

# GAO Highlights

Highlights of [GAO-15-315](#), a report to congressional committees

## Why GAO Did This Study

The Library of Congress is the world's largest library, whose mission is to make its resources available and useful to Congress and the American public. In carrying out its mission, the Library increasingly relies on IT systems, particularly in light of the ways that digital technology has changed the way information is created, shared, and preserved.

The House Appropriations Committee report accompanying the 2015 legislative branch appropriations bill required GAO to conduct a review of IT management at the Library. GAO's objectives focused on the extent to which the Library has established and implemented key IT practices and requirements in, among other areas: (1) strategic planning, (2) governance and investment management, (3) information security and privacy, (4) service management, and (5) leadership. To carry out its work, GAO reviewed Library regulations, policies, procedures, plans, and other relevant documentation for each area and interviewed key Library officials.

## What GAO Recommends

GAO is recommending that the Library expeditiously hire a permanent CIO. GAO is also making 30 other recommendations to the Library aimed at establishing and implementing key IT management practices. The Library generally agreed with GAO's recommendations and described planned and ongoing actions to address them.

View [GAO-15-315](#). For more information, contact Joel C. Willemsen at (202) 512-6253 or [willemsenj@gao.gov](mailto:willemsenj@gao.gov).

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## LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

### Strong Leadership Needed to Address Serious Information Technology Management Weaknesses

## What GAO Found

The Library of Congress has established policies and procedures for managing its information technology (IT) resources, but significant weaknesses across several areas have hindered their effectiveness:

**Strategic planning:** The Library does not have an IT strategic plan that is aligned with the overall agency strategic plan and establishes goals, measures, and strategies. This leaves the Library without a clear direction for its use of IT.

**Investment management:** Although the Library obligated at least \$119 million on IT for fiscal year 2014, it is not effectively managing its investments. To its credit, the Library has established structures for managing IT investments—including a review board and a process for selecting investments. However, the board does not review all key investments, and its roles and responsibilities are not always clearly defined. Additionally, the Library does not have a complete process for tracking its IT spending or an accurate inventory of its assets. For example, while the inventory identifies over 18,000 computers currently in use, officials stated that the Library has fewer than 6,500. Until the Library addresses these weaknesses, its ability to make informed decisions will be impaired.

**Information security and privacy:** The Library assigned roles and responsibilities and developed policies and procedures for securing its information and systems. However, its implementation of key security and privacy management controls was uneven. For example, the Library's system inventory did not include all key systems. Additionally, the Library did not always fully define and test security controls for its systems, remediate weaknesses in a timely manner, and assess the risks to the privacy of personal information in its systems. Such deficiencies also contributed to weaknesses in technical security controls, putting the Library's systems and information at risk of compromise.

**Service management:** The Library's Information Technology Services (ITS) division is primarily responsible for providing IT services to the agency's operating units. While ITS has catalogued these services, it has not fully developed agreements with the other units specifying expected levels of performance. Further, the other units were often not satisfied with these services, which has contributed to them independently pursuing their own IT activities. This in turn has resulted in units purchasing unnecessary hardware and software, maintaining separate e-mail environments, and managing overlapping or duplicative IT activities.

**Leadership:** The Library does not have the leadership needed to address these IT management weaknesses. For example, the agency's chief information officer (CIO) position does not have adequate authority over or oversight of the Library's IT. Additionally, the Library has not had a permanent CIO since 2012 and has had five temporary CIOs in the interim.

In January 2015, at the conclusion of GAO's review, officials stated that the Library plans to draft an IT strategic plan within 90 days and hire a permanent CIO. If it follows through on these plans, the Library will be in a stronger position to address its IT management weaknesses and more effectively support its mission.