My remarks are based primarily on my participation—first as director for cataloging and subsequently as acting Associate Librarian for Library Services—in sessions and interviews that resulted in two documents produced under the auspices of LC’s Office of Strategic Initiatives. To help set the stage for the Library of Congress’s perspective on universal holdings, let me share with you two statements. The first is the Library’s mission, which is

“... to make its resources available and useful to the Congress and the American people and to sustain and preserve a universal collection of knowledge and creativity for future generations.”

The second is the phrase used by the Library’s first benefactor, the third U.S. President, Thomas Jefferson, who in offering to sell his personal library to the United States Congress, noted that “There is ... no subject to which a member of Congress may not have occasion to refer.”

As these references attest, ours has long been a mandate to build a collection of universal holdings. The challenge that now faces us at LC, as indeed it does for all other institutions, is how to continue building these holdings as the output of digital information proliferates.

I will briefly lay out the planning process and the steps that LC has taken and expects to take in order to assure that our universal holdings are indeed universal. That will require that these holdings be format neutral. It will further require that we balance the requirements for current user access against the requisite long-term preservation that supports LC’s obligation to assure access to future users.

To help us gel our thinking, a retreat was held last fall to discuss issues affecting LC’s universal holdings. The aim was to focus the attention of key managers and stewards who have responsibility for building the Library’s collections on developing solutions to collections development as it has been impacted by the rapid growth in the production and dissemination of digital resources. Our objectives were: 1) to discuss the issues impacting our ability to develop the digital component of LC’s universal holdings; 2) to identify actions that we need to take to address these issues; and 3) to develop next steps that prioritize the actions, identify responsibility for each action, and establish a timeline for the action.

Some assumptions were made that underscore the unique position of the Library of Congress:
1. Our guiding principles for building the collections are the LC Collection Policy Statements (CPS).
   These are ours to fashion to develop the universal holdings that we desire to fulfill the Library’s mission.
2. Best edition statements are exclusive to LC.
These statements stem from our unique position in relation to the Copyright Office’s being a part of the Library. They are necessary to define what gets deposited with the Library. The Library has derived incalculable benefit in building our universal holdings as a result of the mandatory deposit requirement in the copyright law.

3. Acknowledgment that we cannot separate the digital from the analog in collecting content, although the focus of the retreat was digital.
4. The focus would be on content, regardless of format
5. Other libraries will continue to collect items in their content area that LC does not collect.

These assumptions would influence the discussion and the directions that we ultimately take in building our universal holdings.

Nine issues were identified for retreat participants to consider:

1. **Establishing priorities and allocating resources**
2. **Enhancing staff skills**
   - The skills required to collect materials are not limited to technical skills. Skills include being able to find or identify sources of content. Curatorial skills include knowledge gained through apprenticeship to selection officials, and knowledge of the topic.
   - Cataloging skills include being able comfortably to provide bibliographic control to digital items—bibliographic control that is commensurate with the material’s research value, taking into account existing metadata.
3. **Shifting operational roles and responsibilities**
   - Participants observed that LC needs to think about the kinds of content it wants to collect or can support even before a decision is made to acquire it. We need to develop a framework for making those decisions. Assigning content a priority designation (e.g., platinum, gold, silver, bronze—based on a system the Library has devised to help it better secure and protect its invaluable collections) means that we are making a long-term commitment in life-cycle management.
   - This means developing an even more consortial environment among our recommending and selection officers, catalogers, and preservation and technical experts with regard to digital content and its lifecycle. We may also seek to engage other institutions in an active role since LC cannot collect everything.
4. **Revamping collections policies to emphasize content over format**
   - Participants observed that many Collection Policy Statements note that materials are collected in all formats. In some cases there are separate Collection Policy Statements for specific formats (e.g., microforms). We will need to retain the technical specifications for these formats, even as we give more prominence to content.
5. **Facing the challenges of the digital preservation issues**
   - Participants observed that preservation is an important and potentially costly part of the life cycle of content. Recommending and selection officials need to consider preservation of content in their recommendations. The cost to preserve some content, particularly digital, may preclude our collecting it. In some cases, preservation responsibilities may need to be delegated to the creating organization.
6. **Finding resolutions to the legal issues**
   - As any institution that has been engaged in matters digital knows, this is one of the thorniest areas to address. Participants observed that these issues may not be resolved, but
that LC would work, through its Copyright Office, to reach a balance that continues to protect creators, while enabling the Library to serve digital content in a responsible manner. This will include addressing legal issues in the U.S. and international arena, because of our comprehensive collecting mandate.

7. **Forging appropriate relationships with external stakeholders**
   This issue is related to the previous one. Participants observed that it may be that if copyright owners were assured of preservation, then they might be willing to support the cost of reformatting the content. The issue is finding a balance between trust, cost, and preservation, with LC’s functioning in a “trusted party” role. We will need to determine whether the acquisition and long-term preservation of any portion of LC’s universal holdings could be delegated to an external stakeholder.

8. **Mitigating the gap between what users expect and what LC can deliver**

9. **Affirming LC’s collecting priorities**
   Participants observed that LC cannot collect everything—priorities must be set as to what will be acquired for inclusion in LC’s holdings.

We identified six pilot projects and several other actions as next steps to help the Library build its universal holdings in the digital environment. The possible pilots will help LC focus on a number of areas related to the technical, logistical, and legal issues involved in collecting digital content. We wanted to start with small, manageable projects, with the hope that we would learn lessons from these. The ultimate goal is to establish a framework to resolve the larger issues and to develop policies and plans to apply to LC’s collection activities. The six potential pilots are:

1. Web site collection
2. Trusted party relationships and agreements
3. Non-Roman script foreign-source acquisition
4. Licensed access versus ownership
5. Digital audio/video capture
6. Digital content collection through mandatory deposit

We are currently taking into account the funding implications for these pilots, as part of our budgeting plans for fiscal 2003.

A critical step is to involve LC’s recommending officers and curators. To do so, we will survey them. The survey will concentrate on three major questions:

1. What impact has technology had on the kind of content that is produced in your subject area and on the way that content is disseminated?
2. What types of previously unavailable content would be important to include in LC’s universal holdings?
3. How can LC make the shift from its vertical definition of collections scope to a more horizontal definition and how should the accountability structure associated with collections development be most effectively adjusted as the shift is made?

To sum up, there are three components that are critical to LC’s building its universal holdings—Copyright deposit; the concept of “best edition”; and LC’s Collection Policy Statements (CPSs). As we looked at these components, we surfaced some key issues that we have to address.
**Scope and depth of coverage**—we want coverage to be driven by public policy in support of the Library’s prime constituent, the Congress; by historical perspective; and by popular culture. Included in the breadth of coverage are consideration of the ephemera of the web, along with the international collecting that has always been a focus of LC’s collecting policies—much more so than for any other national library.

**Access**—digital resources should be accessible within the various parameters governed by technical and legal constraints. This means that digital items should be accessible without much human intermediation; that both newly created or digitized content, as well as digital content created using older or obsolete technology should be accessible to LC users; that digital material using non-roman scripts must be accessible to our users; that legal restrictions must allow LC to accommodate its variety of users—members of Congress, staff carrying out their normal duties, and readers on LC premises—premises that include the Capitol Hill complex, our suburban Maryland and Virginia locations and our far flung overseas offices.

**Preservation**—consideration of preservation needs must begin at the moment of acquisition of digital content. As we refine our best edition policies for digital materials, we will be in a better position to deal with the preservation concerns. Defining best edition specifications will help us more easily prepare for the long-term preservation of what we acquire. Because the copyright law requires the Library to receive two copies of published items, we must define what the technical specifications are for a digital best edition. It may evolve that of the two required deposit copies, the best edition turns out to be one analog and one digital—the analog to be used for preservation and the digital for access. As the long-term reliability of digital preservation is ascertained, the best edition may well become the digital. This is one of the key focus areas for LC in the coming months and, indeed, years.

**Digital repository**—it goes without saying that a digital repository is vital for the Library’s digital collection strategy. LC will be cooperating with external stakeholders to help us build the kind of robust repository that will support the digital content we already have acquired and are storing locally, along with the new content to come in future years. Martha Anderson, of our Office of Strategic Initiatives, will provide an update on our progress in this area this afternoon as part of the update on the recently Congressionally-approved National Digital Information Infrastructure and Preservation Program.

LC is in the process of updating its universal holdings and collections policies. In carrying out this process, we will review policies covering a variety of content and forms that are tangible and intangible and that are digital and non-digital. A key thrust will concern policies that pertain to items created using new and emerging digital technologies. This will enable us to specify what content we want and in what format. We should be able to see gaps and fill those gaps with the most desirable manifestations, whether digital or analog. Our aim will be to refine our policies and procedures as changing circumstances dictate, to assure that they are clear and rational, and that they support our mission to collect universally.

Thank you!