



# CUSTOMER ADVOCATE'S CORNER

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**“When they call us, customers reach a ‘live’ person, including those customers who contact us via our TDD line for the hearing impaired.”**

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## Suggestion from Subscriber

NTIS always welcomes your suggestions and ideas. Following release of the January 2009 issue of our *NTIS Customer Advocate's Corner* newsletter, one of our subscribers suggested we consider adding a feature to make it possible to gain access to previous issues. What a great idea. That suggestion has been implemented, and you can now view previous issues of this newsletter by going to the NTIS Web site at [www.ntis.gov](http://www.ntis.gov) and scrolling to the bottom of the page to select “Site Index.” Once there, simply click on “Customer Advocate's Corner Newsletter.” The section providing links to all issues of the newsletter is highlighted in red. You can also access that section at <http://www.ntis.gov/help/overview.aspx#CACN>.

Thanks to our subscriber's suggestion, we will be adding information on how to access previous newsletters at the end of this and all upcoming issues.

## Insights from the NTIS Sales Desk Manager

Bill McGahey has been with NTIS for 26 years and became Manager of the NTIS Sales Desk in June 2003. Prior to that, beginning in May 1994, Bill managed the NTIS Help Desk. In February 2008, the Help Desk again came under Bill's management, in addition to the Sales Desk.

**Pat Moton:** “Bill, how easy is it for customers to gain assistance from the Sales Desk?”

**Bill McGahey:** “It's quite easy, Pat. They can reach us by phone, fax, e-mail, and regular mail as well as by walking into the NTIS Bookstore at our location in Springfield, Virginia. We want people to contact us; and we operate under the expanded hours of 8 a.m. to 6 p.m., Eastern Standard Time, to accommodate that need. When they call us, customers reach a “live” person, including those customers who contact us via our TDD line for the hearing impaired.

Please see *Insights from the NTIS Sales Desk Manager* on page 3.

## DIRECTOR OF NTIS INTERVIEWED ON FEDERAL NEWS RADIO 1500 AM

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**“We are swimming in an ocean of information . . . We add value by making information easy to find.”**

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On February 5, the Director of NTIS, Ellen Herbst, was interviewed by Derrick T. Dortch on Federal News Radio. In the interview, Ellen discusses the mission of NTIS and the way it collects scientific and technical information, including information related to the social sciences, from across the Federal Government. She talks about how NTIS organizes that information so it is easy to find, the creation of metadata (bibliographic records) to assist in locating that information, and the preservation of over 60 years worth of reports (over 2½ million) to provide for their perpetual dissemination to the public. Ellen explains that a vast amount of the NTIS collection includes gray literature that is public information but not necessarily peer reviewed or published in a scholarly journal. She discusses migration of data files into online searchable databases for public access and the way in which NTIS assists other Government agencies in the dissemination of their information. Ellen states in the interview: “We are swimming in an ocean of information . . . We add value by making information easy to find . . .” She also adds that “the Government is about customer service.”

As the interview progresses, Ellen discusses her background and shares, at length, her personal experiences through the Federal Government hiring process.

To listen to this interview, just access <http://www.federalnewsradio.com/?nid=71&sid=1590734> and scroll down.

## WHERE'S NTIS EXHIBITING?

We hope you'll be able to stop by whenever NTIS is exhibiting in your area.

From June 14-17, NTIS will be exhibiting at the Special Libraries Association Annual Conference & INFO-EXPO in Washington, D.C.—Booth No. 631.

From August 9-12, NTIS will be exhibiting at the GovEnergy Workshop in Providence, Rhode Island, Booth No. 108.

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Are there upcoming conferences or events at which you feel an NTIS exhibit or speech would be a valuable contribution?

Just e-mail me at [customeradvocate@ntis.gov](mailto:customeradvocate@ntis.gov) or call me at 703-605-6103. I'll be sure your suggestion is forwarded to the proper NTIS management staff.

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## Insights from the NTIS Sales Desk Manager from Page 1

**Bill (Cont.):** We even provide voice mail service for customers contacting us after normal business hours. We review those messages promptly the next business day and contact those customers with answers to their inquiries."

**Pat:** "What major changes have you seen in the operation of the Sales Desk over the past two years?"

**Bill:** "We have instituted a heightened effort of educating our staff, in-depth, about our products and services. We've expanded that education to include the functions of other agencies, since many of our contacts are from people looking for information from the Government—but not necessarily from NTIS. Of every six contacts made to the Sales Desk, only one is from a customer placing an order—the others may be for information on pricing, general information about NTIS, and queries totally unrelated to NTIS. Also, we recently we switched to a new Internet Protocol phone system that provides us with greater managerial oversight and statistical reporting. This allows us to provide improved customer service by easily, through technology, managing the incoming flow of customer calls to handle them in the most efficient, expedited manner possible."

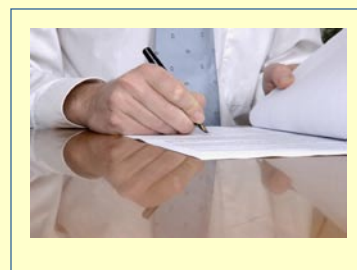
**Pat:** "I understand another change you have made is the development of an outreach effort from the Sales Desk. Is that correct?"

**Bill:** "Yes it is. We want to let our customers know about the exciting and varied items available from NTIS, and we accomplish that outreach by e-mail, since it is less intrusive. It's important that our customers know we are here with the authenticated materials they need."

**Pat:** "Do you anticipate any future changes in the way the Sales Desk interacts with our customers?"

**Bill:** "In recognition of the need to provide a heightened level of assistance on specific areas of our Web site, we are currently exploring future customer communication enhancements. By employing instant messaging, for example, we would be able to instantly push information to our customers, such as order forms and completed pro forma invoices; and we would be able to complete transactions through instant messaging. We have already redesigned the NTIS Shopping Cart on the Web based on customer feedback, both written and oral, and will continue to do so. In addition, we posted a link to Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ's) on Online Ordering on every page of our Shopping Cart to assist customers. They do not have to leave the page they're on to find the answer to their question, be it about shipping, delivery, download formats, payment methods, etc. We will continue to expand these FAQ's as the need arises. And, as always, our dedicated specialists on the Sales Desk stand ready to answer our customers' questions and work with them to resolve any ordering issues—be it offering a product in a different format, finding something not yet in our collection, providing documents by e-mail, etc."

**Pat:** Thanks, Bill. I appreciate your taking the time to share this information with our customers and reinforcing that you and your staff welcome their inquiries and requests for assistance.

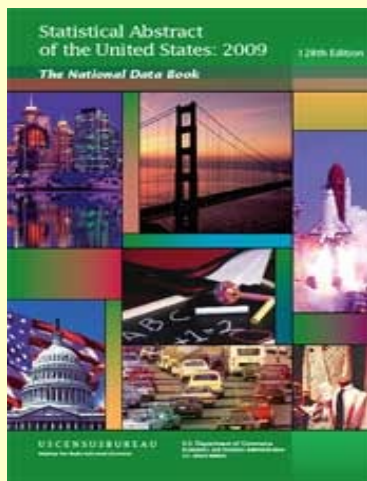


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**“ . . . our dedicated specialists on the Sales Desk stand ready to answer our customers' questions and work with them to resolve any ordering issues . . . ”**

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### [Statistical Abstract of the United States 2009](#)



The *Statistical Abstract of the United States 2009*, also called The National Data Book, has the most interesting mix of statistics that I have ever seen in one volume and has been published by the U.S. Census Bureau every year since 1878. It's used by researchers, business leaders, academic institutions, libraries, planners, and marketers. Examples of some of the Tables in this year's edition are: Table 156, Active Physicians and Nurses by State: 2006; Table 207, Per Capita Consumption of Selected Beverages by Type: 1980 to 2006; Table 371, Major U.S. Weather Disasters: 2001 to 2007; Table 372, Highest and Lowest Temperatures by State Through 2003; Table 400, Voting-Age Population, Percent Reporting Registered, and Voted: 1994 to 2006; Table 786, Civilian Employment of Scientists, Engineers, and Related Occupations by Occupation and Industry: 2006; Table 1194,

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Performing Arts—Selected Data: 1990 to 2006 (includes statistics on Broadway shows, nonprofit professional theaters, opera, and symphony orchestras).

If you haven't yet had a chance to order your copy of this great book, you should know that we have only 95 copies left in stock as I'm writing this article. (Don't worry, we can get more.)

Just go to <http://www.ntis.gov/products/statabs.aspx> to find out more about this year's edition and order a copy, or call our Sales Desk at 1-800-553-NTIS (6847).

### [A Question for Our Subscribers Who Work With State, County, and City Governments](#)

Often, State, county, and city government offices require Federal documents and other materials to accomplish their objectives. Has NTIS been successful in offering you access to the Federal scientific and technical publications you require? If not, please identify the publications and materials you would like to see added to our collection, and we will explore the possibility of obtaining them for you. If you have other suggestions on how we can be of better assistance to you, just send an e-mail to [customeradvocate@ntis.gov](mailto:customeradvocate@ntis.gov). We look forward to hearing from you.

### [If you have not already subscribed, to receive future copies of this free quarterly newsletter](#)

Please send an e-mail to:  
[customeradvocate@ntis.gov](mailto:customeradvocate@ntis.gov)

Please include "Subscribe to NTIS Customer Advocate's Corner" in the subject line of your e-mail.

To access previous issues, go to <http://www.ntis.gov/help/overview.aspx#CACN>. Previous issues are listed under the red highlighting.