

## **APPENDIX 13. NCLIS STUDY PLAN OUTLINE**

Note: This plan was developed in July 2000 and reflects the Commission's plans at the beginning of the assessment. As was intended, these plans were amended and changed as circumstances and opportunities warranted. The original document is included here to show how the assessment was originally planned, and does not convey everything that was, in fact, done as part of the study, or even how each thing was done.

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In Consultation with the Commissioners and Staff

### **BACKGROUND<sup>1</sup>**

This is a study plan outline for the NCLIS study of public information dissemination reforms, including information on the establishment and operation of the four advisory panels and the Board of Experts,<sup>2</sup> and other related NCLIS research activities that are planned.

On June 12, 2000, Senator John McCain, Chairman of the Senate's Commerce, Science, and Transportation Committee, signed a letter to NCLIS Chairperson Martha Gould asking NCLIS to undertake an independent review of the government's public information dissemination laws, policies, programs, and practices. A copy of that letter, NCLIS Chairperson Martha Gould's reply, as well as an NCLIS press release, appears above at this URL address.

Henceforth NCLIS will be referring to the first stage of the study completed in March 2000 of the NTIS situation as the "Preliminary Assessment of the NTIS Closure and Transfer," or Stage One, and the next stage of the study, which is just now being launched, as the "Comprehensive Assessment of Public Information Dissemination," or Stage Two.

### **ADVISORY PANEL CHAIRS AND PANEL OPERATIONS**

To help the Commission in its investigations, four advisory panels and one Board of Experts are being established. The four panels are:

- Panel 1 (**NTIS Business Model**)-Reforming the NTIS business model for the Information Age;
- Panel 2 (**Internal Government Reforms**)-The extent to which individual government agency needs for NTIS, GPO, NARA, national library, & other central service bureau types of information products and services are not being adequately satisfied because of deficient, outmoded, obsolete or unresponsive laws, programs, policies, or practices;
- Panel 3 (**External User Needs**)-The extent to which external (i.e. non-governmental) user needs for NTIS, GPO, NARA, national library, & other central government information products and services, as well as individual Federal agency information products and services are not being

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<sup>1</sup> Available at <http://www.nclis.gov/govt/assess/assess.appen13.pdf> and at <http://www.nclis.gov/govt/assess/planout.html>. This appendix was last revised on July 25, 2000.

<sup>2</sup> This was later referred to as the "Group of Experts."

adequately satisfied because of deficient, outmoded, obsolete, or unresponsive laws, programs, policies, or practices; user needs include: private corporations; institutions such as universities, research organizations and hospitals; library and other intermediary distributors of government information (including public, State, academic, research, depository and special libraries); public interest groups; and individual citizen needs; and

- **Panel 4 (Public-Private Sector Partnerships)**-Redefining public-private sector roles, partnerships, and initiatives vis-à-vis public access to, and dissemination of government information, given the advent of the World Wide Web, the Internet, and associate technological changes that are driving the Information Age.

NCLIS is very pleased to announce that all four candidates invited to serve as chairs have accepted the invitations. They are:

*Panel One: Reforming the NTIS Business Model: Chair: Peter Urbach*, former Director, National Technical Information Service (NTIS), publisher and consultant;

*Panel Two: Internal Federal Agency Information Needs: Chair: Kurt Molholm*, Administrator, Defense Technical Information Center (DTIC), Department of Defense, and Chair, CENDI (interagency group of agencies with important scientific and technical information missions and programs);

*Panel Three: External (public) Information Needs: Chair: Miriam Drake*, Dean and Director of Libraries, Georgia Institute of Technology, Atlanta, Georgia; former President, Special Libraries Association; and

*Panel Four: Refining Public-Private Sector Roles: Chair: Wayne Kelley*, former Superintendent of Documents, Government Printing Office, consultant.

All four of these distinguished individuals participated in the NCLIS Stage One study dealing with the planned closure of NTIS. All four are widely respected, both within and well beyond the boundaries of the library, government information handling, and electronic publishing fields. NCLIS is honored that they have agreed to serve in this role, and requests that they be given the fullest support from federal agencies, lower levels of government, public institutions such as universities and hospitals, private corporations, public interest groups, professional associations, and individual private citizens.

The panels will not just look at the negative side of the equation - - that is deficiencies. They will also look at the positive side of the equation. That is, try to identify "success stories" where a law, program, policy, or practice is working particularly well, is innovative, perhaps is because it is interactive, perhaps because it is multimedia, or has a "multiplier impact," and therefore, for these and/or other reasons, could be more broadly emulated. Reviewing what is working well applies to both the public and private sectors, and especially where private sector practices might be adopted and adapted to the Government's programs.

Moreover, the findings and results of the deliberations of each of the four panels will be "cross-fertilized, laterally and horizontally" and, at the most propitious and appropriate time, made available for public review and comment so that as wide a set of viewpoints as is feasible can be solicited. In short, NCLIS does not want the four panels to operate purely in a "stovepipe, vacuum fashion." NCLIS found in its stage one study that broad public participation, and the resultant wide stakeholder "back and forth" interaction, fostered a valuable climate for ferreting out both hidden facts and enlightened opinions.

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All stakeholder groups are encouraged to seek participation in the work of all four of the panels, whether they are from the public or private sectors. For example, there is no intention that the participation of library professionals be limited just to panel three, or the participation of government agencies be limited just to panel two, or the participation of private sector individuals be limited just to panels one or four. NCLIS hopes there will be as wide a cross-section of stakeholder representation as is feasible given study constraints on all four panels.

The Board of Experts will be composed of recognized, knowledgeable individuals in the fields of information and communications technologies, economics, legal matters, and perhaps other specialized technical fields, including especially the World Wide Web and the Internet, state-of-the-art online approaches, alternative ways of measuring and valuing both the benefits and costs of creating, adding value to, packaging, and making available and distributing government information resources to the public, and so forth. The Board will also assist NCLIS in predicting major future changes and paradigm shifts they perceive on the horizon.

An NCLIS staff person, consultant, or commissioner will serve as liaison to each panel and the board. Membership on each panel and the board will be recommended by the chairs, NCLIS, and other interested parties such as associations, but the Commission reserves final membership approval authority.

The advisory panels are being asked to:

1. Analyze the key issues and concerns falling within the scope of their respective panels (i.e., perhaps an outdated law, a poorly written or interpreted rule, an obsolete regulation, the need for a new policy, a poorly operating program, deficient agency practice, or some combination thereof) in terms of:
  - What is "wrong," deficient, not working as expected, or is out-of-date; and, if so, exactly how and why; conversely, are there "success stories," wherein something innovative is working especially well, and might be more widely followed;
  - What needs to be done to remedy the deficiency (i.e. the reform(s) needed); did the panel make certain assumptions in order to arrive at a recommended (preferred) course of action, and, if so, what are those assumptions;
  - What barriers and constraints exist, if any, to fully and effectively implementing the recommended reforms; and, conversely, what enabling actions (e.g. new legislation, parlaying the "success stories" of agency initiatives that are especially creative, innovative and effective) can be taken to create more positive conditions for strengthening the dissemination of government information to the public; and
  - Should the reforms be subdivided, timeframe-wise, into short, medium, and long-term reforms, and, if so, how and what are those timeframes?
2. Try to assess the likely technological state-of-the-art capabilities in the short (current to two years), mid (2-5 years) and long term (beyond five years) timeframes that will impact the ability of the government to improve its public information dissemination programs and practices, including hardware, software, networks, and information interchange protocols; in this regard the Board of Experts should be able to provide useful advice; and
3. Prepare and submit a draft final panel report to NCLIS with findings, conclusions, and recommendations; ideally (but not mandatory) include the text, or at least an abstract, or "key points" for any proposed new or amended legislation, executive orders, rules or regulations, other kinds of policy statements (e.g. OMB circulars or bulletins, executive orders), or other requirements.

NCLIS will then forward a copy of the four advisory panel draft reports to the Board of Experts for their review and comment; the panel and board chairs are expected to meet as necessary to discuss how to proceed. Once again, to the extent deadlines permit, the public will be invited to review and comment on first drafts.

### TIMETABLE

NCLIS staff comments, and the Board of Experts' comments, as well as the comments of other selected reviewers, will be forwarded to the panel chairs who will make the necessary revisions in their draft reports, and prepare and submit a final report to NCLIS no later than October 1, 2000.

NCLIS will consolidate the four panel reports, review the comments of the board and other reviewers, and prepare a final draft overall report.

The draft final consolidated report will be forwarded to the panel chairs and the board chair for review and comment **by November 15, 2000**; the draft report will also be posted to this Web site, and otherwise made available for public review and comment. The interested committees of the Congress will also be asked to review these documents.

NCLIS will prepare and submit its final report to the President and the Congress **December 15, 2000, as required by Senator McCain's Committee.**

For its part, NCLIS will do everything it can to support the panel chairs and the work of the panels. For example, NCLIS staff liaisons will facilitate posting materials, group e-mailings, faxes, duplication and mailings, and so forth.

### OTHER ELEMENTS OF THE STUDY

There are other key elements of the NCLIS study beyond the work of the four advisory panels and the Board of Experts. For example, the NCLIS Public-Private Sector Task Force report published in 1982 will be republished with a new preface explaining why the findings, conclusions, and recommendations in the original report are still quite relevant nearly twenty years later, despite very significant interim technological developments. Former NCLIS Chairperson Charles Benton, former NCLIS Executive Director Dean Toni Carbo, and former NCLIS Task Force Chairperson Robert Hayes have all been contacted and have enthusiastically endorsed the Commission's plans in this regard. The republished document will be made widely available.

A variety of additional key research activities are also contemplated. These efforts will begin and proceed in parallel to the work of the panels, and will be under the direction of various volunteers. The results of these activities will be made available to the panels and the Board as soon as they become available. If panels identify additional research activities beyond those here listed, they are encouraged to bring them to the attention of NCLIS. Some of these already underway include (short, informal and unofficial titles are used for brevity sake herein):

1. Update the Congressional Research Service (CRS) review "Compilation of Statutes Authorizing Dissemination of Government Information to the Public" dated March 29, 1996, co-authored by Jane Bortnick Griffith, Harold C. Relyea and Frances A. Bufalo;

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2. Update the "National Information Policies Bibliography" published in 1996 by Dean Toni Carbo of the School of Information Sciences of the University of Pittsburgh, including the newly-acquired document collection from former CRS official Robert Chartrand;
3. Informal Survey of Selected Federal Agency Public Information Dissemination Programs and Practices, including agency Websites, classified by agency type such as cabinet department, regulatory, etc., by subject matter coverage, by special interests targeted, and so forth; coordinate closely with Panel Two;
4. Update Phase 1 of the 1998 GPO/Westat study to ensure NCLIS is fully aware of the state-of-the-art Federal IT situation, initially done by the National Academy of Sciences, Computer Sciences and Technology Board; coordinate closely with the Board of Experts;
5. Communicate and/or meet with representatives of the NIIAC, Access America/NPR, and the very recently announced FirstGov.Gov and WebGov.Gov initiatives, and the Government[-] Connection.Com initiative; GPO including FDLP/Sales Program/GPO Access; LC Thomas/Other Library of Congress Programs and services; Statistical Agencies; public information user groups such as Americans Communicating Electronically (ACE) and the Association of Public Data Users (APDU); professional library associations including ALA, SLA, ARL, ACRL, PLA, AALL ULC and COSLA; coordinate closely with Panel Three;
6. Secure assistance of experienced "legislative drafter specialists" to help prepare recommended legislation, rules, regulations, executive orders, OMB circulars and bulletins, other kinds of policy statements, and so forth;
7. Special coordination with the CIO Council and its committees, with responsibility for public information creation, handling, storage, retrieval, dissemination, archiving, and so forth, especially those overseeing the FirstGov.Gov and E-Gov initiatives; coordinate closely with Panel Two;
8. Preparation of a comprehensive Stage Two Study bibliography;
9. Preparation of Key General Reference Annexes, including a comprehensive "Public Information Resources Map" which could serve as a working matrix that classifies, cross-indexes and correlates in other useful ways the full array of:
  - Federal information laws, public information resources, legislative and executive authorities and responsibilities,
  - Agency public information roles, products, and services, both central service bureau and individual agencies (sorted by subject category, targeted beneficiary entitlement groups, and so forth),
  - The various major Federal information beneficiary and user groups,
  - How public information programs and services are financed (e.g. appropriations, revolving funds, user fees),
  - Whether fees are charged for a government information product or service, or not, and
  - So forth.
10. A background section will be prepared for the final report succinctly describing in highlight fashion "major relevant Information Age paradigm shifts" which have/are occurring during the transition from the pre-electronic to the electronic era, such as:
  - How the basic ideas of "access" vs. "dissemination" are changing significantly;
  - How agency and private sector roles, responsibilities, missions, and methods are being realigned,

- Permanent public access vs. impermanent public access to current information,
- Paper-based collections being replaced by electronic databases,
- E-gov vs. paper-based gov, and
- About two dozen additional major paradigm shifts.

## **FINAL REPORT TO THE CONGRESS AND THE PRESIDENT**

NCLIS will receive inputs for its final report throughout the course of the study from:

1. The work of the four advisory panels;
2. The work of the Board of Experts;
3. Results of review of the various research activities, including literature reviews, the database of current information laws, and so on;
4. Results of the selected federal agency surveys of their principal public information dissemination programs and practices;
5. Meetings with the CIO Council and its committees, and other key interagency groups including the Federal Publishers Committee, the Interagency Committee on Publishing and Printing, the Federal Library and Information Center Committee, the Federal Webmasters Group, and others;
6. Meetings with library and information professional associations, including ALA, SLA, AALL, COSLA, ASIS, ARL, ACRL, ULC, PLA, and others;
7. Meetings with State, local, and tribal library and information professional associations, and with special and specialized societies;
8. Meetings with private sector groups including trade and industry associations, unions, and others;
9. Meetings with public information user groups, including ACE and APDU;
10. Public responses to NCLIS Web Site postings, and other relevant web sites including, notably, the new e-Gov web site launched by the Senate Governmental Affairs committee;
11. Inputs from other sources

NCLIS's final report will include a foreword, acknowledgements paragraph, background section, a findings section, a conclusions section, and a recommendations section, plus a bibliography, a list of study participants, a chronology, and a variety of annexes. The analysis undertaken to prepare this report will take into account advantages and disadvantages of alternative proposed courses of action over the current situation, a preferred course of action and how and why it was selected, how those recommendations will "set the stage" for public information dissemination in the next 10/20 years at least (but ideally longer if feasible), savings (including benefits to citizens, not just costs), and other analytical justifications. The emphasis will be on trying to answer the challenge: "How will the recommended, preferred course of action improve over what is being done now?" To the extent time and budget constraints permit, key implementation follow-on steps and actions required will also be identified. The recommendations will also be time-phased in a "transition plan" type of format in order to differentiate short range, mid-range, and longer term actions.

**VOLUNTEERS NEEDED**

The initially established NTIS Study "Stakeholder Group" of about 100 people has already been alerted electronically to the next steps in the study, and volunteers for various tasks solicited, including panel/board membership, *and related study research project such as those listed above*. Many volunteers have already stepped forward, but more are needed. Additional participation is hereby invited; individuals may contact either a panel chair, or NCLIS. Moreover, volunteers may undertake various tasks without necessarily having to be a member of a panel. Some individuals may wish to serve on a panel in a proactive role whereas others may wish to remain in a more passive "observer status" to track progress and review deliverables.

**PUBLIC REVIEW AND COMMENT**

The vehicle of the NCLIS Website will again be used as a primary communications and coordination vehicle for securing involvement and participation, and obtaining public review and comment at key stages as the study proceeds and deliverables are produced in draft. Public comment is welcomed at any time.