MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE
NATIONAL TECHNICAL INFORMATION SERVICE ADVISORY BOARD
FEBRUARY 10, 2012

Location: NTIS, 5301 Shawnee Road, Alexandria, Virginia 22312

Present: John Regazzi (Chairman) and NTIS Advisory Board Members Jose′-Marie Griffiths, MacKenzie Smith, and Robert Friedenberg. Also in attendance: NTIS Director Bruce Borzino, the NTIS Senior Staff and the Designated Federal Officer for the Federal Advisory Board.

Welcome

At 9 a.m., the Chairman of the National Technical Information Service (NTIS) Advisory Board, John Regazzi, and the NTIS Director, Bruce Borzino, welcomed everyone to the meeting. John Regazzi complimented NTIS on the read-ahead package the members received in preparation for the meeting and stated that it was the best he had ever been provided. He appreciated the openness, the continuity from meeting to meeting, and congratulated NTIS on a job well done. He also appreciated the fact that NTIS follows and acts on the Board's recommendations.

Risk Management

The Director then discussed NTIS efforts in risk management. He described the Department of Commerce (DOC) current approach to risk management and how NTIS has applied the DOC methodology to NTIS programs. NTIS is using quad charts in assessing risk management. NTIS program and product managers will update the charts monthly.

Financial Status

The NTIS Chief Financial Officer, Mary Houff, presented information on where NTIS was financially in FY 2008 and how it has progressed to FY 2012. The Chief Financial Officer pointed out that NTIS continues to have an Unqualified Opinion from the DOC annual financial statement audit. The Chairman found NTIS finances most impressive. He completed a quick calculation of revenue generated per employee and found that NTIS has doubled its productivity—going from well below the information industry average to significantly above average.

A Board member stated that since repository technical reports products are a flagship operation for NTIS, it needs to address how to increase revenue from those products. The Chairman agreed that product revenue is a challenge, as well as where to invest--subscriptions and services, or technical products.

Office of Product Management and Acquisition (OPMA)

The Associate Director, OPMA, Don Hagen, presented the following OPMA status update:

Publishing and Services

A discussion ensued regarding publishing and services—addressing the fact that publishing is public-facing while most service programs support other Federal agencies. It was suggested that NTIS consider enhancing some of its products to make them valuable to its customers. It was also pointed out that NTIS has a difficult time aggregating information products because some Federal sources insist their materials be separate. A Board member then suggested search methods that would combine products together when searched. Another member suggested focusing on core content and key assets and said that there is a lack of focus--NTIS needs to be driving the process.

Mr. Hagen pointed out that NTIS created the Selected Research Service as a move away from microfiche to electronic copies of Government documents. He further stated that S&T on CD is staying relatively flat and needs to be moved to a totally electronic product.

National Technical Reports Library

The discussion then turned to the National Technical Reports Library (NTRL), which has been a challenge and has been relaunched by NTIS. The Advisory Board members stated that for every $1.00 collected, NTIS actually spends $1.10. They wondered why NTIS is doing that--it is not sustainable. NTIS staff described NTRL as one way of presenting NTIS content in online electronic form and advised the Board that NTIS is receiving very good feedback from the NTRL product both domestically and internationally. NTIS staff noted the risk aspect of free access through individual Federal Web sites—some librarians refuse to pay NTIS for content they can access elsewhere at no charge.

The Board suggested that NTIS must obtain a better understanding of the needs of the ultimate NTRL user, their workflow, etc., and added that if NTIS aggregates content, more customers might use the NTRL product. NTIS staff said they were discussing adding videos, datasets, etc., to NTRL. The Board continued the discussion of free open access, adding that ownership of content is becoming less and less of a competitive advantage. It stated that NTIS needs to create value by reaching into its customer base. It was suggested that NTIS develop a value proposition that will drive demand for NTRL.

At this point, the question about digitization of the remainder of the NTIS collection arose. It was stated that NTIS had determined that such digitization is not feasible at this time due to costs. The reduction in sales of non-electronic technical reports and number of microfiche customers was also discussed as well as the effect on cost recovery. S&T on CD added more content by adding color and metadata as opposed to microfiche.

Federal Science Repository Service

The Federal Science Repository Service (FSRS) was described to the Board.   It was reported that the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) is extremely pleased with their FSRS service which includes PDFs, images, datasets, and streaming media. The Board agreed that the FSRS is a positive current approach to NTIS fulfilling its mission.

Discussion ensued by the Board regarding capturing the current opportunity, focusing on the unique NTIS position in providing the FSRS to Federal agencies that lack such an infrastructure. It was also stated that a thematic approach can be derived from FSRS that would be available through separate agencies. Discovery metadata was then discussed at length, as well as other metadata opportunities for NTIS to offer to help other agencies. The transitional strategy from technical reports to a positive, innovative approach through FSRS to furnish science to the end user was highlighted. The Board also discussed the "addressable market" and how fast NTIS wants to approach it. NTIS staff described pricing strategy for FSRS as a base with additional options available to add to that base.

Further discussion centered on the need for NTIS to establish a strategy for data governance, non-copyrighting issues, data usage agreements, and whether researchers will want to control their data.

DEA and DMF Products

Drug Enforcement Administration products are doing well, and moving customers to secure FTP has been positive. The Death Master File is doing well in terms of revenue generation. In November, electronically submitted State data was removed from DMF by the Social Security Administration. Potential misuse of DMF data by public users was described as well as the Congressional hearing that was recently held. It was pointed out that NTIS is the distributor of the product, not the manager of its content. The options currently being considered regarding the public availability of DMF data were described in depth.

World News Connection

The focus of the meeting then turned to the World News Connection (WNC) product. Sales are flat, and NTIS is considering bringing it in-house under the NTRL platform. NTIS staff asked for the Board's thoughts on this product—should it be aggregated with NTRL, etc.? The Board was unsure about moving WNC from the 3rd party platform. One Board member could not think of a reason to keep WNC; but another stated that it is unique, and it has value to the Federal sector and to the public.

Potential Customers and Growth

A Board member suggested NTIS look at the trade industry for potential new technical product customers. The Board pointed out that managing growth is important and that NTIS should be careful about spreading itself too thin because it will affect the whole agency. Putting in the right tools to manage the growth process is important.

Office of Federal Services (OFS)

The Associate Director, OFS, Elizabeth Shaw, discussed OFS lines of business, contacts for particular agencies, Web services, and grants management. A question arose regarding providing cloud services to Federal agencies, and it was affirmed that NTIS plans to continue as a Federal cloud provider.

E-Training and Knowledge Management

"Leadership for Life" (tentative title) was presented by NTIS staff as a new program to assist small agencies with limited budgets in accomplishing their e-training requirements without the cost of an agency learning management system.

Federal Energy Management

The Board asked why NTIS is continuing to carry the Federal Energy Management line of business. The Associate Director and Director indicated that NTIS is revamping the program to provide additional capabilities desired by potential Federal customers. If new customers are not added after the restructuring, the Director will strongly consider terminating this line of business.

Office of the Chief Information Officer (CIO)

The CIO, Keith Sinner, discussed upgrades to NTIS business systems.

NTIS Business Systems Upgrades

NTIS staff turned the discussion to NTIS business systems and the upgrades needed for those systems. In the CIS.PUB ordering system upgrade, some software customization may be required to ensure that the new system produces the reports required by the Office of the Chief Financial Officer and program managers. The intricacies of the conversion to the upgraded order processing system were described.

Strategic and Tactical Recommendations

NTIS and the Board then discussed the progress NTIS has made in accomplishing the strategic and tactical recommendations that the Board submitted in its annual report.

Strategic Recommendation 1

NTIS presented its new unified mission and vision statement that established a clear mission statement and market focus reflecting a unified vision encompassing all of its products and services.

Strategic Recommendation 2

NTIS discussed its plans for revenue generation in FY 2012 in addition to continuing efforts to reduce its cost structure to enhance long-term sustainability. NTIS staff asserted that NTIS is

still overburdened with costs, part of it for labor, part of it with systems and the way NTIS accounts for bibliographic data. The costs of tangible distribution came into the discussion and the fact that NTIS is trying to move away from tangible media products to electronic distribution.

<div align="center">Strategic Recommendation 3</div>

NTIS presented the Board with the initial draft of a comprehensive agency risk management register focused on key strategic, operating, and financial risks that NTIS now faces. The Commerce Enterprise Risk Management (ERM) risk scoring methodology was discussed and risk management analysis was described.   The Board thinks the process is a very strong one, but that it needs a filter applied to capture exposure realities as well as the risk values identified.

<div align="center">Tactical Recommendation 1</div>

NTIS discussed with the Board the information management, dissemination, and services initiatives and programs that it intends to focus on and emphasize in its FY 2012 business development program

<div align="center">Tactical Recommendation 2</div>

NTIS staff described the difficulty of establishing one set of metrics that would apply across the agency in deciding when to invest in or exit from a program or line of business. The Board agreed that establishing a single set of metrics is difficult. A simpler approach may be to continuously review NTIS investments and lines of business to determine if they are accomplishing or underperforming to plan. It was emphasized that NTIS will conduct a mid-FY review in April 2012 to decide if underperforming projects or products will be discontinued in FY 2013. Transitioning from tangible to electronic products will be addressed at that time.

<div align="center">Tactical Recommendation 3</div>

NTIS discussed its approach to identifying alternative and new business models reflecting the changing value propositions and demands of customers. The Board pointed out that emphasizing the full services NTIS provides is essential.

<u>Roadmap</u>

A member of the Board raised the question of whether NTIS should begin to develop a roadmap of scope and scale, pricing strategies, core capabilities, and human resources.   The Associate Director, OPMA, committed to development of the roadmap within one month.

<u>Advisory Board Observations and Recommendations</u>

A Board member stated that NTIS needs to be sure its qualitative and quantitative metrics are tied to the NTIS mission statement.   It was also suggested that, since the Board member did not see anything related to China and Asia, perhaps NTIS should look to international sales of its technical products. NTIS staff pointed out recent international subscribers to NTRL.

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The Board raised the question of whether there was an opportunity for striking up partnerships with international organizations performing similar functions as NTIS. NTIS indicated that it will investigate this option.

<u>Next Meeting of the NTIS Advisory Board</u>

The Chairman of the Advisory Board stated that the next meeting of the Board will have a strategic focus. There seem to be two fundamental challenges:

- Growth—NTIS services have grown rapidly, but we may want to review and refine that portfolio;

- Redirection—Content services are at a crossroads. What are the opportunities to redirect them?

The next meeting will be a strategic look at a 3-year NTIS strategic business plan.

It was then suggested that the Advisory Board meet each April and October in the future.

Tentatively, the next meeting of the NTIS Advisory Board will be Friday, October 26, 2012.

The meeting adjourned at 2:40 p.m.