



National Science Foundation

Research.gov

Privacy Impact Assessment

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Table of Contents

1.	CONTACT INFORMATION.....	1
2.	GENERAL SYSTEM INFORMATION.....	1
3.	DATA IN THE SYSTEM.....	3
4.	ATTRIBUTES OF THE DATA (USE AND ACCURACY)	3
5.	SHARING PRACTICES.....	4
6.	NOTICE TO INDIVIDUALS TO DECLINE/CONSENT USE.....	4
7.	ACCESS TO DATA (ADMINISTRATIVE AND TECHNICAL CONTROLS).....	4
8.	PRIVACY ANALYSIS.....	5

Revisions

Revision Number	Author	Date	Description
Initial PIA	Various	12/17/07	Original PIA
1.1	Amit Sharma	05/15/2008	Included content for RgF2- FFR
Version 2.0	M Tillotson/ K Deutsch/ D Saunders	Feb 2009	Updated the PIA

Privacy Impact Assessment Form

1. CONTACT INFORMATION

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2. GENERAL SYSTEM INFORMATION

1. Name of System:

Research.gov (<http://www.research.gov/rgov/anonymous.portal>)

2. Description of System:

Research.gov is a web portal solution that delivers a comprehensive menu of Grants Management Line of Business (GMLoB) consortium services. Led by NSF, Research.gov improves customer service for applicants and awardees by streamlining and standardizing grant management business processes among its' partner agencies and research institutions.

Research.gov provides principal investigators and sponsored project office officials the ability to view their grant application status as submitted to NSF, US Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service (CSREES) and Department of Defense's Army Research Office (ARO). The Federal Financial Report (FFR) service allows government-wide standard financial reporting for NSF grant recipients.

Research.gov displays publicly available information including research highlights, a policy library, public award information, and publication citations. These initial services are:

- Research Spending and Results - Search for detailed award information from NSF and the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA), including award abstracts and publication citations.
- Policy Library - An electronic library that consolidates federal and agency-specific policies, guidelines, and procedures for use by federal agencies and the awardee community.
- Research Headlines - News and highlighted research activities from NSF and participating partner agencies.

Additional grants management services will be developed and deployed over time in conjunction with additional partner agencies.

3. What is the purpose of the System or Electronic Collection of Information?

Research.gov enables applicants to view the status of grant application submissions to the partnership agencies. Research.gov enables organizations and researchers to access streamlined services for multiple federal agencies in one location. Research.gov offers the following services:

- Research Spending and Results - Award information is available from NSF and the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) to be searched by the public in compliance with new Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act requirements.
- Policy Library - An electronic library that consolidates federal and agency-specific policies, guidelines, and procedures for use by federal agencies and the awardee community.
- Research Headlines - News and highlighted research activities from partnership agencies.
- Grants Application Status (Beta) - Sponsored Projects Offices (SPOs) and Principal Investigators (PIs) can check the status of their applications, from submission to decision, as they are received and reviewed by partnership agencies.
- Federal Financial Report (Beta) - Online tool to complete and submit grant financial reports using the new government-wide standard form.
- Institution and User Management (Beta) - Service to allow Institution Administrators with Research.gov accounts to add users and manage their profiles.

4. Requested Operational Date?

Research.gov became operational on December 17, 2007.

5. Does this collection create a new Privacy Act System or is this information collection covered by an existing Privacy Act System? If so, what is the name of the current Privacy Act System?

The Privacy Act System of Records Notice that covers Research.gov is NSF-72 Research.gov.

6. What specific legal authorities, arrangements, and/or agreements require the collection of this information?

- 44 U.S.C. 3101
- 42 U.S.C. 1870
- National Agricultural Research Extension, and Teaching Policy Act of 1977 (NARETPA), 7U.S.C. 3318.

7. Is this an Exhibit 300 system/project?

Yes, Research.gov is an Exhibit 300 Grants Management Line of Business (GMLoB) system/project.

3. DATA IN THE SYSTEM

1. What data is to be collected?

Research.gov is an internet web portal that displays grant status information previously collected by partnership agency grant management systems.

Research.gov also collects financial status information from an authorized Research.gov Federal Financial Report (FFR) user. Only a user assigned by their organization's Financial Administrator can access the Federal Financial Report module of Research.gov. The organization's Financial Administrator controls the permissions for Financial Functions using NSF's FastLane. Financial grant obligation and expense information is collected for the Federal Financial Report. The Federal Financial Report is an online service that allows organizations to prepare and submit the new government-wide standard financial report, which replaces the Financial Status Report (SF-269) and the Federal Cash Transaction Report (SF-272).

2. What are the sources of the data?

An authorized Research.gov FFR user provides financial data through Research.gov's Federal Financial Report service. Only a user assigned by their organization's Financial Administrator can access the Federal Financial Report (FFR) module of Research.gov. The organization's Financial Administrator assigns the permissions for Financial Functions using NSF's FastLane. The report is prepared and certified by the organizational representatives.

3. Why is the data being collected?

Grantees are required to report the status of funds received from NSF on a quarterly basis through the submission of a Federal Financial Report (FFR). The reports are prepared and submitted electronically to NSF through either the Federal Financial Report Function in FastLane or Research.gov. For information on NSF's reporting requirement, see Chapter III.E.1 of the Award & Administration Guide.

4. What technologies will be used to collect the data?

Research.gov utilizes web portal and web browser technology to access data via the World Wide Web.

5. Does a personal identifier retrieve the data?

Yes.

4. ATTRIBUTES OF THE DATA (USE AND ACCURACY)

1. Describe the uses of the data:

The Federal Financial Report (FFR) data includes program income, expenditure and data provided by the grantee to report the financial status of their award from the National Science Foundation and is reviewed by NSF's Grantee Cash Management Section.

2. Does the system analyze data to assist users in identifying previously unknown areas of note, concern or pattern?

No.

3. How will the data collected from individuals or derived by the system be checked for accuracy?

- Embedded business rules enforce financial data checks such as “expenditures can not be in excess of federal funds authorized.”
- Business rules validate data completeness.
- The Federal Financial Report business rules are built into the screens and required fields are marked as such.
- Users must add data in data fields identified as mandatory in order to complete the screen and save the data.

5. SHARING PRACTICES

1. Will the data be shared with any internal or external organizations?

Yes – Federal Financial Report data is provided to NSF financial management staff to monitor use of federal funds. Data is not shared with any external organizations.

2. How is the data transmitted or disclosed to the internal or external organization?

Federal Financial Report data is shared internal to NSF financial management staff through NSF’s secure internal network which has firewall rules, antivirus screening, and intrusion prevention technology.

3. How is the shared data secured by external recipients?

No data is shared with external organizations.

6. NOTICE TO INDIVIDUALS TO DECLINE/CONSENT USE

1. Was notice provided to the different individuals prior to collection of data?

Yes. The Research.gov web site displays a Web Privacy Policy and an Information Collection and Use policy.

2. Do individuals have the opportunity and/or right to decline to provide data?

Yes.

3. Do individuals have the right to consent to particular uses of the data?

Yes.

7. ACCESS TO DATA (ADMINISTRATIVE AND TECHNICAL CONTROLS)

1. Is the data secured in accordance with FISMA requirements?

Yes, the Research.gov major application and is certified and accredited system in accordance with FISMA requirements.

2. Describe the privacy training provided to users, either generally or specifically relevant to the program or system?

All Intergovernmental Personnel Act (IPA) employees, federal employees, visiting scientists, and contractors must complete annual IT Security Awareness Training. IT Security Awareness Training discusses such topics as recognizing types of sensitive information that must be protected at NSF (e.g., proprietary, Privacy Act, and confidential financial records); the various Federal laws and guidance that relate to the protection of privacy in individuals and businesses; and an introduction to NSF's privacy policies (e.g., IT Privacy Policy, Policy Regarding the Privacy of Sensitive Information, and Policy on Reporting the Breach of Personally Identifiable Information).

NSF staff and contractors that access privacy act information are required to sign a Rules of Behavior agreement. These agreements explicitly detail the permissible and appropriate access and actions required when working with NSF resources.

All Research.gov users are required to accept a Rules of Behavior agreement the first time they login to the system. They must review and accept the agreement annually.

3. Will NSF contractors have access to the system? If so, will they be trained on privacy principles?

Yes, authorized NSF contractors have access to Research.gov and its' information as required to complete their job responsibilities. All NSF contractors are trained on privacy principles by taking annual IT Security Awareness Training. NSF contractors are required to complete IT Security Awareness Training prior to having access to NSF systems and applications and annually thereafter.

NSF staff and contractors that access privacy act information are required to sign a Rules of Behavior agreement. These agreements explicitly detail the permissible and appropriate access and actions required when working with NSF resources.

4. Has the retention schedule been established by records management? If so, what is the retention period for the data in the system?

- Non-electronic proposal records are retained for 10 years and then destroyed.
- Non-electronic award records are retained for 10 years after the award is closed and then transferred to National Archives and Records Administration.
- Electronic records are retained for 10 years.

5. What are the procedures for identification and disposition of the data at the end of the retention period?

Records produced by Research.gov will be appropriately scheduled with the National Archives and Records Administration..

8. PRIVACY ANALYSIS

Given the amount and type of data being collected, discuss what privacy risks were identified and how they were mitigated.

Since the inception of Research.gov, NSF program managers continually assess privacy risks and risk mitigation:

- Personally identifiable information: To protect personally identifiable information, NSF eliminated the use of Social Security Numbers from business processes and systems where there was no business need. Research.gov users are required to use their NSF ID to access Research.gov.
- Data completeness: Research.gov enforces completeness by not allowing data entry to continue unless required fields are entered.
- Data accuracy: See Section 4 Attributes of the Data (Use and Accuracy). Data is checked for accuracy through embedded business rules that enforce checks and validate data completeness, business rules are built into screens along with required fields, and there are mandatory fields for completion.
- Data access: Access is restricted to a small group of administrative employees, approved sponsors, and system administrators. Access is restricted by roles and the use of user IDs/passwords. Authorized users have access to all data in the system in accordance with their position duties. Users are trained to know what is considered to be proper access.
- Data disclosure: Data are only disclosed to authorized users who have an appropriate role.
- Documenting data access: Research.gov automatically documents data access by using a role based access system. Each administrator is given a password and is assigned a particular role. Data are accessible based on the privileges assigned to each role. If data changes are made they are stored in audit logs within the system.
- Division of responsibilities: Users of the system can only perform operations associated with their assigned roles.