



Highlights of [GAO-08-649T](#), a testimony before the Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations, Committee on Armed Services, House of Representatives

Why GAO Did This Study

In 1995, the Department of Defense (DOD) began an effort to implement a standard departmentwide travel system, the Defense Travel System (DTS). This testimony is based on previously issued GAO reports and testimonies that highlighted challenges confronted by DOD in the implementation of DTS. More specifically, today's testimony focuses on prior GAO reporting concerning (1) the lack of quantitative metrics to measure the extent to which DTS is actually being used, (2) weaknesses with DTS's requirements management and system testing, and (3) two key assumptions related to the estimated cost savings in the September 2003 DTS economic analysis were not reasonable. Today's testimony also highlights some actions that DOD could explore to help streamline its administrative travel processes such as using a commercial database to identify unused airline tickets.

What GAO Recommends

In its January and September 2006 reports, GAO made several recommendations aimed at improving the management of DTS. In commenting on these reports, DOD generally agreed with the recommendations and described efforts to address them. In commenting on the draft of the September 2006 report, DOD disagreed with the finding that the reported savings were unrealistic. However, DOD did not provide any data to support its assertion.

To view the full product, including the scope and methodology, click on [GAO-08-649T](#). For more information, contact McCoy Williams at (202) 512-2600 or williamsm1@gao.gov.

DEFENSE TRAVEL SYSTEM

Overview of Prior Reported Challenges Faced by DOD in Implementation and Utilization

What GAO Found

Overhauling the department's antiquated travel management practices and systems has been a daunting challenge for DOD. In several prior reports and testimonies, GAO identified several key implementation issues regarding DOD's ability to make DTS the standard travel system for the department. Specifically, GAO reported that DTS was not being used to the fullest extent possible, and DOD lacked comprehensive data to effectively monitor its utilization. At the time of GAO's 2006 review, DOD's utilization data were based on a model that was developed in calendar year 2003. However, the model had not been completely updated to reflect actual DTS usage at that time. The lack of up-to-date utilization data hindered management's ability to monitor progress toward the DOD vision of DTS as the standard travel system. Additionally, the continued use of the department's legacy travel systems resulted in the underutilization of DTS and adversely affected the expected savings that DTS could achieve.

Furthermore, GAO previously reported weaknesses in DTS's requirements management and system testing practices. GAO found that DTS's requirements were still inadequate. GAO noted that until DOD improves DTS's requirements management practices, the department will not have reasonable assurance that DTS can provide the intended functionality.

Additionally, GAO's 2006 report of the September 2003 DTS economic analysis found that the two key assumptions used to estimate annual net savings were not based on reliable information. Two cost components represented the majority of the over \$56 million in estimated net savings—personnel savings and reduced commercial travel office fees. GAO's analysis found that \$24.2 million in personnel savings related to the Air Force and the Navy were not supported.

- Air Force and Navy DTS program officials stated that they did not anticipate a reduction in the number of personnel, but rather the shifting of staff from the travel function to other functions.
- The Naval Cost Analysis Division stated that the Navy will not realize any tangible personnel cost savings from the implementation of DTS.

In regard to the commercial travel office fees, GAO's 2006 reporting disclosed that the economic analysis assumed that 70 percent of all DTS airline tickets would either require no intervention or minimal intervention from the commercial travel offices resulting in an estimated annual net savings of \$31 million. However, the support provided by the DTS program office was an article in a trade industry publication. The article was not based on information related to DTS, but rather on the experience of one private-sector company. In addition, GAO identified concepts that the department can adopt to streamline its travel management practices.