

**SUMMARY MINUTES
MEETING OF NTIS ADVISORY BOARD
OCTOBER 18, 2006
9:00 am – 3:30 pm
5285 Port Royal Road
Springfield, Virginia**

Participants

NTIS Advisory Board Members

Dr. Beth Fitzsimmons – President, Information Strategists, LLC
Dr. José-Marie Griffiths – Dean and Professor, School of Information and
Library Science, UNC
Dr. John Regazzi – Dean, College of Information and Computer Science, LIU
Mr. Kent Smith – Management Consultant

NTIS Staff

Ellen Herbst – Director, NTIS
Bruce Borzino – Deputy Director, NTIS
Jon Birdsall – Associate Director, Office of Customer Services
Doug Campion – Associate Director, Production Services
Wally Finch – Acting Associate Director, Office of Business Development
Wayne Gallant – Chief Financial Officer
Pat Moton – Customer Advocate
Steve Needle – Senior Policy Analyst
Keith Sinner – Chief Information Officer

Other

Bonnie C. Carroll – President, Information International Associates
Eileen Hill – Candidate, SES Development Program, Department of Commerce
John Raubitschek – Counsel to NTIS, Department of Commerce

OPENING OF MEETING

The Director of the National Technical Information Service (NTIS) opened the meeting and introduced Advisory Board members and NTIS Staff. She announced that the purpose of the meeting was to discuss the NTIS Strategic Plan, and seek the Advisory Board's guidance on the Plan and related initiatives.

Currently, there are four Advisory Board members. NTIS issued a *Federal Register Notice* on October 10, 2006 soliciting another member. Current Advisory Board

members nominated Dr. John Regazzi as Chairman of the NTIS Advisory Board and he accepted the nomination during the meeting.

NTIS BACKGROUND

NTIS is self-sustaining and what it does is in the public good. Its mission is to promote progress by serving as the Federal Government's central means of making technical information perpetually and widely available. Its vision is to ensure easy and perpetual availability of the most comprehensive collection of Federally-funded scientific, technical, and engineering information (STEI) as well as business-related information in support of the nation's economic growth and opportunity.

NTIS STRATEGIC PLAN

NTIS Senior Staff worked throughout FY 06 to develop a Strategic Plan for 2006-2010. The Plan includes three high-level strategic initiatives: re-engineering key business processes; increasing acquisition and dissemination of results of Federal Government information; and managing human capital. External input to the NTIS Strategic Plan included informal literature research and purchased market research. NTIS' Customer Services group also provided considerable feedback and is developing a customer survey.

NTIS Senior Staff presented an overview of NTIS' financial self-sufficiency, operational objectives, and status in the President's Management Agenda. The meeting also addressed challenges facing NTIS, including workforce management, investment in technology, and facility requirements.

OVERVIEW OF NTIS FUNCTIONS

Each NTIS Senior Staff member provided an overview of his area, answering questions from the Board as they arose. A summary of these presentations is included at the end of this report.

GENERAL DISCUSSION

In general, the Advisory Board thought the NTIS Senior Staff had done a good job in identifying needed improvements in operating processes and infrastructure, and explaining these in the Strategic Plan. The Board also identified the need to explore new sources of revenue in the changing environment in which NTIS must operate.

Specific discussions included the following topics, information and conclusions:

Searching the NTIS collection:

All content in NTIS' collection must be findable, searchable, and seeable on the Web.

Links to and from the NTIS web site and to and from other information providers' web sites could increase user satisfaction and relevance of the NTIS Web site.

Branding:

NTIS branding is important to better communicate to NTIS users what NTIS stands for -- the standards for its database, its core competencies, what drives its economic interest. To become more competitive, NTIS needs to identify what it does better than anyone else and what drives its economic engine.

Union:

NTIS is unionized and has representatives that work with NTIS managers in a positive, not adversarial, way.

Facility:

NTIS is conducting a study of its facility/infrastructure to determine if it will move or stay in its present facility.

Market Research:

Due to the breadth of NTIS' product mix, NTIS must conduct additional market research to better identify which markets and users it serves.

There were no members of the public present. The meeting was adjourned at 3:30 p.m.

OVERVIEW OF NTIS FUNCTIONS (SUMMARY)

Office of the Chief Financial Officer

The Chief Financial Officer (CFO) presented a financial overview of the Agency, pointing out that NTIS has not requested appropriations in seven years. The CFO's presentation covered the shift in dissemination of information from physical to electronic form and the dissemination of technical information for other Federal agencies, using NTIS' in-house expertise and infrastructure. He also described NTIS' financial reporting responsibilities to Congress, the Department of the Treasury, Office of Management and Budget (OMB), and the Department of Commerce. The CFO pointed out that NTIS has had a clean, unqualified audit opinion for the past 10 years and was the first agency in the Department of Commerce to have an unqualified opinion. A future challenge will be replacing NTIS' financial and order processing systems within the next three years.

Office of Service Management

NTIS' Deputy Director provided an overview of NTIS' Office of Service Management, describing information dissemination services provided to other Federal agencies on a reimbursable basis to assist them in meeting their information needs. These services include:

- Information production, storage and dissemination services;
- IT and web services; and
- Services related to NTIS' designation as an Official Office of Personnel Management (OPM) e-learning and knowledge management service provider.

Examples of services provided to agencies include the Department of Labor's Wage Determinations Online, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, and U.S. Department of Agriculture information dissemination services.

NTIS also has joint venture authority which enables it to enter into partnerships with the private sector to share in both the risks and rewards of creating new products. As an OPM e-learning and knowledge management service provider, NTIS also has several joint venture partners that provide e-learning courses.

Office of Product Management

The Acting Associate Director for the office of Business Development gave an overview of the Office of Product Management, which is responsible for acquiring and marketing Scientific, Technical and Engineering Information (STEI) produced by the U.S. Government and complementary sources. With the advent of the Internet, there are no longer centralized points in Federal agencies for the publication of documents. As a result, NTIS has begun harvesting full-text documents from agency web sites.

This presentation also addressed the American Technology Preeminence Act (ATPA). ATPA mandates that agencies submit their STEI products to NTIS within 15 days of publication. NTIS conducts outreach and education programs to Federal agencies to market the benefits of working with NTIS and complying with the ATPA.

NTIS has developed several joint venture partners that provide marketing and online access to certain databases that NTIS receives from agencies. These include the Social Security Administration's Death Master File, Drug Enforcement Administration's Registered Practitioners Database, and World News Connection online products.

Office of Customer Services

The Associate Director for the Office of Customer Services (OCS) explained that OCS is composed of four areas: Sales (including the NTIS Bookstore); Customer Services; Subscriptions; and the Help Desk. The NTIS Customer Advocate is also part of the OCS.

The goal of OCS is to supply total support for NTIS products and services. OCS' key activities consist of: entering customer demand and subscription/standing orders; resolution of customer problems and inquiries; Help Desk assistance with the NTIS web site and online products as well as with the IRS CD-ROM, particularly during the period of peak demand between January and April.

The OCS Office of Sales has also instituted a program to promote NTIS best sellers through direct customer interaction by sending educational e-mails to identified target customers.

OCS tracks customer service levels. NTIS currently enjoys a 98 percent Customer Satisfaction Rating, which is reported under the Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA).

Office of Production Services

The Associate Director of Production Services explained that his Office is responsible for order processing, product manufacturing, warehousing, inventory management, and distribution. The Office also has responsibility for building the NTIS database. Production Services' Input Processing Group accomplishes this by traditional cataloging, indexing and abstracting. In an effort to increase productivity and to assist its information analysts, NTIS is exploring a machine-aided indexing (MAI) tool.

Approximately 85% of the documents NTIS acquires annually are in a digital format. Of the 2 million reports in the NTIS collection, approximately ½ million are stored digitally.

The Board suggested that NTIS look at the end-user and linking to other agency web sites to create an overall value-add experience. NTIS also is exploring vertical searching and migration to content management, which will be customer driven.

NTIS must ensure preservation of its collection and focus on access, and providing customers digital and analog product options. NTIS views the National Archives and Records Administration, the Government Printing Office, and the Library of Congress as logical partners in preserving information and disseminating it to the public. NTIS is actively conducting discussions with these agencies to identify and implement joint projects.

Office of the Chief Information Officer

The Chief Information Officer (CIO) described his Office's goals, including: capital planning and investment control; information architecture; Information Technology security; e-Government support; Web compliance; and quality guidelines. The OCIO supports NTIS' internal systems -- order processing, bibliographic, print-on-demand through NTIS' electronic archive, infrastructure, and Web sites.

OCIO also supports external NTIS clients and products, such as: the Department of Labor's Wage Determinations Online; the Social Security Administration's Death Master File; Drug Enforcement Administration online products; Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services; and U.S. Department of Agriculture online ordering.

The OCIO has worked hard on institutional knowledge transfer to prepare itself for retirements of key employees. The harvesting of documents is quite time-consuming, but NTIS is doing a good job of harvesting the web sites of targeted agencies without outside assistance. NTIS will be conducting a requirements analysis this year to replace its order processing/accounting system. NTIS also plans to upgrade its Web site, including its search functionality.