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IV. PRINCIPLES

We turn now to the Principles that have been identified by the Task Force as the basis for determining policy decisions related to Federal government activities with respect to the distribution of information. In each case, we will define the principle and then discuss problems or critical issues related to it. Then we will summarize means for implementation, including the related recommendations that will be discussed in detail in the following section of this Report.

There are two points to be made of general importance. First, the Task Force considers that these principles should be viewed as a whole and that none of them should be taken in isolation from the others. Second, in many situations, some of the principles may conflict with each other or with principles outside the scope of these deliberations. There is no way in which such conflicts can be resolved in the statement of principles; they can only be resolved in the specific situations in which they occur.

In the following presentation of principles, reference will be made to the "Draft Report" and the preliminary text of [the principles] as given in it. This is for the purpose of highlighting the discussion of issues of controversy and differences of view within the Task Force. We feel that the bare boned statement of each principle couldn't begin to convey the reasons that it is regarded as important. It could give the appearance of triviality or of the statement of a truism, belying the depth of the issues actually involved. By presenting the flavor of the discussion leading to the statement, we hope that some sense can be gained of the points at issue that had to be resolved.

OVERVIEW.

Governmental Leadership

- [1.] Discussion
- [2.] Implementation

Encouragement of Investment

- [1.] Discussion
- [2.] Implementation

Governmental Information Services

- [1.] Discussion
- [2.] Implementation

Government Use of Private Sector Information

- [1.] Discussion
- [2.] Implementation

Availability of Government Information

- [1.] Discussion
- [2.] Implementation

Pricing of Government Information

- [1.] Discussion
- [2.] Implementation

Libraries

- [1.] Discussion
- [2.] Implementation

GOVERNMENTAL LEADERSHIP.

In a formal vote, with one abstention, the following principle was UNANIMOUSLY accepted by Task Force members present:

Principle 1. The Federal government should take a leadership role in creating a framework which would facilitate the development and foster the use of information products and services. [Page 40]

[1.] DISCUSSION.

The Federal government has the opportunity to play a significant role by leadership of the country in fostering the use of information as an economic and social resource. The reasons for calling on the government to play this role are many. The overall growth of information as a component in the economy, both in the United States and abroad, has made it a dominant factor in national progress. Further development of it is essential, especially in view of the mounting competition from other countries, functioning with direct governmental involvement.

The wording of Principle 1 in the Draft Report was as follows:

The Federal government should take a leadership role in the development of information as a national resource for economic and social advancement.

That wording was discussed in detail:

- Replace "should" by "must"?
- Replace "information" by "information products and services"?
- Replace "development" by "encouragement of development"?

The debate then centered on the text as finally voted upon. The following brings out issues that members of the Task Force regard as important:

- Some members wanted the phrase "national resource" to be included as descriptive of information.
- Concern was expressed about how the role of government could be confined, with the view that "creating the framework" was already giving it too much flexibility. The aim is to create a climate that will encourage development, but not manage it.
- The alternate phrase "essential information products and services" was extensively debated, with emphasis on the extent to which the Federal

government role was restricted or expanded by that wording. One view was that the government should be limited to encouragement only when there were essential national needs involved; the opposing view was that the responsibility for defining what was essential would by its nature expand the role of government. The former view was based upon concern about what the form of encouragement would be, the effects upon proprietary rights, and a concern about how the role of government could be constrained. The latter view, on the other hand, was based on the principle that the primary role of government is to establish the framework, independent of what may or may not be essential; while the political process may identify some things as "essential", [that is] independent of establishing the framework. [Page 41]

- All of that discussion was within the context of the view that the government's role should be limited, not expanded by this principle. However, some members of the Task Force expressed the view that the government should not arbitrarily be limited, that it has a responsibility to determine what is essential to the national interests.

It must be stressed that we are talking about leadership, not management. We regard this as a realistic and important distinction. The aims as they are interpreted by the Task Force will not be achieved by Federal government setting a "national information policy", with the view that by doing so it would manage the entire information enterprise of the country. Rather, the goals can be achieved if the government sets policies that will guide Federal agencies in their information activities, and makes those policies coherent, so that a context is established within which non-governmental sectors can function. The view that the government can "manage" the national information system is regarded by the Task Force as both irrational and counter to the entire political philosophy of the country. But it is both rational and feasible for the government to manage its own activities in such a way as to foster the growth of information as a national resource.

This view of government leadership with respect to development of information as an economic and social resource is consistent with an emerging concept of "industrial policy", in which existing activities are being examined for their relationships to long range goals and plans for improved industrial productivity. The information economy is both an integral part of the industrial environment and an essential tool in the improvement of productivity. This has been recognized by the OMB, by the Office of Telecommunications (now NTIA), and by other government agencies, but it needs to be made explicit in the form of coherent policies to guide Federal agencies.

[2.] IMPLEMENTATION.

Among the most important steps in fulfilling this leadership role are those that will serve to encourage the private sector to innovate and compete. Charles L. Schultze, in his book *The Public Use of Private Interest*,^[1] pointed out, "...the growing industrialization, urbanization, and interdependence of society generate an array of problems that cannot be handled by the purely voluntary buy-and-sell mechanism of private markets". He refers specifically to the "high cost of information" — to the consumer as well as to the decision-maker. It is important to note that Schultze regards the mechanism of the marketplace as the best means for dealing with problems that are so large and complex that no one, including the Federal government, can "manage" them. It is for that reason that Schultze is suggesting that instead of calling on the Federal government to step in and provide the

¹ Schultze, Charles L. *The Public Use of Private Interest*. Washington: The Brookings Institution. 1977.

services required in such cases, society should make use of mechanisms that would provide incentives for the private sector to do so. [Page 42]

Among the recommendations in the next section of this Report, the first twelve are specific to this principle. They include an affirmation of the First Amendment applicability to information products and services in general, encouragement of the use of efficient technologies, support to educational and research programs, an urging that there be periodic reviews of government information activities, exploration of alternative means for dissemination of government information, especially through libraries and other private sector organizations, and an even handed consistency in the application of principles.

ENCOURAGEMENT OF INVESTMENT.

In a formal vote, the following principle was UNANIMOUSLY accepted by the Task Force members present:

Principle 2. The Federal government should establish and enforce policies and procedures that encourage, and do not discourage, investment by the private sector in the development and use of information products and services.

[1.] DISCUSSION.

The role of the private sector is to provide the means for distribution of information in the context of the open marketplace, in which the criteria for value of any given service or product are economic forces rather than political ones. This implies private investment, frequently of risk capital, with profit as the means of rewarding the individual entrepreneur. Examples have been presented in Appendix 3 of this Report of cases in which Federal government activity or threat of activity appears to have discouraged risk capital investment.

The wording of that principle in the Draft Report was as follows:

The private sector should be encouraged and not discouraged from capital investment in information products and services.

Again, as with Principle 1, the wording was discussed in detail:

- Why include "not discouraged"?
- "The private sectors..."?
- What does "encourage" mean?

The possibility that this principle might be interpreted as suggesting subsidies, either hidden or explicit, was discussed. The view was expressed that the effects of subsidies could not be predicted; some sectors of the economy are encouraged by subsidies, some may be discouraged.

In the debate, concern was expressed about how the term "private sector" would be interpreted. In particular, would it be clear that investment should be encouraged in both the for-profit and the not-for-profit components? While [Page 43] it was pointed out that the definition of "private sector" was explicit in including both components, still it was felt that such should be reinforced in the context of this principle.

[2.] IMPLEMENTATION.

The Task Force identified a number of possible means to implement this principle: providing government information to private sector companies, using contracts to foster capabilities, providing tax incentives, changing regulatory structures, etc. For some of them, there were differences of opinion within the Task Force concerning their efficacy or the problems they might pose. In particular, making governmental information readily available might be in conflict with the need to protect parallel private information services that may be used by the government or with which a governmental information resource might effectively compete. Using "tax incentives" raises problems of conflict with revenue needs. The use of contracts potentially could be a disincentive to risk capital investment, since it would change the nature of the risks involved; the use of contracts doesn't really change the basis for decisions. There was no clear description given during the Task Force deliberations of the barriers in the present legal and regulatory structures to the encouragement of investment, although there was a generally evident feeling that there were serious barriers to investment. In general, though, there was agreement with the principle and with the view that these kinds of activities should be identified and brought together as illustrations of the means for implementation of the principle.

Some members of the Task Force feel it is important to recognize that there have been times when entrepreneurial investment has failed to meet or even to recognize the needs. The user obtained needed information because the Federal government initiated a service. Those members feel that "the public should be encouraged and not discouraged by the effects of capital investment in information products and services". They feel that the Federal government should not be prevented from development and innovation just in case an entrepreneur might someday want to take the risks of investment in an area in which the government would have established that a need existed.

The final result of the discussion of means for implementation is a set of six recommendations, presented in detail in the next section of the Report, specific to this principle.

GOVERNMENTAL INFORMATION SERVICES.

In a formal vote, with one abstention, the following principle was UNANIMOUSLY approved:

Principle 3. The Federal government should not provide information products and services in commerce except when there are compelling reasons to do so, and then only when it protects the private sector's every opportunity to assume the function(s) commercially. [Page 44]

[1.] DISCUSSION.

The role of the Federal government is to meet the needs identified by the political process, but to do so in such a way as to achieve an optimum balance between public sector and private sector activities. This implies that the government should not arbitrarily be excluded from providing services that the political process identifies as needed, but on the other hand, it should not engage in such activities unless there has been a clearly defined reason for doing so.

In the Draft Report, Principle 3 was worded as follows:

The government should not provide information products or services, in commerce, unless there are compelling reasons for it to do so.

This wording was discussed in detail:

- Replace "compelling" by "explicit and publicly debated"?
- Replace "compelling reasons" by "enactment of specific legislation"?

In the debate of wording, concern was expressed about the definition of the phrase "in commerce". Does it mean "sale", "extensive marketing", or merely "dissemination" by whatever means, including "giving it away"? It was pointed out that the issue is what controls the government. If the material is given away, the control lies in the political process that authorizes the funding of that service. If the government sells the service or product, it is then functioning (to some extent anyway) outside the controls of the political process, but without the constraints built into the market process.

The Task Force was divided on the suitability of governmental enhancement of an information product or service, with some members feeling that such enhancement would be appropriate if there is a clearly identified public or social need, a specific constituency that needed to be served (such as the handicapped or the disadvantaged), or if it were warranted by efficiency of operation. They felt the government should not be forced to refrain from enhancement as a doctrinaire policy, but rather should encourage, support, and as necessary provide enhancement.

The primary issue of discussion was the extent to which the Task Force should attempt to establish the "compelling reasons". Is it the responsibility of the Task Force to define when the government should intervene in the information products and services arena? The view was expressed that there is no way in which the Task Force can specify to Congress what is or is not appropriate for governmental responsibility.

In this respect, it is important to understand the reasons for choice of the phrase "compelling reasons". It was used precisely because the Task Force was unable to agree on what would be universally applicable rules for deciding [Page 45] when the Federal government should or should not engage in an activity. Terms like, "in the public interest" or "when there is a public need" or "in the national interest" all convey the implication that there are identifiable, though undefined needs. "Market failure" implies something even more; not only is there a need, but in some way the market process has failed to meet it. While these may indeed be true, the problem is that they were not well enough defined to permit the Task Force to identify conditions under which they would apply.

The point though really is that the choice of terms is not the material issue. It is the process by which the decision is made. The term "compelling reasons" was used precisely because it so clearly begs the question without setting out some implied basis for the decision. At the least, the term makes it clear that the answer will always be found in a process, not in a catch phrase.

[2.] IMPLEMENTATION.

This is all to emphasize that the process for determining whether there are "compelling reasons" is central to this recommendation. That process has been embodied in the several recommendations related to this principle (i.e., announcement, review and approval, impact analysis, and periodic review), so it should not be considered as separate from them.

The Task Force believes that the problem of "policy obsolescence" should be emphasized. The need for periodic review is particularly great where detailed policies about the handling of information have departed from sound general principles, even though they may have been formulated in response to what appeared to be compelling needs.

Technological realities will continue to change, the information marketplace will continue to develop, and our understanding of the problems will continue to mature. Therefore our policies must also continue to develop or they will cease to serve us well. This can only be achieved if the reasons for policies are reexamined frequently as time passes or as circumstances change.

GOVERNMENT USE OF PRIVATE SECTOR INFORMATION.

In a formal vote, the Task Force UNANIMOUSLY approved the following principle:

Principle 4. The Federal government, when it uses, reproduces, or distributes information available from the private sector as part of an information resource, product, or service, must assure that the property rights of the private sector sources are adequately protected.

[1.] DISCUSSION.

Throughout the Task Force discussions, the issues in government use [Page 46] of information taken from the private sector and government duplication of information already available from the private sector arose repeatedly. Two distinctly different problems were raised: the economic problem and the professional one.

In an effort to resolve economic issues, three categories of information were defined: 1) that generated or synthesized by the government, 2) that gathered or deduced by the government, and 3) that bought by the government. The problem is in determining the nature of the rights involved in each of these situations, especially when private sector information is included. The following was unanimously adopted as a statement of position:

The acquisition of information by the government does not necessarily carry with it government control over all rights to access, duplication, or dissemination of that information. Some rights, not all of which have yet been defined in law, are retained by the original owner.

If rights are transferred to the government when it acquires information from a non-governmental organization, they should be precisely defined in the contract or purchase agreements.

Government should recognize that its proprietary rights to the information it has acquired are not unlimited.

Government should not take action with respect to information it has acquired, by whatever means, that impinges on the retained proprietary rights of the original owner.

Turning then to establishing a statement of principle, the Task Force considered the following statement, as included in the Draft Report:

When governmental agencies utilize or duplicate information available from the private sector as part of an information resource, product, or service, they should assure that the property rights of the private sector source are adequately protected.

After discussion, it was unanimously accepted with the final wording left to the editorial committee.

The term "property rights" was discussed with the view that it should not be interpreted as implying interference in the private sector. On the other hand, it was pointed out that there are other private sector interests, beyond property rights, that also must be protected. It was emphasized that this principle affirms the responsibility of government to comply with laws of copyright, contracts, etc. [Page 47]

It is important to note that this principle fails to address the second set of issues — those related to professional concerns and Federal control of information. While the other principles do deal with the needs to assure open access to governmentally distributable information without undue government control, none of them deals with the impact of government information services upon scientific and technical decisions.

[2.] IMPLEMENTATION.

Important though this principle obviously is, the Task Force did not identify specific steps for implementation of it. The important issues relate primarily to legalities of property rights and means for protecting them, in contrast to policy questions. While the Task Force had the responsibility and the qualifications to comment on policy questions, it did not feel that it could do so on essentially legal questions.

AVAILABILITY OF GOVERNMENT INFORMATION.

A formal vote was taken on Principle 5: 12 IN FAVOR, 1 OPPOSED:

Principle 5. The Federal government should make governmentally distributable information openly available in readily reproducible form, without any constraints on subsequent use.

The vote in opposition was due to the phrase "...without any constraints on subsequent use...", with the view that one could anticipate circumstances in which such constraints are necessary and desirable.

[1.] DISCUSSION.

Clearly there is a spectrum of availability, actual or potential, of information from the government:

- 1) Information normally not available, such as intra-agency work in progress.

- 2) Information available under limited, controlled, and qualified access, including national security and other classified information, personal information (such as personnel dossiers, census data, etc.), investigative and other law enforcement information.
- 3) Information available on request and specifically information covered by the Freedom of Information Act.
- 4) Information suitable for availability, including information products or services which are potentially useful, but not presently delivered.
- 5) Information presently being made available through active publication, distribution, or dissemination. [Page 48]

The Freedom of Information Act says that government information (with obvious specific exceptions — national security and personal privacy, for example) should be openly available. However, mere availability, especially as involved in the Freedom of Information legislation, would fail to meet the need for availability of government information as the Task Force sees it. Information should be readily as well as openly available, and usable for a variety of purposes.

The following principle was presented in the Draft Report, but discussion of it was deferred until the definition of "government information" had been clarified.

Government or public information should be made openly available in a readily usable form at the incremental cost of access to it and reproduction of it.

There are some obvious problems inherent in this principle that the Task Force recognized. They relate to the operative terms, "available", "readily usable form", and "incremental cost".

First, with respect to availability, there seems to be little difficulty in the principle when it is applied to forms such as print, microform, or even magnetic tape form — forms that can be delivered as a product. But availability "online" raises significant issues as a result of the added value provided by the selection and processing services implied by online operation. The question is whether the government should provide such additional services, beyond providing the information itself, or should leave such added value services to the private sector.

Second, the issue of form of availability is complicated again by whether production in different forms would not constitute another type of added value service that might better be provided by the private sector. If the government originally produced the information in one form — printed, for example — should it be limited to distribution in only that form? Or should the government agency be free to distribute it in any or all usable forms? This question was unresolved, although the Task Force generally was in agreement that distribution in a variety of usable forms is appropriate.

Third, the issue of "marginal cost of access and reproduction" is complicated by a number of problems, so the decision was made to separate the consideration of cost from that of availability, treating it as another principle.

The purpose of principle 5 was discussed. Is it to increase the entry of the private sector into use of governmentally distributable information? It was pointed out that individuals, as well as private sector companies, need to have access to governmentally distributable information. The central issue, as the Task Force viewed it, was the reaffirmation of the principle underlying the Freedom of

Information Act — that government should not [Page 49] operate in secret — but added to that is the principle that information is of concrete value to the social and economic structure of our society.

The following text was accepted as a statement of the rationale underlying Principle 5:

It is in the national interest for information to be widely and readily available to citizens. Information controlled by the government represents a major resource of demonstrable actual and/or potential economic, social, and political value. The activities of libraries and of non-governmental and private information organizations are among the most important means for enhancing access to information by citizens.

The principles presented here are intended to recognize, reflect, and be responsive to the goal of improved citizen access to information. In applying these principles, and especially in resolving actual or apparent conflicts among them, the government should take those actions that enhance opportunities for citizen access to information and should avoid those that limit or restrict such access.

The phrase "openly available" was discussed. What does it mean? It was pointed out that it was used to replace "freely available", so as to avoid the issue of the cost of availability. The term "without restriction" was suggested as an alternative; similarly, "without limits on the way it can be used". It was pointed out that there are cases in which restrictions are needed (e.g., Social Security releases some information, but with restrictions to preserve confidentiality). It was suggested that the term be deleted, but the consensus was that it be retained.

The term "access" was discussed, and interpreted as including retrieval of pre-specified (not user-specified) packages of information. It could include an ability to communicate online, but with only limited interaction with the user. Access would include availability at identified national and regional centers and depository libraries. Access by user-specified retrieval would be provided only if specifically authorized.

"Reproduction" would include machine-readable forms, microforms, and printed forms, subject to the source form(s) of availability. In each case, however, the reproduction should be in pre-specified standard formats, not in user-specified formats.

The term "readily reproducible" was substituted for the original phrase "readily usable" to avoid having this principle authorize directly a variety of services to augment the usability of governmentally generated information, including translating information from one form to another. The phrase "readily reproducible" was interpreted as including machine-readable forms in standard formats, but user specified retrieval and online access would be involved only if specifically authorized. [Page 50]

The phrase "any constraints" was substituted for an original phrasing "prior constraints" to emphasize the view of the Task Force that open availability should imply the unconstrained use of the information generated by government. It was pointed out that there are occasions when there are proper reasons to grant a limited copyright for the purpose of encouraging a private sector company to provide for wide-scale promotion and distribution of an information package. It was apparently the consensus that the principle wording was accepted:

Specific exceptions to this principle may be desirable in the public interest. Such exceptions, in the form of direct or indirect subsidy and/or incentives to the private

sector to facilitate dissemination of socially useful information should invariably be considered through the legislative process and be subject to periodic review.

There was considerable discussion concerning the relation of computer programs to the issues involved. Are they "information" or "data"? Or are they "property"? Or are they both? Are the property rights in computer programs different from those in data bases or other forms of "information"? It was suggested that the scope of concern of the Task Force should not include computer programs; other members of the Task Force felt they should be included. The example of the Census was cited, especially with respect to availability of governmentally generated software (with the view that it would directly compete with commercial packages). It was pointed out that maintaining software, providing updates, training, and distributing would represent economic problems. (Although the same can be said for data bases.) It was also pointed out that some Federal agencies have interpreted software as falling outside the scope of the Freedom of Information Act, with the view that it represents government property. However, except for that limitation, NTIS will make such programs available.

Information derived from both governmental and private sources, whether distributed by the public sector or the private sector, must conform to laws concerning the property rights of the private sector sources. Application of Principle 5 would then necessitate recognition of Principle 4, as discussed above. There was therefore extensive discussion of the interdependence and of the order of presentation of the several principles involved. While each of the principles may focus on a specific issue of importance, it should not be treated in isolation from the others. Some members of the Task Force regard Principle 5 as the fundamental one, since it emphasizes the open availability of information generated by the government. Other members would argue that Principle 4 is the fundamental one, since it emphasizes the need to protect private rights. The consensus of the Task Force was that the dependence among the principles is mutual rather than hierarchical, each to be considered as independently valid, that they mutually depend upon each other, and that they will conflict with each other in specific situations. [Page 51] The Task Force deems that to be appropriate and in no way vitiating the importance of the principles. It simply means that the world is complex and that principles can only guide decisions, not make them.

[2.] IMPLEMENTATION.

Three of the recommendations included in the next section of the Report relate specifically to Principle 5: Recommendations #24, #25, and #26. They identify the need to announce availability, to deposit material at centers where it can be viewed, and to avoid assertion of Federal government copyright domestically.

PRICING OF GOVERNMENT INFORMATION.

The following principle, in a formal vote, was UNANIMOUSLY approved:

Principle 6. The Federal government should set pricing policies for distributing information products and services that reflect the true cost of access and/or reproduction, any specific prices to be subject to review by an independent authority.

[1.] DISCUSSION.

With respect to costing, it is necessary to distinguish several categories of cost: (1) cost for generation of the information, (2) cost for the production of the first copy, (3) cost for initial distribution, and (4) cost for subsequent access and reproduction. Even the costs for access are a function of the means for access; similarly for reproduction. In any event, there is a real difficulty in determining the cost for any of those, and even if the costs could be determined they would vary with time as well as with means. Therefore it is almost meaningless to identify costs or to publish them as part of any announcement (as in a Register) of availability. Even the use of a "consistent formula" would not provide an answer, because of the inherent variability of the factors involved.

The issue of cost was extensively discussed. NTIS, for example, does not charge simply the incremental cost; it also charges for overhead. It was pointed out that overhead is a legitimate part of cost; the issue is whether each item of information (title, for example) bears its own share of the total costs or whether all items are treated as an aggregate. It was also pointed out that the term incremental cost refers to the cost for the information package, but not including the costs to create it in the first place (for example, the costs of the research that went into it should not be included in the incremental costs for access to that information). On the other hand, it is also the case that the dissemination of research may require subsidization of publication and distribution of its results.

Turning to the basis for pricing: NTIS and the GPO base their prices roughly on the number of pages, but with the price set so as to recover all costs of operation. This is representative of a pricing approach that deals [Page 52] with the total enterprise rather than with the single item. "Best sellers" may be priced at considerably more than the mere costs of reproduction, and as a matter of public policy, some items may be priced at less than the full costs of reproduction (cases in point being the *Federal Register* and the *Congressional Record*). Furthermore, the price for some items may be greater than the costs of reproduction in order to cover the costs of creation of them. (The example of the NTIS developed index to governmental statistical data bases illustrates this possibility.) The issue of whether it is ever appropriate for the costs of development to be recovered as part of the price is unresolved, although the conflict with the principle of pricing at the incremental cost of access and reproduction is evident.

The problem is how to determine when it is appropriate to price something at other than cost, and who should have the responsibility for doing so. The view of the Task Force is that the Congress should have the responsibility of identifying such publications, either individually or as a class, and of providing the funding necessary for pricing them below cost.

Principle 6 was then considered in detail. Examples were raised of situations in which pricing would appropriately be at other than the incremental cost. The problems in identifying what the costs actually are were discussed, including not only how the costs were to be accounted for but what would be included in them. For example, should the costs of an index be included in the costs of access? The very decision to distribute formally implies one set of costs different from those if the distribution is only in response to separate demands.

[2.] IMPLEMENTATION.

The Task Force did not have specific recommendation to make with respect to this principle, since implementation of it is primarily a technical matter of determining the basis for accounting for costs and establishing prices rather than a policy matter.

LIBRARIES

The following principle was formally voted on and approved by a vote of 13 YES to 1 NO, with one abstention.

Principle 7. The Federal government should actively use existing mechanisms, such as the libraries of the country, as primary channels for making governmentally distributable information available to the public.

[1.] DISCUSSION.

Virtually none of the Federal programs to date has taken cognizance of the availability of the academic, public, and special libraries of the country as an infrastructure for the distribution of information. There has been some effort to use public libraries as points of access to the 1980 census; both state and local libraries [Page 53] are becoming involved in dissemination of energy information; and there is the depository library system. But beyond that, there is little if any formal use of this great resource.

The wording of principle 7 in the Draft Report was as follows:

The libraries of the country should be actively used by Federal agencies as a primary means for making governmental information available to the public.

As with the other principles, this wording was extensively discussed:

- Substitute "government generated" for "governmental"?
- Replace "should" by "must"?
- Should the contrast of "libraries" with "Federal information centers" be emphasized?
- Delete the word "actively"?
- Replace "public" by "citizens"?
- Replace "Federal agencies" by "Federal government" (to include Congress)?
- What does "primary means" mean?

A question was raised about whether this principle really was relevant to the interests of this Task Force. It was pointed out that libraries exist in both the public and the private sectors, that the depository libraries had been specifically concerned about their relationship to the issues of the Task Force, and that a crucial function provided by the libraries is that of serving as the "safety valve" for society — the assurance of means of access, even if the private sector is indeed used as the means for distribution of governmental information.

[2.] IMPLEMENTATION.

To identify some specifics about how the role of libraries could be enhanced with respect to the distribution of Federal governmental information:

- Funding by the Federal government of costs involved in providing this service to the public in general.
- Expanding the scope and range of the depository library system.
- Using the nation's libraries instead of governmental agencies as means for communication with the public.
- Developing ties between private sector information services and libraries.
- Encouraging libraries to develop services based on new technologies (making the public library, in particular, the "electronic information center" for the general public in each community). [Page 54]

The expansion of the depository library system would require attention to some very specific needs:

- The costs of managing, cataloging, and maintaining the depository collections are often ignored, since they are not normally covered by the budgetary support from the principle source of funding for those libraries. Means should be found to provide support for those functions as part of the depository library system.
- Government publications themselves are not organized or distributed in a manner that makes the operation of the depository libraries effective. While several of the recommendations of this Task Force may lead to steps that will alleviate this problem, specific attention will need to be paid, in implementation of them, to the needs of the depository libraries.
- The present set of depository libraries (about 1300 of them) is only a small part of the total library community. Means should be found to expand the number and distribution of depository libraries.

The Task Force makes no specific recommendations concerning these means for increasing the role of libraries. In fact, there would have been significant differences in views within the Task Force concerning the value and appropriateness of any one of them. Despite that fact, the Task Force is generally in agreement with the view that, if libraries are to be society's means for assuring access to government information by the general public, attention will need to be paid to the serious economic problems faced by public and academic libraries throughout the country. While this would possibly require re-deployment of funds from other governmental information activities, the encouragement of libraries in that role is a goal of sufficient economic and social value to warrant doing so.