



## The United States Publishing Academy

*Although the Government Printing Office opened the day Abraham Lincoln took his oath of office, it was not until 34 years later that Congress finally codified the Printing Act of 1895, allowing that "the Public Printer may employ any such number of apprentices, not to exceed 25 at any one time, as in his judgment will be consistent with the economical service of the office."*

*Workforce developments waxed and waned with the times, being revived after World War I to help train veterans, and again during the depression. In 1939, under the leadership of Public Printer Augustus E. Geigengack, the GPO Apprentice School had 150 boys and girls and a faculty of four and was declared to be "the best apprentice vocational school in the country."*

### **Vocational Education and Master Classes**

The Government Printing Office has always been at the forefront of technological change, working with early Vartypers systems after World War II, and pioneering photocomposition with magnetic tapes in 1967. Today, publishing continues to change, an opportunity the GPO can embrace by establishing an aggressive program of training for four audiences:

- Workforce development for the existing staff of the Government Printing Office.
- Workforce development for the publishing and printing personnel of other agencies.
- An opportunity to provide vocational training and internships in partnership with the District of Columbia schools and schools in the surrounding areas.
- An opportunity to publish curriculum materials for use throughout the country, by individuals on the Internet or by other schools in their own programs.

Today, GPO offers two forms of education. An Institute for Federal Printing and Electronic Publishing offers 14 basic classes to federal and DC Government employees, certain federal contractors, and librarians. GPO also offers an internal workforce development program, funded by a \$2 million congressional appropriation in FY2006 and an additional \$1 million in FY2007. We propose here to combine and expand those programs, providing a range of educational activities in a more formal, focused, and systematic way than is currently provided.

A program of formal education in the arts and sciences of printing and publishing can range from the traditional crafts such as bookbinding, design, and typesetting to their modern equivalents of high-speed photocomposition, advanced print-on-demand services, and the modern languages of PostScript, CSS and HTML. A small full-time faculty—supported by a distinguished cast of visiting experts and scholars—could easily support the current program of short-term training provided by the Institute, while working with an initial full-time pilot class of students. If successful, the program could expand to provide a range of classes ranging from introductory topics to advanced master classes. A program of testing and certification can provide an objective measurement of the skills and knowledge attained, and the materials developed for certification programs and curricula can be offered on-line for others to use without restriction, helping fuel similar efforts throughout the country.

The U.S. government has always played a vital role for certain forms of specialized training. The National Fire Academy trains thousands of volunteer and professional firefighters and the National Mine Health and Safety Academy is internationally renowned for its programs of occupational safety. GPO can provide a central focus for publishing, training its own workforce, the federal government, and the public in the art and science of publishing.