



**National Science Foundation**

## **2008 E-Government Report**

**October 14, 2008**



## **Executive Summary**

During FY 2008, NSF focused on an initiative to reduce the use of information that, if inadvertently lost, could impact the privacy of agency customers. We conducted a comprehensive privacy review and established several high priority opportunities. One priority was the review of NSF's grants management systems to ensure the appropriate protection of personal information. We identified where SSNs were used and replaced them with an alternate identifier where possible. A key outcome was that nearly 400,000 SSNs are no longer used to access FastLane, our premier grants management web site used by NSF customers. We also removed SSNs from financial and human resource reports.

NSF coordinates information dissemination activities and makes information products available via the NSF website (<http://www.nsf.gov/>) to ensure that members of the public can easily locate, access, and utilize the Foundation's public information products. From our public-facing and internal web sites, visitors can access NSF's Information Resource Management (IRM) Strategic Plan; determinations, priorities, schedules, and inventories of information dissemination products; Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) resources and frequently requested materials; information on agency-sponsored research and development (R&D) activities; overviews of NSF partnerships that foster information dissemination; and summaries of NSF's NARA-approved records schedules.

### **Section 1: Implementation of Electronic Government Initiatives**

NSF supports the goals of the E-Government Act of 2002 by utilizing technology to improve services to citizens, businesses, and other federal agencies. We are a federal leader and innovator in government-wide efforts to support basic research in the sciences and engineering.

NSF is committed to ensuring the protection of personal information. During FY 2008, NSF focused on an initiative to reduce the use of information that, if inadvertently lost, could impact the privacy of agency customers. We conducted a comprehensive privacy review and established several high priority opportunities. First, we reviewed NSF's grants management systems to ensure the appropriate protection of personal information. We identified where SSNs were used and replaced them with an alternate identifier where possible. One key outcome was that nearly 400,000 SSNs are no longer used to access FastLane, our premier grants management web site used by NSF customers.

Next, we reduced potential for accidental access, use, or disclosure of personal information by increasing protections where SSNs must be used for business purposes. We examined use of personal information in agency systems and processes, and removed SSNs from financial and human resource reports. We eliminated paper reports containing SSNs by publishing them on a secure internal website available only to authorized employees.

Because we work seamlessly with scientists, researchers, and members of the academic community in pursuit of our mission, their collaboration and support of this initiative was critical. We presented the agency's plans at a wide range of conferences targeted to faculty members, researchers, and grant administrators to ensure they had up-to-date information on the



initiative. Our plans were met with enthusiasm by customers; they quickly adopted our alternative to SSN and provided positive feedback regarding the protection of their personal information.

It is difficult to quantify cost savings or avoidance; however, there are significant benefits to this initiative. NSF's proactive effort to reduce the use of SSNs in business processes mitigates the risk of exposure, retains the trust of customers, and reduces the risk of identity theft.

This initiative followed NSF's investment management process, which provides a consistent method and structure to manage the IT investment portfolio. This process allocates limited resources, addresses strategic needs, and ensures compliance with statutory laws and guidance. We also ensure that new e-government and IT initiatives avoid duplication with existing or planned federal efforts, and utilize periodic reporting of investment status so initiatives remain on track. Our process includes linkages to IT architecture, IT security and privacy, strategic planning, budgeting, and acquisition activities.

## **Section 2: Agency Information Management Activities**

### *A. Information Resources Management (IRM) Strategic Plan*

NSF's IRM Plan and EA Transition Plan: <http://www.nsf.gov/oirm/dis/irmplan0908.pdf>.

### *B. NSF's information dissemination products, priorities, and schedules*

NSF's inventory of web site content, priorities and schedules:  
[http://www.nsf.gov/policies/egov\\_inventory.jsp](http://www.nsf.gov/policies/egov_inventory.jsp).

Overviews of NSF research: <http://www.nsf.gov/news/overviews/>

Discoveries from NSF research: <http://www.nsf.gov/discoveries/>

NSF Award Search: <http://www.nsf.gov/awardsearch/>

### *C. Agency Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) information*

NSF's FOIA Handbook (Public Information Handbook):  
<http://www.nsf.gov/pubs/2007/nsf07135/nsf07135.pdf>.

NSF's primary FOIA web site: <http://www.nsf.gov/policies/foia.jsp>.

NSF collection of significant and frequently requested agency documents:  
<http://www.nsf.gov/publications/ods/>.

### *D. Sources of R&D information*

NSF is increasing public access to information about how research grant dollars are being spent and what results are being achieved. Research.gov (<http://www.research.gov/>) is a new



initiative led by NSF that provides the latest research award information, headlines, policies and events for NSF and partner agencies. Research.gov is increasing transparency of federal research spending, beginning with a new Research Spending and Results service that provides a fast and easy online way to search NSF and NASA grant awards. Research Spending and Results makes government research spending more transparent to the research community, Congress and taxpayers. It also fosters collaboration among researchers by offering detailed information on federal support of scientific research around the country. Research awards are easily searchable by agency, awardee, award amount and date, and key word. An advanced search option offers additional ways to examine awards, including by congressional district. Information can be reviewed online or exported to various file formats such as XML and electronic spreadsheets.

NSF Award Search (<http://www.nsf.gov/awardsearch/>) allows users to search the title, abstract, and other key information to find out what areas of research the Foundation has funded. A successful search delivers summary information for each award, including the start and end date of the award, the total award amount, and an abstract describing the nature of the work to be performed; some of the award abstracts also include information on publications that have resulted from in-progress or completed research.

NSF R&D information is also available via Science.gov (<http://www.science.gov/>).

#### *E. Agency agreements to facilitate information dissemination*

NSF supports collaborative projects involving academic institutions, private industry, and state and local governments. The Foundation also works closely with other Federal agencies in cross-cutting areas of research and education, and we support U.S. participation in international scientific efforts. Promoting partnerships is one of NSF's core strategies. Collaboration and partnerships between disciplines and institutions and among academe, industry, and government enable the movement of people, ideas, and tools throughout the public and private sectors. NSF's partners are listed at <http://www.nsf.gov/about/partners/>.

NSF's Division of Science Resources Statistics (SRS), which provides a central clearinghouse for the collection, interpretation, and analysis of data on scientific and engineering resources, works collaboratively with other federal agencies and international science organizations to improve the capture and analysis of scientific statistical data. SRS's work is facilitated by interagency committees, jointly funded efforts, and other agreements, and results in the provision of statistical reports and data via the NSF web site and through other sources. A list of SRS surveys and partners is available at <http://www.nsf.gov/statistics/about.cfm>.

Research.gov is an exciting new initiative that enables grantees to access streamlined research grants management services and other resources for multiple federal agencies in one place. NSF is leading Research.gov in partnership with other federal research agencies to provide a menu of services tailored to meeting the unique needs of the research community. Consistent with the way NSF built and deployed FastLane, Research.gov is taking a phased approach to offer services that align with the needs of the research community and federal agency partners. NSF is partnering on Research.gov with NASA, DoD Research (including the Army Research Office



and the Air Force Office of Scientific Research), and USDA's Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service (CSREES). NSF and its partner agencies are committed to serving the research community through Research.gov and are eager to offer grantees the capability to access information and services for multiple federal research agencies in one location. NSF's Research.gov partners are listed at [https://www.research.gov/rgov/anonymous.portal?\\_nfpb=true&\\_pageLabel=page\\_partnering\\_agency\\_list](https://www.research.gov/rgov/anonymous.portal?_nfpb=true&_pageLabel=page_partnering_agency_list)

#### *F. Agency records management program*

NSF's NARA-approved records schedules are available on the "Inside NSF" web site, which is accessible to NSF employees and contractors only. They are not publicly accessible on the public NSF web site at this time. The following inventory briefly describes NSF's unique records, exclusive of what is covered by the General Records Schedule.

- Grant and Contract Records: Materials created and maintained to administer the granting of Government funds for the promotion of basic research, science information, and science education.
- National Science Board: Documentation related to decisions of the National Science Board.
- Office of the Director: Official correspondence of the NSF Director.
- Office of Legislative and Public Affairs (OLPA): Formal publications, transcripts of official speeches, and other records unique to this NSF office.
- Office of Budget, Finance, and Award Management: Files associated with budget formulation, submission, justification, and use. (Approved by NARA as "Office of Budget and Control" records).
- Personnel Records: Personnel files of individuals who participate in the U.S. Antarctic Research operations under NSF grant or contract.
- Printing, Binding, Duplication, and Distribution Records: Copy of each publication, poster, chart, directive, regulation, booklet, speech, form, press release, and similar material originating from an NSF office other than OLPA.
- Procurement, Supply and Grant Records: Title papers documenting the acquisition of real property.
- Special Assistant - Office of the Director: Records pertaining to NSF executive bodies and to the Director's Special Awards.
- Property Disposal Records: Records dealing with the sale or disposal of surplus real and personal property by NSF.
- Administrative Management Records: Copies of official directives, forms, organizational charts, and other records related to administrative management.
- Fellowship Records: Materials created and maintained to administer the granting of government funds for awards of Fellowships in the sciences.
- Design and Construction Drawings and Related Records: Preliminary and presentation drawings and models of Federal Structures and engineering projects such as the National Research Centers.



- Science and Engineering Surveys: Scientific and engineering surveys relating to activities and trends in science and engineering programs, federal funding for research and development; federal support to colleges and universities; scientific and engineering employment; and personnel characteristics.
- Congressional Correspondence Records: Correspondence from the Congress with replies from NSF.
- Declined and Withdrawn Proposal Case Files: Program case files consisting of declined and withdrawn proposals related to the promotion of scientific research.
- Office of the Deputy Director: Official correspondence files for the Office of the Deputy Director.
- Office Of Inspector General: Investigation files, audit and review materials, and other records from the NSF Office of the Inspector General.

NSF anticipates meeting the September 30, 2009 deadline to have NARA-approved schedules for all records in existing electronic systems, as specified in the E-Government Act of 2002 and NARA Bulletin 2006-02. To ensure we will meet the deadline, NSF continues to take necessary steps to analyze agency systems and resources, such as the following:

- NSF is investigating the capabilities of electronic records management systems to facilitate the central management, retention, and electronic transfer of agency records in digital format and ensure compliance with DoD 5015.2 standards.
- NSF has received NARA approval to use an NSF system as the official agency record of proposals and non-awards, and is investigating options for the transfer of electronic materials to NARA.
- NSF's Records Officer continues to meet with system owners and administrators to determine how to proceed with inventorying systems, to identify the content of system records, and to update business practices.
- NSF continues to transfer electronic media to NARA as scheduled (e.g., magnetic media including Award System information), and has tested the transmission of awards system records via email, in preparation of formal transmission of electronic records in the future.

NSF has not submitted any records schedules to NARA in FY 2008, but estimates that there are approximately six agency systems that will require records schedules by the end of FY 2009.