'Yes We Scan: US government access policies and the revived attempt to 'Reboot.Gov''

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Despite being the home of Creative Commons and other 21stC advances for the public domain, a history of disastrous US government 'commercial' decisions in the 20th Century reversed the promise of much earlier initiatives such as the Government Printing Office, and resulted in a range of key information being lost to public access, or left languishing for want of resources. Compared to the global successes of e.g. the Free Access to Law movement (assisted by AustLII), public access to legislation, cases, and regulatory material has been stunted; and as in other domains in the diverse US system, there is a patchwork of progress or regression in related fields of public information such as standards, safety, and skills for public information creation. However with the digital-friendly Obama regime in Washington, there is now a renewed push by long time activists (YesWeScan.org) and a coalition of supporters to break the paralysis and leap-frog to the front of the field. This paper looks at the early promise and past failures, and focuses on the key elements of the new proposals, comparing them with the scope, resourcing and status of Australian equivalents.