

National Technical Information Service
Advisory Board Meeting Minutes
December 7, 2015
Held at 5301 Shawnee Road, Alexandria, Virginia 22312

Welcome/Opening Remarks

Bruce Borzino, Director, NTIS opened the meeting and welcomed the board members, NTIS senior staff, and guests. Jennifer Werner was introduced as the new NTIS Chief Financial Officer and Allison McCall as the new NTIS Deputy Chief Information Officer. Dr. Willie May, Under Secretary of Commerce for Standards and Technology and Director, National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST), and Dr. Shyam Sunder, Senior Science Advisor to the Deputy Secretary of Commerce and Director, NIST also participated. There were 2 members of the American public who attended the meeting.

The primary focus of the meeting was to review and discuss the Secretary of Commerce New Strategic Direction for NTIS and to review NTIS Fiscal Year (FY) 2015 performance results and NTIS FY 2016 strategy development. The following board members were in attendance: John Regazzi, Chairperson; Robert Friedenberg and Judith Russell; and via teleconference, MacKenzie Smith and Jose-Marie Griffiths.

A New Strategic Direction for NTIS

Dr. May spoke on the Secretary's review of NTIS and the decision to establish a new strategic direction to support the Commerce data mission and national data needs. The Commerce Department has made data a strategic priority to make it easier for business, government, taxpayers and communities to access, analyze and use data, strengthen economic growth, and create new jobs. Following a rigorous review of NTIS mission and operations, the Secretary set a new strategic focus for NTIS in June, 2015, to expand access to the Commerce Department's and the broader federal government's data resources, with an emphasis on data concerning the nation's economy, population, and environment. NTIS has been in the business of information and data dissemination since its inception and has a history of partnering with industry to find data solutions. Seeing NTIS as a solution to the challenges of releasing data, Dr. May stated that NTIS in its new role will deliver exceptional value by meeting a 21st Century National Need and serving as a Center of Excellence to execute the Commerce Department's Data Mission. The Department of Commerce is taking this action to evolve NTIS as an organization, consistent with its existing authorities, toward a focus on the DOC data mission and to transition away from services not aligned with DOC and/or National data priorities; and, to ensure effective communications with Congress and NTIS customers and partners. Dr. May also discussed the role of the NTIS Oversight Board established to guide the evolution of NTIS toward a focus on DOC data mission, including open access and open data. NTIS is moving forward to evolve as an organization consistent with its existing authorities.

The revised NTIS Mission is to promote the Commerce Department's and Federal data priorities, including open access and open data, by providing information and data services to the public, industry, and other federal agencies in ways that enable U.S. innovation and economic growth. NTIS will be a center of excellence that delivers trusted data networks through agile partnerships with the private sector and enables the private sector to develop and/or use new and improved data products and services. NTIS will support the entire data delivery pipeline for creating unique platforms to access, analyze, and use data; combining and using data in new ways to enable innovative products and services; and, delivering better data to businesses, communities, and citizens.

Moving forward, NTIS will provide the following four key data service elements: Data Discovery and Usability; Data Interoperability and Standards; Data Analytics and Forecasting; and, Data Infrastructure and Security. NTIS will provide data services using modern data science, engineering, and best practices essential to rapidly executing projects requiring high levels of innovation and creativity. NTIS has unique capabilities and authorities to partner with the private sector which are essential to execute projects requiring the use of modern data science, engineering, and best practices. NTIS will leverage its unique core competencies and partnering capabilities through its joint venture authority to rapidly plan and deliver tailored solutions to meet critical data mission needs. NTIS will build a joint venture partnership program that is aligned with the Department's and Federal data priorities during FY 2016 and FY 2017.

Financial Performance

The NTIS Chief Financial Officer presented the Board with the NTIS financial performance for FY 2015. Board members indicated that it would be helpful for NTIS to provide at future meetings a separate breakout of the overall costs of the NTIS transformation as well as to view the lines of business that were not aligned with the new data mission. The NTIS FY 2016 and FY 2017 budget risks associated with the elimination of non-aligned projects and lines of business were discussed.

Associate Director Updates

Federal Data Access: Office Product Management and Acquisitions (OPMA)

The NTIS Oversight Board has determined that NTIS Technical Reports are aligned with the new NTIS data mission. The Board was provided a summary of the performance of the Open/Public Access National Technical Reports Library (NTRL) that was open to the American public in October, 2014, and Premium Access NTRL for institutional subscription users. There was discussion on data and metadata, and the need to reduce the costs of the technical reports library. Lastly, the Board was provided status updates on the Limited Access Death Master File (LADMF) Interim Rule Certification program and the LADMF Final Rule Certification program implementation.

Federal Data Solutions: Office of Federal Services

NTIS has initiated announcement and transition activities for agency customers and joint venture partners regarding the alignment of current and future projects with the new data mission. Multiple meetings with agency customers and joint venture partners have been conducted to discuss the changes within the agency. NTIS is working with the Commerce Office of the Chief Data Officer to strengthen weakly aligned data projects. NTIS is revising agency agreement and project planning processes and policies to include review of data mission alignment and use of the joint venture partnership authority. NTIS is creating Sources Sought Federal Register Notices for the new joint venture partnerships aligned to the NTIS data mission. There is an overlap of the current business lines with the phased out lines of business. Going forward NTIS will focus on enterprise data solutions capitalizing on current data successes and the existing infrastructure. There will also be a focus on expanding current agency relationships and projects.

Information Technology and Management: Office of the Chief Information Officer

NTIS has revised the agency's IT investment governance practices and reporting to a single portfolio with three major subcomponents: Federal Services; Financial Management; and, Infrastructure. Federal Risk and Authorization Management Program (FedRAMP) activities include a signed Authorization to Operate (ATO) in March 2015. NTIS has continued to enhance its technical infrastructure through virtualization, data center consolidation, system redundancy, administrative support, and, systems security.

Challenges to the NTIS mission success include the hiring process for data scientists, nimble acquisition process for contractor support, and establishing joint venture partnerships for new technologies and capabilities that will support Commerce's and National data needs. Data scientists will be recruited through a special hiring authority for data scientists. The procurement process will require a fast and workable process for current and new contracts supporting the NTIS data mission. Joint ventures will need to attract those companies with new capabilities in cloud computing services, data science and visualization, and user interface and frontend development.

Public Comments:

There was one member of the public present at this time who indicated that the meeting and presentations answered his questions.

Advisory Board Roundtable:

The Board commended the Department of Commerce and NTIS on the new data mission and vision, and stated that going forward the NTIS strategic direction is now clear. Board members also stated that NTIS continues to perform well while transitioning through the evolution process. The Board recommended that a transition plan be established to guide the NTIS strategic evolution; manage risks, challenges and opportunities; and, assist in identifying and focusing on value services for its customers. Board members indicated their support for the

NTIS evolution and will be pleased to provide any assistance that NTIS and the Department will require.

Board Governance/Administration:

No date was set for the next meeting.