NESDIS CUSTOMERS:  ARE THEY SATISFIED?
RESULTS FROM THE CUSTOMER SATISFACTION SURVEY

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Anytime a service is being provided to a user community, it is important to periodically evaluate whether the service is meeting the needs of its users.  Often times, direct communication can provide useful feedback for changes as well as new ideas for future products.

During the spring of 2003, NOAA's National Environmental Satellite Data and Information Service (NESDIS) Data Centers (which includes the National Climatic Data Center, the National Geophysical Data Center, and the National Oceanographic Data Center) and the Office of Satellite Data Processing and Distribution sent a customer satisfaction survey to their users.  A users' workshop was also held during the summer of 2003 in order to continue the communication process.

## 2. CUSTOMER SATISFACTION SURVEY

### 2.1 Survey Background

The customer satisfaction survey consisted of 20 rank and multiple choice questions as well as a space for additional comments.  The questions were selected from a pool of cleared questions approved by the Office of Management and Budget as well other agreed upon questions.  The survey asked users to rate their satisfaction on issues such as quality of products and services received, accessibility of data, and timeliness of response. The survey also asked users to identify the type of data received, the primary use of the product, as well as the benefit of the data to the user or user's company.  Users were encouraged to log into a password protected website to enter their survey responses or to mail back the two page survey which

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accompanied the introductory letter.  Mailed surveys were entered into the resulting database by an independent contractor. A follow up letter was also sent out to encourage responses.

The survey was sent to a total of 25,228 users who had requested data from the four agencies during 2002.  Non-paying users who ordered data on-line were not surveyed since their contact information was not recorded.  Responses were received from 6,440 users which resulted in a 26% response rate.

### 2.2 Survey Results

The first section of the survey asked the user to rank their satisfaction of various service and product related issues on a scale of 1 (not at all satisfied) to 5 (extremely satisfied).  The average score for eight questions can be seen in figure1.  Overall, 92% of users were satisfied or extremely satisfied with the service they received.

The largest user groups were those from the business/industry sector (45.6%) followed by individuals (18.4%).  The primary use for the requested data was for business purposes (35.0%) followed by legal documentation (27.6%) and scientific research (16.8%).  The two most common ways products were obtained was as a printed copy (38.2%) or digitally by FTP (26.9%).

Thirty-five percent of users reported that they request data on a regular basis (i.e., more than twice a year).  While 69.0% of internet users reported that they found the needed information easily or very easily on the agency's website, 25.7% of users reported having difficulties (figure 2).

Difficulties with website navigation was the most common improvement area mentioned.  Users also mentioned difficulties with data interpretation as well as the inability to preview data before placing an order.  Mention of excellent customer service, valuable data holdings, and better service than other government agencies were among the numerous compliments given to the NESDIS agencies.

### 3. NESDIS DATA USERS' WORKSHOP

In order to encourage further dialogue, users from all four agencies were also invited to the NESDIS Data Users' Workshop, held in Boulder, Colorado, in June 2003. Approximately 375 users, representing various user groups, attended the workshop. The goals of the workshop were to:

• improve communication and rapport with users,
• assess users' needs and societal benefits,
• solicit users' opinions on current NESDIS data and information products and services,
• inform users of future capabilities, plans, and data sets,
• and review and update user needs for new products, data archiving and access, and future plans.

Users made over 500 recommendations which were consolidated into approximately 180 common recommendations. An action plan is currently being developed to address each of the recommendations and a workshop report will be posted on the workshop web site at http://www.osd.noaa.gov/datausers/index.htm.

### 4. CONCLUSIONS

Overall a majority of customers were satisfied or extremely satisfied with the products and services they received. The largest user groups were those in business and industry related fields and individuals. While a large majority of on-line users found the data easy to locate, others found the web sites cumbersome to navigate.
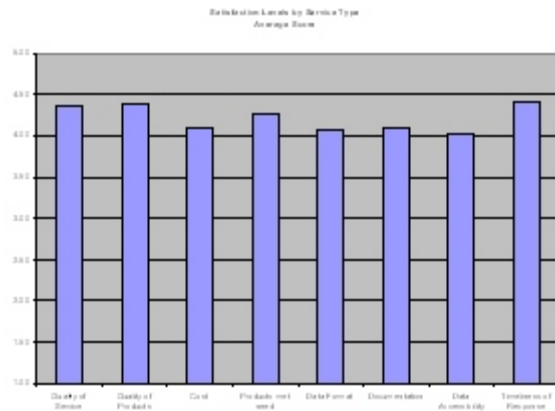


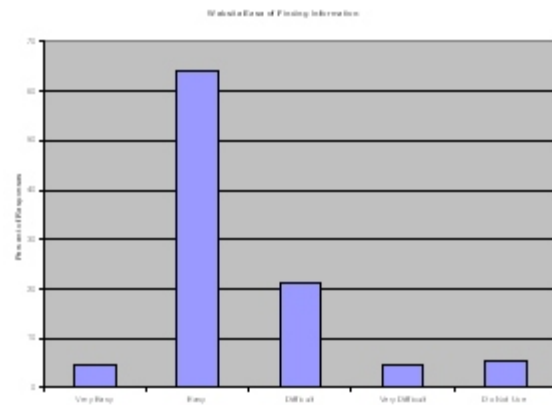Figure 1. Average satisfaction level of various service and product related issues.



Figure 2. Ease of finding information on agency web sites.