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Open Source America's Operating System
"It's Not Just A Good Idea—It's The Law!"

February 9, 2011

Mr. Richard G. Davis, Managing Director
Library Services and Content Management
Government Printing Office
732 North Capitol Street, NW
Washington, DC 20401-0001

Ref: Mirror of FDSYS

Dear Mr. Davis:

I am writing to propose an experiment between the Government Printing Office and Public.Resource.Org, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit corporation. As you know, Ms. Sarah Walch of the Office of Archival Management wrote to me and asked if Public.Resource.Org could join other groups in providing a "mirror" of your FDSYS system.

We have been using network-based tools to create such a mirror, but the process is fairly slow and will take over 3 months to create the initial dump. My proposal to you is that Public.Resource.Org send you a disk drive and that GPO copy the current contents of the FDSYS PKG directory and send it back to us. We will use that to load the system, then will engage in a best-effort mirror to keep it up-to-date. We will clearly mark on our system the "as-of" date so it is clear how current the mirror is.

The advantage of the Public.Resource.Org mirror is that we allow bulk access to our system using FTP and rsync protocols. We provide a similar mirror of the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office database in cooperation with Google. I believe this service will be quite useful, particularly to members of the Federal Depository Library Program.

I call this an experiment because I know that the GPO is not in the "business" of loading up disk drives. However, this might be a way of more rapidly propagating large disk archives, and by doing this once with Public.Resource.Org you can evaluate whether this is worth doing again. We will pay for the disk drive and shipping both ways, so there would be no direct cost to the government.

Sincerely yours,

Carl Malamud
Public.Resource.Org