Keith Michael Fiels  
ALA Executive Director and Secretary of the ALA Council