

Guidance - Maintaining the Bibliography of UK Official Publications

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(Revised 7 May 20108)

This Guidance Note sets out the current arrangements for the bibliographic record of United Kingdom Official Publications, and the responsibilities of departments and agencies in maintaining the record, enabling the search and access of official publications.

Purpose

1. This guidance reminds departments of the importance of maintaining a complete bibliographic record of United Kingdom official publications and the action which needs to be taken by departments and agencies. The United Kingdom Official Publications Database (UKOP) is the official authoritative catalogue of official government publications in the United Kingdom, which is published by The Stationery Office Limited (TSO).

Background

2. UKOP was launched in 1989 as a joint venture between HMSO and Chadwyck-Healey (now ProQuest) and combined the complete bibliographic database of all of the titles published by Her Majesty's Stationery Office (HMSO) and Chadwyck-Healey's Catalogue of British Official Publications (not published by HMSO). The result was the creation of the only complete catalogue of official publications.

3. Following the privatisation of HMSO's trading functions in 1996, consideration was given as to how an official bibliographic database could be maintained and who should be responsible for managing it. Parliament was concerned that the potential fragmentation of Official Publications arrangements following privatisation would make it difficult for the House authorities and others to trace official documents. Although it would have been possible to create a new bibliographic database within Government, it would have required a significant investment in cost and manpower. There would also have been a loss of the continuity provided by the existing databases which had been developing over a number of years. As both TSO and Chadwyck-Healey had agreed to continue the joint venture, Ministers decided that HMSO, as part of its ongoing role in Official Publications, should take responsibility within Government for building on these existing arrangements. Ministers also gave commitments to both Houses of Parliament that every government department and agency would ensure that their published titles were listed on UKOP. In January 2003 TSO took over the full responsibility for the maintenance and publication of the UKOP database when it purchased all the existing ProQuest records and their interest in the product.

4. A Dear Establishment Officer Letter dated 17 February 1997 which dealt with a number of consequences of the privatisation, explained that it was essential for a UKOP database to be maintained, and departments were required to ensure that where they published items themselves, or via commercial publishers other than TSO, that details of those publications should be featured on UKOP.

The need for a comprehensive bibliographic database of official publications

5. The need for a comprehensive bibliographic database of official publications has not changed. Machinery of Government changes which result in responsibilities moving between departments increase the difficulties for users in tracking official publications, especially those in series where a number of departments may have been involved in their publication. UKOP enables users to find these titles without having any knowledge of the departments that might have been involved in their production. The increasing use of the internet has also added to this need, especially where a publication, previously available in print, is now available only on the internet.

6. The libraries of the UK Parliament and the devolved Parliaments and Assemblies have particular requirements to be able to trace all official publications. OPSI also has a requirement to be able to identify all titles as soon as they are published so that requests for copies of titles received from British Members of the European Parliament can be handled speedily and orders placed with the appropriate publisher/distributor.

7. Implementation of the Freedom of Information Act and the production of Publication Schemes by departments and agencies will mean that details of the publications covered by these schemes can be readily identified by searching within UKOP.

The UKOP database

8. The combination of the Chadwyck-Healey and TSO catalogues has resulted in the most comprehensive and up-to-date source of official publications in the UK. For users it saves hours of searching through a number of separate and partial indexes.

9. UKOP catalogues all parliamentary and statutory publications (including Acts and Statutory Instruments), and the publications of UK official bodies including central government departments, the devolved administrations, agencies, quangos and other bodies. Selected output of international bodies such as the United Nations and the World Health Organisation is also included. It consists of:

- over 500,000 records dating back to 1980
- 25,000 links to full text on the internet
- 16,000 documents archived in full text.

10. UKOP was redesigned in 2000 to make it easier for users to find relevant, timely information on government publications. The latest version of UKOP offers the following facilities:

- increased access to full text in a permanent stable archive, including digital versions of the most important official documents not available electronically elsewhere
- daily updating
- e-mail alerting
- search history

- improved search capabilities, including the ability to search on related meanings and spellings.

11. Details of all titles published by TSO are added automatically to the UKOP database on a daily basis. The inclusion of details of all other official publications which are not published by TSO, relies on material provided by government departments and agencies. There are some gaps in this part of UKOP and it is essential that every department and agency takes steps to close these by ensuring the supply of material to TSO.

Action required by departments and agencies

12. In order to fulfil the commitments given by Ministers; departments and agencies need to provide a copy of each title/document which they issue, whether it is published/distributed by themselves or another commercial publisher on their behalf (but excluding titles published by The Stationery Office - see para. 11 above). These should be sent as soon as they are published to:

The Bibliographics Manager
TSO
Parliamentary Press
Mandela Way
London, SE1 5SS

e-mail: suppliers@ukop.co.uk

Since UKOP is updated daily, currency is extremely important and all documents should therefore be sent on publication with same-day notification of web-published documents. Wherever possible TSO should also be advised of forthcoming titles before their release.

13. Titles covered by this requirement are those covered by a departments FOI Publication Scheme and should include periodicals, newspapers, serials, single sheet updates and appendices, free leaflets and publicity material (if the contents are of value), atlases, maps, posters and audio-visual aids. Material which can be excluded are internal memoranda, internal reports and house magazines intended for internal readership only. Other categories of publication that are excluded are very large groups of specialised material that are already well catalogued, such as Ordnance Survey maps and Patent information. In cases of doubt departments should contact HMSO. In the case of titles published in a number of languages, only the English language edition need be supplied - though a note stating availability in other languages is useful.

14. Although it would be helpful to include all titles produced by departments, it is left to the discretion of departments as to whether titles produced by departments and/or UK Embassies etc. overseas and which are aimed specifically for circulation within those countries, are included on the database.

15. Any department/agency which has difficulty in providing copies of publications to TSO, should discuss their concerns with HMSO (see contact details at para. 17).

Other sources of information

16. TSO are also archiving, on UKOP, the full text of a range of Core Collection publications (as detailed in the attached Annex) and other publications that are freely available on the internet. TSO also digitise some free or nominally priced Crown copyright protected documents (under £2 face value) that are not currently available in electronic form. The typographical copyright should also be vested in the Crown. In addition to providing a copy of the printed publication to TSO, departments should also deliver in the following manner:

- for Core Collection documents published on the web: notification by e-mail of the URL
- for Core Collection documents published in print only that departments are able to send in electronic format: by e-mail in either PDF, HTML, TXT or Microsoft Word formats
- for all Core Collection documents unavailable in electronic format: in printed format as at present.

All notifications of publication and all electronic documents should be sent to suppliers@ukop.co.uk

Contact details and helpline

17. If you have any queries regarding this guidance please contact The National Archives Official Publishing team (e-mail: Official.Publishing@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk)

CAROL TULLO
Director, Controller, and Queen's Printer

ANNEX

CORE COLLECTION DOCUMENTS

Departments and agencies are required to provide a copy of all publications for cataloguing purposes.

Departments should also (see para. 16 of this Guidance) provide an electronic copy of the full text of documents in the following categories that make up a Core Collection of documents most vital to the user:

- press-releases: all news releases, press notifications, and operational notes.
- fact sheets and guidance notes: for example guidance on specific regulations or safety guidance on health equipment or specific workplace/environmental hazards.
- circulars (numbered): any documents produced for circulation to staff and related employees, for instance Home Office circulars.

- consultation documents: consultation papers themselves and responses to consultation.
- Headline statistics: may overlap with press releases, but any freely available documents that contains statistical information
- Annual reports: the annual report of your organisation
- Inspections reports: not school inspection reports but reports into other bodies such as prisons, fire services and social services.
- Official inquiries: inquiries into accidents, reports on specific issues, or investigations into public affairs.

If there are certain documents that departments would prefer not to be reproduced in full then this should be indicated with the relevant publication.