U.S. Department of Commerce
National Technical Information Service
Alexandria, VA 22312

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF   COMMERCE
NTIS
National Technical Information Service

A New Strategic Direction for NTIS

Overview

The National Technical Information Service (NTIS) is an entirely fee-supported agency that promotes U.S. innovation and economic growth by providing information and data services to the public, industry, and other federal agencies.

Since its founding in the early 1960's, NTIS has done this largely through its database of more than three million publications covering more than 350 subject areas. As technology has evolved, however, projects related to online data and services have generated an increasing share of the agency's operating revenues.

Following a rigorous review of the agency's operations, Secretary of Commerce Penny Pritzker set a new focus for NTIS in June 2015 to expand access to the Department's and the broader federal government's data resources, with an emphasis on data concerning the nation's economy, population, and environment.

The Department has made data a strategic priority. It has committed to making it easier for businesses, government, taxpayers, and communities to access, analyze, and use data, strengthen economic growth, and create new jobs.

NTIS will help implement that commitment by supporting the Department's and Federal data priorities, including open access and open data, using its existing legal authorities and capabilities to:
- deliver government data services through agile partnerships with the private sector to rapidly execute innovative projects;
- enable the private sector to develop new and improved data products and services; and
- support the entire delivery pipeline for trusted data networks with stringent privacy and security, including discovery, usability, analytics, interoperability, and standards.

Below are some questions and answers that address key elements of NTIS's new strategic approach to accomplishing its mission.

1. **Will any of NTIS's current services be phased out as part of this new focus on data?**
   A. The Department and NTIS are currently reviewing the agency's portfolio of services. If any current projects do not align well with NTIS's new data role, a transition plan will be created and shared with relevant stakeholders prior to a phase-out of those services.

2. **Isn't data delivery also a mission that other federal agencies already know how to do as well or better than NTIS?**
   A. 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. NTIS has made thoughtful investments in both infrastructure and staff capabilities that are unique and essential to build modern data products (e.g., trusted data networks, metadata, APIs, data standards, data

center operations). In its new role, NTIS will address important national priorities by serving as a center of excellence to execute the Commerce Department's data mission.

As NTIS evolves, its service portfolio of data services is expected to grow. This will include secure cloud solutions—pending final FedRAMP approval—that provide a significant level of security for hosted systems, ensure data integrity, and establish trust between the user community and data providers.

3. **Are there examples of NTIS work that demonstrate its ability to deliver data solutions?**

   A. In response to a White House initiative, NTIS partnered with the W} ã^åÂÛçæ^•Â^Ôããã^}•@ã Á æ}åÂQ{ ã¦æã}ÂÙ^¦çã&^• Á and the private sector to deliver the new my.USCIS.gov website. This website ranks among the most popular in government and is used by all those seeking citizenship and immigration services. NTIS completed this project within just 90 days of initiation and for just a fraction (10 percent) of the typical development cost.

   NTIS has also successfully implemented controlled access to critical federal datasets with stringent privacy and security requirements such as the DEA Controlled Substance Database and the Federal Wage Determination Database. In addition, NTIS plans to partner with the National Institute of Standards and Technology for private sector delivery of Internet time and custom services.   Just as making Global Positioning System (GPS) data publicly available in the early 1980s led to an explosion of GPS-related innovations, access to precision network timing could lead to another innovation surge.

4. **How will NTIS remain self-supported (i.e. not receive appropriations from Congress) since it has moved to an open/public/premium access model for its technical reports collection?**

   A. Data services related to premium access, data licensing, and selected research subscriptions to the National Technical Reports Library account for about five percent of NTIS revenues. NTIS already receives the majority of its operating costs from information and data services provided to the public, industry, and other federal agencies.

5. **Why is NTIS implementing this change now?**

   A. This change is the result of a critical and rigorous internal assessment of NTIS, its services, and authorities completed recently by the Department of Commerce. As part of that effort, we also considered key concerns of Congress.

   Numerous recent studies predict that data from different sectors of the economy, including the rapidly growing Internet-of-Things, could generate trillions of dollars in benefits to the United States alone. The Commerce Department has also made data a strategic priority in its "Open for Business Agenda," and expanding broad access to that data can strengthen economic growth and opportunity. In addition, NTIS will support Federal data priorities, including open access and open data.