

우리나라 정부간행물의 배포체계에 관한 분석

Weaknesses in the Distribution System for Korean Government Publications

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초 록

정부의 범위와 역할이 확대되고 그 활동내용이 다양해지면서 정부차원에서 생산되는 정보량도 지속적으로 증가하게 되었을 뿐만 아니라 정부가 생산한 정보는 국민이 국가정책을 이해하는데 중요한 정보원이 되고 있다. 이에 본 연구에서는 우리나라 정부간행물의 발간정책과 최근 발간경향을 살펴보고 정부가 생산한 정보의 합리적 배포체계를 위해 법적, 제도적, 기술적 측면에서 분석하였다.

주제어 : 정부간행물, 정부정보, 배포체계, 생산체계, 정보정책

Abstract

Government agency information has steadily increased as the role of government has expanded, and information provided by the government is increasingly a significant source for the public's understanding of government policy. Further, this information is an important resource for academic research oriented toward national development. However, in South Korea the distribution system for government information is far from ideal. This paper critiques that system. It begins with a short history of Korean government publishing policy, followed by a more detailed look at recent publishing trends. It then goes on to describe the legal, institutional, and technical aspects of Korean government's distribution of its information, focusing on weaknesses that prevent information from reaching those who desire or need it.

Key Words : government publications, government information, distribution system, publishing system, information policy

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1. Introduction

Government has often played a key role in the development of society by publishing and distributing vast amounts of information and data, much of which is geared toward informing the public about government activities and services. The United States Government Printing Office (GPO) is the world's largest publisher of information, regardless of the format in which it appears. In open and democratic societies, government information has been a significant source for the public understanding of national policy. Further, government information provides an important primary resource for academic research.

An efficient distribution system allowing an appropriate utilization of government information is a prerequisite for the development of a democratic government. However, in many countries, the dissemination of government information can be an inefficient process, although it is important that government-generated information be readily available and easily accessible to the public.

According to Oppenheim and MacMorrow (1997, p. 207), there are two broad approaches to disclosure of government information. The first, official secrecy (as has been the tradition in the U.K.), is based on a government's deciding what it will release to the public, and when. The second approach, known as Freedom of Information (FOI), is based on all government information being available to the public, except in certain cases in which the government feels the release of information would be harmful, and here that decision often must be justified to an independent body. The freedom of information principle is an established concept in the U.S. and France.

In the 1990s, many nations began to build their information infrastructures in order to transform an industrial economy into a knowledge-based economy. Since information has become the cutting edge of technological development as well as a central element in economic growth in knowledge-based societies, the development of information technology has become the major issue in national development planning and in the evolving international economic order (Kim, 1996). Because the openness of government is essential to the realization of a transparent and democratic society, democratic nations rush to construct an "electronic government." An example of this is the Korean Information

Infrastructure (KII) Plan, which arose in response to the National Information Infrastructure (NII) initiatives of the U.S. and Japan. The KII will complete the implementation of the "electronic government" by 2010 (Hwang *et al.*, 1999).

As Ch'ng (2001) stated, many developing countries have provisions for the legal deposit of government publications at designated agencies. Nevertheless, in practice, a considerable number of these publications have not been deposited due to a lack of adequate coordination, facilities and manpower. In addition, there is no central government body or exclusive bibliographic control mechanism that facilitates easy access to government information. Furthermore, there is no comprehensive national policy relating to government information resources. Although South Korea is one of the more advanced developing nations, its system for the distribution of government information nevertheless suffers from weaknesses common to developing nations.

Before looking at these distribution problems, this paper reviews in some detail the literature on the publishing of government information in South Korea, in order to provide background for a subsequent literature review of the system by which that information is disseminated, including legal, institutional, and technical aspects. The review includes Korean government publications, excluding public records, issued by ministries and official agencies at all levels.

2. Korean government publishing

2.1 Modern publishing policy

As Childs (1973, p. 40) states, "government publications are a mirror of the functions of a government and of its agencies and its instrumentalities and of its subventions," and in keeping with this, the evolution of Korean government publishing has been heavily influenced by the structure and development of its political system. There has been no centralization of government printing and publishing, from the inception of the modern South Korea constitutional government in 1948. However, since the 1960's, the Korean government has made an effort toward the development of an official publishing and

distribution system by government agencies. Two notable successes were the Advisory Council for the Coordination of Government Publications under the Prime Ministry, created in 1965, and the Government Publishing Office under the Ministry of Information, established in 1991.

Following Executive Order No. 5150 in 1970, the purposes, membership composition, and functions of the Advisory Council for the Coordination of Government Publications were specified. The Council's main purpose has been to review the most effective ways for coordinating official publishing activities by various government agencies. However, a 1997 study (Moon, 1997, p. 29) on the publishing and distribution system for government publications found that for all government publications, the share of government publications reviewed by the Council consistently declined, from 407 titles (15.2%) in 1992 to 389 titles (10.4%) in 1993 and 354 titles (7.6%) in 1994. She recommended modification or abolition of the Council because it had not been effectively operated in spite of several changes in the council. She further stated the necessity of designating a government agency that would assume responsibility for the management of government publications. As Wilson (2000, p. 157) noted, government publishing activities should be supervised by a National Assembly committee, similar to the Joint Committee on Printing of the U.S. Congress, to reduce the duplication of publications by government organizations.

The Government Publishing Office was established under the Ministry of Information to manage and centralize the official publishing activities of different government agencies in 1991. When the Eighth Republic (1998-2003) carried out the reorganization of government in 1998, the Government Publishing Office was absorbed by the newly created Ministry of Culture and Tourism. The major responsibilities of the Government Publishing Office were : to publish and distribute promotional materials on national policies, to produce and disseminate government publications at the request of central government agencies, and to support and manage a library of Government Publishing Office.

In 1999 the Government Information Agency (GIA), a successor to the Ministry of Information that was abolished in the government reorganization of 1998, was established under the Office of Prime Ministry to provide promotional information on national policies. Following Presidential Order No. 16328 in 1999, the Government Publishing Office and National Visual Media Center were integrated into the National Visual Media and Publishing Center at GIA. This new organization has two main functions, to produce

and preserve various multimedia materials regarding overall national policies, and to publish and disseminate a weekly *National Policy Newspaper* and an irregular *National Policy Promotional Publications*. Since 1991, it and its predecessor, the Government Publishing Office, have edited a *Catalog of Government Publications* that provides the overall picture of Korean government publications. However, it is not a comprehensive list covering the entirety of official publications issued by Korean government agencies.

2.2 Recent publishing trends

The entries listed in the *1999 Catalog of Government Publications* (1999, p. 10) present the publishing trends for Korean government information for the six years from 1993 to 1998, as shown in Table 1. The data clearly indicate a constant increase in the number of government publications, from 3,743 titles in 1993 to 4,802 titles in 1997, but the titles of government publications declined dramatically to 4,338 titles in 1998. Perhaps this is at least partly due to the fact that the Kim Dae-jung administration, which came to power in 1998, restructured government to implement smallness and efficiency.

Table 1. Korean government publications by type of agency (1993-1998)*

Issuing Agency	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	Total
Executive	989 (26.4)	1,163 (25.0)	1,331 (26.9)	1,337 (28.5)	1,260 (26.2)	1,300 (30.0)	7,380 (27.2)
Legislative	44 (1.2)	87 (1.9)	84 (1.7)	126 (2.7)	135 (2.8)	72 (1.7)	548 (2.0)
Judiciary	44 (1.2)	39 (0.8)	41 (0.8)	32 (0.7)	26 (0.6)	31 (0.7)	213 (0.8)
Constitutional Court	5 (0.1)	6 (0.1)	7 (0.1)	8 (0.2)	5 (0.1)	6 (0.1)	37 (0.1)
NEMC**	15 (0.4)	9 (0.2)	7 (0.1)	24 (0.5)	8 (0.2)	19 (0.4)	82 (0.3)
Local Government Bodies	839 (22.4)	972 (20.9)	1,060 (21.4)	1,030 (21.9)	1,030 (21.5)	934 (21.5)	5,865 (21.6)
Offices of Education	277 (7.4)	352 (7.6)	443 (9.0)	485 (10.3)	679 (14.1)	390 (9.0)	2,626 (9.7)
GIA***	300 (8.0)	236 (5.1)	291 (5.9)	301 (6.4)	208 (4.3)	221 (5.1)	1,557 (5.7)
GRA****	1,230 (32.9)	1,781 (38.4)	1,686 (34.1)	1,354 (28.8)	1,451 (30.2)	1,365 (31.5)	8,867 (32.6)
Total	3,743(100.0)	4,645(100.0)	4,950(100.0)	4,697(100.0)	4,802(100.0)	4,338(100.0)	27,175 (100.0)

* Number of publications and percentage of total

**NEMC (National Election Management Commission)

***GIA (Government-Invested Agencies)

****GRA (Government-Related Agencies)

Source: Catalog of Government Publications (1999, p. 10).

Besides national and local governments, Korea has two other types of government agencies. The first type, called government-invested agencies, are "organizations in which the government has over 50% of equity share, but whose operations are financially independent of the central government (Wilson, 2000, p. 6)." The Basic Act for Management of Government-Invested Agencies (Act No. 3690, December 31, 1983) was first established to specify basic matters on autonomous and responsible management systems of these agencies. Examples of government-invested agencies are the Korean Electric Power Corporation (KEPCO), the Korean National Tourism Organization (KNTO), and the Korean Trade-Investment Promotion Agency (KOTRA). The second type, called government-related agencies, are organizations that are established with government capital and whose operations are influenced by the national government. In addition to these organizations, government-related agencies include government-supported research institutes whose research and management activities are autonomous with respect to the national government. There are a number of government-related agencies, including the Korean Consumer Protection Board (KCPB), the Korean Research Foundation (KRF), the Korean Energy Management Corporation (KEMC), the Korean Educational Development Institute (KEDI), and the Korean Institute for Industrial Economics and Trade (KIET).

Table 1 also shows the breakdown of government publications by type of issuing agency for the years 1993-1998. Looking at the number of government publications by type of issuing agency, publications by government-related agencies are the most common(32.6%), followed by executive publications(27.2%), local governments' publications (21.6%), city and provincial offices of education publications (9.7%), and government-invested agency publications(5.7%). The considerably high number of publications by the government-related agencies may in part stem from the fact that most of the agencies are mainly composed of government-supported research institutes, so they tend to issue many official publications that report on special research projects. A large number of government publications (27.2%) were issued by the executive branch, including ministries and commissions, while 2.0% of the official publications are from the legislative branch, and only 0.8% came from the judicial branch. The large difference between executive, legislative, and judicial publications may be partly explained by the fact that executive publications are issued by such agencies as the Office of the President, the Office of the Prime Minister, 15 ministries, 15 offices (Food and Drug Safety Office, Patent Office, etc.) and different commissions. In addition, the *Catalog of Government Publications* leaves out

a considerable number of legislative and judicial publications, as mentioned earlier. With the establishment of the local autonomy system in 1995, 5,865 (21.6% of the total of 27,175 government publications) were issued by local government bodies, including the Special City of Seoul, six metropolitan cities, and nine provinces.

Table 2 shows the distribution of Korean government publications by discipline for the six years 1993–1998. The official publications of Korean government agencies were classified according to the ten broad disciplines of the Korean Decimal Classification System, a modified Dewey Decimal Classification, commonly employed in public libraries in Korea. While the data indicate a general consistency in the percentage of government publications by discipline for the six years, the data show strong discipline-to-discipline variations in levels of publishing activities. Most noticeably, the social sciences and applied sciences are characterized by higher levels of official publishing activity than the arts and humanities.

Table 2. Korean government publications by discipline (1993–1998)* **

Discipline**	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	Total
Generalities	183 (4.8)	278 (6.0)	301 (6.1)	189 (4.0)	209 (4.3)	137 (3.2)	1,297 (4.8)
Philosophy	10 (0.3)	17 (0.4)	22 (0.4)	14 (0.3)	10 (0.2)	11 (0.3)	84 (0.3)
Religion	2 (0.0)	1 (0.0)	3 (0.1)	5 (0.1)	3 (0.1)	2 (0.1)	16 (0.1)
Social Sciences	2,264 (60.4)	2,854 (61.4)	3,079 (62.2)	3,110 (66.2)	3,011 (62.7)	2,703 (62.3)	17,021 (62.6)
Natural Sciences	99 (2.6)	102 (2.2)	100 (2.0)	65 (1.4)	109 (2.3)	163 (3.7)	638 (2.3)
Applied Sciences	912 (24.4)	1,070 (23.0)	1,141 (23.0)	986 (21.0)	1,065 (22.2)	873 (20.1)	6,047 (22.3)
Arts	98 (2.6)	119 (2.6)	112 (2.3)	129 (2.8)	186 (3.9)	192 (4.4)	836 (3.1)
Linguistics	17 (0.4)	19 (0.4)	22 (0.4)	20 (0.4)	16 (0.3)	13 (0.3)	107 (0.4)
Literature	74 (2.0)	49 (1.1)	37 (0.8)	29 (0.6)	30 (0.6)	21 (0.5)	240 (0.9)
History	84 (2.2)	136 (2.9)	133 (2.7)	150 (3.2)	163 (3.4)	223 (5.1)	889 (3.3)
Total	3,743 (100.0)	4,645 (100.0)	4,950 (100.0)	4,697 (100.0)	4,802 (100.0)	4,338 (100.0)	27,175 (100.0)

* Number of publications and percentage of total

** Based on the Korean Decimal Classification

Source: Catalog of Government Publications (1999, p. 12)

Of the 27,175 government publications, 17,021 (62.6%) were in the social sciences, 6,047 (22.3%) in the applied sciences (agriculture, environment, and medicine), 1,297 (4.8%) in the general category, 889 (3.3%) in history, and 836 (3.1%) in the arts. At the bottom were philosophy (0.3%), religion (0.1%), linguistics (0.4%), and literature (0.9%), which seem to have little or no relationship with either national policies or government activity. The data indicate that publications by Korean government agencies are heavily concentrated

in such social sciences as economics, politics, public administration, and education.

The distribution of Korean government publications by subject matter seems to reflect the distribution of the Korean researchers who show interest in those publications (Moon, 1997, p. 57). In her study, 92% of the researchers in the social sciences and humanities made heavy use of government publications, while only 29.4% in the sciences and engineering employed those publications as information sources.

Table 3 shows that while the percentage of government publications for each publication language remained fairly constant over the six-year period, the absolute number fluctuated. Among the 27,175 publications, the majority (96.7%) were in Korean.

Table 3. Korean government publications by language (1993-1998)* **

Language	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	Total
Korean	3,571 (95.4)	4,509 (97.0)	4,796 (96.9)	4,556 (97.0)	4,653 (96.9)	4,192 (96.6)	26,277 (96.7)
English	110 (2.9)	113 (2.5)	122 (2.5)	107 (2.3)	117 (2.4)	137 (3.2)	706 (2.6)
Japanese	0	10 (0.2)	11 (0.2)	19 (0.4)	19 (0.4)	3 (0.1)	62 (0.2)
Chinese	0	1 (0.0)	5 (0.1)	4 (0.1)	3 (0.1)	2 (0.0)	15 (0.1)
French	0	1 (0.0)	3 (0.1)	3 (0.1)	2 (0.0)	2 (0.0)	11 (0.0)
German	0	0	3 (0.1)	3 (0.1)	5 (0.1)	0	11 (0.0)
Spanish	0	0	2 (0.0)	2 (0.0)	2 (0.0)	1 (0.0)	7 (0.0)
Russian	1 (0.0)	2 (0.0)	2 (0.0)	2 (0.0)	0	0	7 (0.0)
Arabic	0	0	0	0	0	1 (0.0)	1 (0.0)
Italy	0	0	0	1 (0.0)	0	0	1 (0.0)
Thai	0	0	0	0	1 (0.0)	0	1 (0.0)
Bilingual or Multilingual	61 (1.6)	9 (0.2)	6 (0.1)	0	0	0	76 (0.3)
Total	3,743(100.0)	4,645(100.0)	4,950 (100.0)	4,697 (100.0)	4,802 (100.0)	4,338(100.0)	27,175 (100.0)

* Number of publications and percentage of total

** Based on the Korean Decimal Classification

Source : Catalog of Government Publications (1994, p. 517; 1995, p. 685; 1996, p. 823; 1997, p. 766; 1998, p. 13; 1999, p. 15)

Of the foreign languages employed in government publications, English (2.6%) was the most utilized, followed by Japanese (0.2%) and Chinese (0.1%). The fact that a considerable number of government publications were in English is due to English being considered the universal language for providing promotional information on Korea overseas. In addition, the data reveal the strong economic and political interactions between Korea and the U.S. According to *the 2000 Economic Statistics Yearbook* (2000, pp. 170-173), published by the Bank of Korea, Korean foreign trade in 1999 was greatly influenced by

three major countries, the U.S., Japan, and the People's Republic of China. With exports of \$29.5 billion (20.5%) and imports of \$25 billion (20.8%) in 1999, Korea's trade with the U.S. was the largest component of Korean trade. The second most important trade partner in 1999, was Japan, with \$15.9 billion (11.0%) of Korea's total exports and \$24.1 billion (20.2%) of Korean total imports. With exports of \$13 billion (9.5%) and imports of \$9 billion (7.4%), the People's Republic of China was Korea's third most important trade partner. Further, Korea has strong historical and cultural ties with Japan and China, a consequence of the proximity of these countries. It is likely that the frequency of publications in Japanese and Chinese will increase in the future.

In addition, 76 government publications (0.3%), e.g., *Annual Statistical Report on Korean Tourists*, were either bilingual or multilingual. Bae's (1994) analysis of the Korean government's publishing activities found that the Ministry of Information, the predecessor of the Government Information Agency, published approximately 30% of its publications in foreign languages to promote national policies and Korean culture abroad.

3. Distribution system of Korean government publications

3.1 Legal deposit and depository libraries

The legal depository systems for government publications are summarized in Table 4. The 1963 Library Law required that two copies of all government publications printed or published in Korea, including "official gazettes," be deposited with the National Library of Korea. In addition, upon becoming a depository library upon the passage of the National Assembly Library Act in 1963, the Library began to receive ten copies of official publications and reports from government agencies within thirty days of the issuing date. The National Assembly Library was also designated as a depository library for inter-governmental publications issued by international organizations such as the U.N. and the W.T.O. In the reorganization of the Eighth Republic (1998-2003), the Government Archives and Records Service within the Ministry of Government Administration and Home Affairs (MOGAHA) is entitled under the Regulations for Office Management to receive three free

copies of official publications issued by the executive branches of both national and local governments. In addition, government agencies are obliged to submit three copies of their publications to the Library of National Visual Media and Publishing Center. The Regulations for Office Management stated that the leading public libraries in cities and provinces could be designated as depository libraries (Hong, 1993, pp. 42-43, 57-59; Moon, 1997, p. 39). Following the Regulations for Public Libraries Council, fifteen regional public libraries were designated, one for each major city and each province. Korean government publications are to be placed on deposit in these regional public libraries; in return, the libraries have accepted responsibility for making these publications available to the public.

Table 4. Korean legal depository system for government publications

Government agency responsible for management of depository system	National Library of Korea	National Assembly Library of Korea	Central Materials Management Agency	Regional Representative Agencies
Key legislation	Library and Reading Promotion Act	National Assembly Library Act	Office Management Regulations	Office Management Regulations
Materials for deposit	Books, serials, discs, videotapes and other materials specified by the Act	Books, serials, and materials for legislative information support and international exchange	Official publications assigned a Publication Registration Number (PRN)	Official publications assigned a Publication Registration Number (PRN)
Time limit for submission	Within 30 days of the date on which the material is issued or produced	Within 30 days of the date on which the material is issued or produced	Within three months of the issue date	Within one month of the issue date
No. of copies to submit	Two copies	① Ten copies from national and local agencies ② Two copies from publishers	Three copies	Two copies
Depositors	Issuing agencies including national and local agencies and publishers	Issuing agencies including national and local agencies and publishers	All government agencies that issue official publications	All government agencies that issue official publications

Sources : Publishers and Printing Offices Registration Act (Presidential Order No. 14375, Revised in August 31, 1994);

Library and Reading Promotion Act (No. 5657, Revised in January 21, 1999);

National Assembly Library Act (No. 6034, Revised in December 15, 1999);

Office Management Regulations (Presidential Order No. 15063, Revised in June 29, 1996).

Currently, the National Library of Korea, the National Assembly Library of Korea, the Government Archives and Records Service, and the Library of National Visual Media and

Publishing Center, and the selected regional libraries are depository libraries in Korea. Although all government agencies, including local government bodies, are legally required to submit a certain number of copies of their publications to depository libraries, in practice some government agencies have ignored the laws and regulations entirely, or have provided only samples of their publications. The major reasons for these failures in the deposit system can be summarized as the lack of an agency staff perception of the necessity of making legally-required deposits, the lack of enforcement of the deposit system laws and regulations, and the lack of unified laws and regulations for the depository system.

Consequently, no depository library has a collection of government publications that is even approaching being complete and comprehensive. Hong's study (1993, pp. 57-89) of the distribution of government publications in public libraries found that 12 of the 15 regional public libraries and 13 of the 18 public libraries in Seoul, the capital of Korea, had fewer than 100 government publication titles. Of the 3,743 government publication titles in 1993, the average number distributed to the 15 regional public libraries was only 58, while that of government publications distributed to the 18 public libraries in Seoul was little better, standing at 77 titles. That is, an overwhelming majority of government publications simply were not acquired, so most citizens, wherever they live in Korea, suffer from an inadequate distribution system for government publications, which of course hinders the availability and accessibility of vital government information. To rectify this, Moon (1997, p. 82) has suggested the enforcement of the deposit system laws and regulations that require the deposit of all government publications. She has also emphasized the necessity of developing a national authority, a central coordinating body to carry out the management of the deposit system and of the depository libraries.

3.2 Distribution methods for government publications

While the depository system laws and regulations determine many of the details of government publication distribution, another factor affecting the distribution of government information is whether it is for sale. According to the *Catalogs of Government Publications*, government publications not for sale accounted for 19,408 (82.8%) of total government publications for the five years (1994-1998), so less than one fifth (4,024

publications, 17.2%) were for sale. A recent trend has been for government publications of scholarly value to be offered for sale more and more often, as can be seen in Table 5. In 1998, of the 942 government publications for sale, the type of agency that issued the largest number of titles was the government-related agency (735 titles, 78.0%), followed by the executive branch of the central government with 140 (14.9%), local government bodies with 46 (4.9%), government-invested agencies with 18 (1.9%), and city and provincial offices of educations with 3 (0.3%). The data reveal a current trend: the share of government publications for sale rose from 5.0% in 1992 to 14.0% in 1995, and to 21.7% in 1998. Government publications for sale are distributed either via designated government publications sale centers or issuing agencies. In addition, the number of designated government publications sales centers has increased a dramatic 142%, from 24 in 1993 to 58 in 1998. However, the acquisition of government publications outside the capital area is problematic, because sales centers are concentrated in and around Seoul.

Table 5. Korean government publications by distribution method (1994-1998)*

	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	Total
Provided Without Charge	3,859 (83.0)	4,233 (86.0)	3,970 (84.5)	3,950 (82.3)	3,396 (78.3)	19,408 (82.8)
For Sale	786 (17.0)	717 (14.0)	727 (15.5)	852 (17.7)	942 (21.7)	4,024 (17.2)
Total	4,645(100.0)	4,950(100.0)	4,697(100.0)	4,802(100.0)	4,338(100.0)	23,432(100.0)

* Number of publications and percentage of total

Source : Catalog of Government Publications (1995, p. 686; 1996, p. 825; 1997, p. 768; 1998, p. 15; 1999, p. 14)

For the government publications that are provided free, there are even more problems for distribution, because "the dissemination of free government publications is based on a predetermined distribution list compiled by each agency (Wilson, 2000, p. 42)." Thus, the issuing agencies distribute their free publications to government agencies, public agencies, academic libraries, public libraries, research institutes and individuals in the specialized fields according to the distribution list. It is often impossible for newly-established institutes to be included on the distribution list, because the distribution lists are customarily subjective, without any logical criteria for the process of selecting the agencies or persons that are to receive the publications. Moon (1997, pp. 42-43) recommended as a solution that government publications presently distributed without charge gradually become publications

that are for sale. That is, the establishment of a distribution system for a greater number of government publications through sales is necessary to give the public easy access to government publications.

3.3 Legal framework for distribution of government information

Until recently, closely controlled and regulated access to government information has been generally accepted as necessary in Korea. However, there is certainly a growing sense of openness in regard to government information in the present transitional period. As Moore (1997) noted, it is a truism that Korean policies on access to information are being challenged increasingly by Western governments, by international organizations like the WTO and G7, and by Korean citizens. As Korea has experienced economic growth and political stability in the 1990s and early 21st Century, the attitudes towards access to government information are being reconsidered by the Korean government as well as by the public. In addition, a paradigm for public access to information is being created by information technology that facilitates increased availability of and better access to information. In 1992 freedom of information issues began to be seriously discussed when the Supreme Court of Korea judged in favor of a citizen's right of access to the administrative information of a local government in "A Proposal of Administrative Information Openness Ordinance of Chongju city." Following the decision of the Supreme Court, many local assemblies began to pass administrative information openness ordinances that permit the disclosure of information to the public. Similar to the Freedom of Information Act in the U.S., the Information Openness of Public Agencies Act, which was passed in 1996, has been in effect since 1998. Although the legislation may provide a basis for right of access to information held by public authorities, it is criticized for considerably restricting the disclosure of such government information as speculative investment in real estate, technology development, and reunification-related matters, all contrary to the intent of the original legislation. Besides regulating the extent of information openness, the act deleted a section on the establishment of an independent information openness commission, an agency responsible for managing the appeal process.

Chu (1999) has suggested specific criteria necessary for deciding the openness of government information, and the Information Openness Act provides eight situations that

can justify restrictions on the disclosure of information held by public agencies. However, decisions on restrictions are often made by the subjective judgments of agency staff because the eight sections of the Information Openness Act regulating the secrecy of official information are both wide-ranging and ambiguous. After a comprehensive study of the type of information not open to the public, specific criteria for information secrecy are needed, including personnel matters, budgeting, balancing accounts, and other accounts-related matters, contract-related matters, and approval and permission-related matters.

Government agencies have vast quantities of government information, and this increasingly constitutes an important resource that has a strong bearing on citizens' daily lives. In 1995 the Basic Law for the Facilitation of Informatization was passed to implement an electronic government through administrative computerization. This was part of a wider move to provide administrative information services using information technology. Sections 11-13 of that law provide the legal framework for various projects aimed at facilitating the dissemination of information, including the computerization of the public sector, the spread of an "information culture," and the providing of more information. As a result, the databases being built by public agencies are open to the public. Public agencies, including government agencies, accounted for 21.2% of all Korean database producers and distributors (Hwang & Kim, 1994).

3.4 IT framework for distribution of government information

The National Basic Information System project (1987-1996) emphasized information sharing and the provision of services by information networks, along with the development of information industries in Korea (Hwang *et al.*, 1999). As the project was approaching completion in 1995, the Korean Information Infrastructure (KII) Plan for Information Superhighways was proposed. As a fifteen-year electronic government plan with a US \$2.5 billion infrastructure budget, it aims at developing a "paperless" electronic communication network that includes not only all government agencies, private businesses, and research institutes, but also 13 million households, all on the Korean Information Infrastructure (KII) backbone. The KII plan calls for the completion of a government information network, the Korean Information Infrastructure-Government (KII-G), by 2002 and a public information network, the Korean Information Infrastructure-Public (KII-P), by 2010.

As in the case of other IT-advanced countries in Asia, the KII-G, the first-step toward a national information infrastructure, is being completed directly through government sector involvement, with public funds. It will be finished during 2002. Following that, the KII-P project, the second-step toward a comprehensive broadband network, is to be carried out with private funds by the private sector, including such industries as telecommunication service providers, in order to provide improved information and communication services to the public. As a result of the KII plan, the Ministry of Government Administration and Home Affairs (MOGAHA) completed during 2001 the integration of existing decentralized Web sites into the E-government site. The E-government site will play a key role in providing clearing services to citizens, via the internet, for all administrative information.

With the IT development plan, much more government information is being produced electronically. Electronic formats for government publications are mainly CD-ROMs, online databases, and Web sites. As of 1998, the number of government publications issued on CD-ROM was 91 titles, comprising only 2.1% of 4,338 Korean government publications (National Visual Media and Publishing Center, 1999, p. 15). With the growing emphasis on electronic distribution of government information in the 1990s, however, many government publications are increasingly being issued in CD-ROM format. For example, until 1997 the National Assembly Library published in print format two main bibliographies, the *Masters' and Doctoral Theses Catalog* and *Index to the Periodicals*, but in 1998 the Library shifted this to CD-ROM format, entitled *The National Assembly Library's Bibliographic Information*, which includes two guides. Very recently, a number of other heavily-used government publications previously issued in print format have been shifted to CD-ROM format. In addition, since the 1988 construction of Korea's first database for providing economic and industrial full-text information, such leading telecommunications network as Chollian of DACOM, Hitel of Korean Telecom, and Unitel of UDS have played an important role in the electronic dissemination of government information resources. According to the *1996-1998 Catalog of Government Publications*, the number of government publications available through telecommunication networks and/or the Internet has increased rapidly, from 90 titles in 1995 to 252 titles in 1997, an increase of 180%.

It appears that many government agencies, including ministries, departments, and local government bodies have maintained their informative Web sites. Major libraries, such as

the National Library of Korea, the National Assembly Library, the KERIS, the KISTI, and the KAIST Science Library have participated in the National Digital Library Project, which is designed to digitize their collections, in particular government publications, to make them available to the public over the Internet or via other networks. The Korean Education and Research Information Service (KERIS) is a government-funded organization established by the KERIS Act, which merged the Korean Multimedia Education Center (KMEC) and the Korean Research Information Center (KRIC) in 1999. Its mission is to establish a comprehensive education and research information network, which allows researchers easy access to domestic and overseas scholarly information. The Korean Institute of Science and Technology Information (KISTI), a key organization of the national knowledge information infrastructure, was established at a result of the consolidation of KINITI and KORDIC in 2001. It is an affiliated information organization of the Korean Research Council of Public Science and Technology under the Prime Minister's Office. This new organization has main four functions, to produce and provide bibliographic and full-text databases in science and technology, to provide technology information analysis service for value-added knowledge information, to construct and enhance the research network for information dissemination, and to support supercomputing facilities for research and development activities.

All these digitized information resources are available to the public free of charge via the Internet. For example, the National Assembly Library has provided 16 bibliographic databases and 14 full-text databases to the public on the Web. Full-text information of all government publications listed in the *Catalog of Government Publications* is also available on the Web site of the Government Archives & Records Service under the Ministry of Government Administration and Home Affairs (MOGAHA). In addition, the Korea Advanced Institute of Science and Technology (KAIST) Science Library in Daedeok Science Town, established in the 1970's to assist national development by encouraging scientific and technological innovation, has since 1997 led the National Digital Science Library Project to provide clearing services for international scholarly journals in the science and technology fields.

Nevertheless, the quality and content of Web sites vary from one agency to another. An evaluation (Yoo, 2001) of Web information services being provided by 40 Korean government agencies was conducted by applying quality measurement methods. The researchers found that in terms of retrieval effectiveness, user-friendliness, and user

support systems, the majority of government Web sites (82%) were below the level of satisfaction demanded by users. On a scale from 1 (very poor) to 7 (excellent), the Ministry of Environment (ME) site was evaluated as "well maintained but still needing to be revised" while receiving the highest score (5.3). In contrast, the Military Manpower Administration (MMA) site was the worst site (2.2); it gives only basic information on the agency, but offers an no means for information retrieval.

4. Conclusion

Government publications have steadily increased in number as the role of government has expanded, and the Korean government has responded by making efforts to increase the efficiency of the publication and distribution systems. This is commendable, in that government information is increasingly a significant source for public understanding of national policy, as well as an information resource for academic research oriented toward national development.

Nevertheless, an inadequate distribution system hinders the availability and accessibility of vital government information. All government agencies are legally required to submit a certain number of copies of their government official publications to depository libraries. However, in practice, a considerable number of these publications have not been deposited due to a lack of adequate coordination, facilities and manpower. In addition to the depository system laws and regulations, another factor affecting the distribution of government publications is whether they are for sale. Moon recommended as a solution for poor distribution that government publications presently distributed without charge gradually become publications that are for sale. Although the Korean Information Infrastructure-Government (KII-G) will be in place in 2002 as a result of direct government action funded by the public, and although more and more government information is being produced and disseminated electronically, inherent weaknesses still remain, and these must be addressed.

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