

National Crosswalk Service Center

**Annual Report
July 1, 2000-June 30, 2001**



National Crosswalk Service Center
Center for Career and Occupational Resources
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Introduction

The federal government has funded the operation of an occupational classification and crosswalk service center since 1983. For the first dozen years of this center's operation, funding came from the National Occupational Information Coordinating Committee (NOICC). NOICC ceased operations on June 30 2000, and funding for operation of the center, now known as the National Crosswalk Service Center (NCSC), flowed from the Employment and Training Administration through the ALMIS Database Maintenance Consortium. This report covers the operations of the NCSC during the first year of funding through that consortium.

NCSC products and services have evolved significantly over time as its technological setting has changed. The center's original products consisted of a limited number of files available on nine-track computer tape and a number of standardized printed extracts from those files. Over time, NCSC staff developed the expertise to customize these reports for individual customer needs, but the standard delivery mechanism, through the mail, remained unchanged for a number of years.

As personal computers' processing and storage capacity increased in the late 1980s, a number of the NCSC's customers saw value in manipulating the data themselves and customizing the output for their own applications. The center's products shifted significantly toward delivery of database files on floppy disks, and beginning in 1989, through a dial-up bulletin board system. By the end of the operation of this system in 1999, NCSC customers had downloaded over 6,500 files.

The shift to Internet delivery of the center's products and services has had a variety of impacts on the center, some of which are discussed in this document. While Internet delivery has put the center's products in the hands of many more users, many of those users have little or no database or occupational classification experience. The change has also resulted in less day-to-day contact with the center's customers, which makes it more difficult to anticipate and accommodate their individual needs.

This report covers activity of the NCSC for the year ending June 30 2001. It consists of three sections: (1) the relationships between the center's activities and its statement of work, (2) the overall level of delivery and products delivered and (3) a brief discussion of the activity anticipated for the next year of the grant.

NCSC Activities Related to Work Statements

The National Crosswalk Service Center spells out a number activities designed to support the ALMIS Database Maintenance Consortium, states that are implementing the ALMIS Database structure and the center's traditional customers. This section of the document relates the center's activities to its work statements. (NOTE: some activities may relate to more than one work statement task.)

Support for the ALMIS Database Maintenance Consortium

- ❑ Attended consortium meetings in Georgia (October) and Florida (April). Activity updates were provided to the consortium at both meetings, and during the Florida meeting, the NCSC's proposed work statements for the upcoming contract period were reviewed and revised.

- ❑ Created a Visual FoxPro database utilizing the new 2.1 database structure in September.
- ❑ Worked with staff from North Carolina and Utah to prototype new customer service (single point of contact) web pages for the ALMIS Database Maintenance Consortium's web page. (November, December, January February)
- ❑ Participated in ALMIS Database training sessions in Atlanta in November and February.
- ❑ Delivered a CD-ROM containing ALMIS Database and Workforce Information Council multimedia material to the consortium. (April)
- ❑ Researched and presented options for future ALMIS Database Training (December)
- ❑ Researched a variety of issues relating the ALMIS Employer Database (January)

Support SESA/LMI staff in their efforts to populate and manage the ALMIS Database

- ❑ Formatted a variety of national Department of Labor datasets for use in the ALMIS Database, including:
 - Current Employment Statistics (monthly updates beginning in January)
 - Current Population Survey (monthly updates beginning in May)
 - Covered employment and wages (ES-202, February)
 - Occupational Employment Statistics (OES) wage estimates by industry and occupation (February)
- ❑ Obtained and formatted non-Department of Labor data describing the output of training program:
 - Bureau of Apprenticeship and Training program completers (annual update in October)
 - Counts of persons separating from military service (annual update in December)
- ❑ Obtained and formatted non-Department of Labor data for specific ALMIS Database tables:
 - Bureau of Economic Analysis income estimates (September, December, March)
 - Population estimates (September, December)
- ❑ Created automated mailing list (listserver) for use in communicating with ALMIS Database Managers (April)
- ❑ Began analysis of crosswalk files from the National Skills Standard Board as a starting point for new prototype national units of analysis.
- ❑ Internet polling – Installed software and published first Internet survey (December)
- ❑ Participated in beta testing of America's Career Kit products:
 - O*NET (public release – July, August)
 - ACINet (September, November, April)

Provide support to the America's Career Kit consortia, the Employment and Training Administration and other users of occupational and training classification systems and related data:

- ❑ Provided database support for ETA consultants developing occupation-specific skills (work performance statements) database:
 - Participated in working sessions with the consultants in Raleigh NC (February) and Annapolis MD (June).
 - Consolidated the work done independently by the consultants between meetings to prepare database files needed for further work.
- ❑ Transition of the licensed occupation Internet application to America's Career InfoNet:
 - Complete sets of national files to ETA contractor for use in system development and application deployment (September, October, April)
 - Message to contractor on upcoming changes to the ALMIS Database structure that will have an impact on the ACINet application (April).
 - Communication with Labor Market Information directors and ALMIS Database Administrators describing file structures, content requirements and types of tools and assistance available from the NCSC (March)

- LOIS Internet application removed (April)
- Development of resources based on new or revised classifications:
 - O*NET database files (July, September)
 - SOC files and revisions (September, November)
 - Census industry and occupation indexes (March)
- Development of resources linking occupations to training programs
 - Information about IPEDS files furnished to ALX staff and contractors for their use in planning update of community college information (September).
 - Development of draft crosswalk linking the SOC to the 1990 Classification of Instructional Programs (November).

Develop and maintain the Internet resources necessary for the center's operation

- Complete the transition from the noicc.gov to the NCSC's own Internet domain.
 - xwalkcenter.org domain secured (August)
 - FTP services transitioned to xwalkcenter.org domain (September)
 - New listserver to replace the NOICC list (May)
- NCSC Internet home page enhancements:
 - ALMIS Database state data files reorganized (September).
 - Page added for O*NET Database resources (October)
 - ALMIS Database and state data files pages developed (October).
 - America's Career Kit crosswalk resources page developed (March)
 - ALMIS Database data update calendar page (March)
 - Implemented features to allow search of the contents of the files on the center's FTP server and to allow increased access to FTP directories through web browsers (April)
- Capacity and Security Activities
 - Windows NT security training (January)
 - Installed new server to increase capacity (March)
 - Customer Database Research (April)
 - Intensive work with the state's security team after attack on state's Internet servers (June)

Maintain and expand the center's collection of occupational and training classification resources

- O*NET 3.0 database files (July)
- Revised O*NET 3.0 database files (September)
- SOC revision information (September)
- SOC-DOT crosswalk development (September, January, February)
- 2000 SOC Files (November)
- Census occupation and industry index files (March)
- Revised Military to civilian crosswalk (April)
- 1980 SOC to 2000 SOC Crosswalk

Conference Participation/Support

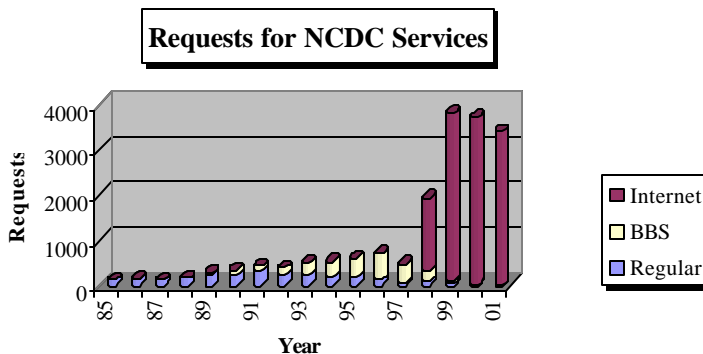
- JETT*CON in Albuquerque NM (July)
- Labor Market Information Forum in San Antonio TX (August) including a pre-conference presentation on O*NET resources available from the NCSC
- America's Career Resource Network meeting in Alexandria VA (October)

Overall NCSC Utilization and Product Delivery

(The contents of this portion of the report are based largely on an analysis of the usage logs of the NCSC's FTP server.)

The NCSC's mission is most directly carried out through providing files to users. A number of trends in NCSC usage have been apparent for several years. First, the number and variety of products offered by the center has increased greatly. During the center's first few years, staff delivered a couple of dozen products based on just a few resources. The center now has thousands of different files available for downloading. The second significant trend is the NCSC's reliance on changing technology to deliver an increasing number of products, both in quantity and variety.

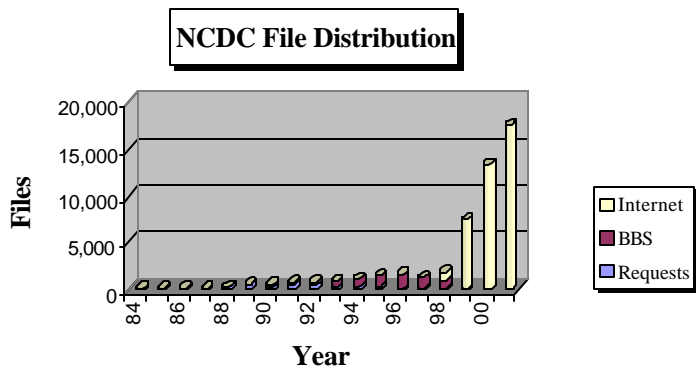
A great deal can be learned about the NCSC, its products and customers by examining logs of access to the center's Internet services. One measure of the center's operation is the number of customer requests filled. This measure was relatively simple to calculate when the center sent products through the mail in response to telephone or mail requests. The introduction of a dial-up bulletin board system in 1989 and Internet FTP services in 1998 have made this calculation more difficult. For the current year, a request was defined as a session from which files were downloaded from the NCSC's Internet FTP



server. All files downloaded from any single Internet address were considered to be part of the same request. Due to server log file format changes, this was a slightly different definition than had been used in the past, and contributed to the slight apparent decrease in overall requests. Regardless of this type of issue, the accompanying graph clearly reflects the overall increase in demand for the center's products and services.

One downside to the increasing reliance on the Internet for product delivery is a decrease in direct contact with customers. In the center's early years, staff worked directly with customers to define resources that would meet the customers' needs.

Another measure of the utilization of the center by customers is the number of files delivered. The trend in this measure mirrors that of overall requests. The number of files delivered by the center has increased



greatly over the past three years, and the increase is entirely attributable to delivery of files over the Internet. See the appendix for a listing of the files downloaded most frequently from the NCSC FTP server. While this list reflects the most popular files, it doesn't reflect the variety of files available and downloaded. Over

3,000 different files were downloaded during the year. Some highlights:

Number of user sessions	14,758
Number of unique Internet addresses	3,614
Number of files downloaded/viewed	17,613
Bytes downloaded	35,332,809,658

The server's files are organized into file folders based on their general content. A review of files downloaded indicates that ALMIS Database files accounted for more than half of all files downloaded during the period. The number of files downloaded from some directories of interest include:

File Subject	Downloads/ Views
ALMIS Database Files	10,255
OES Wage Files	1,484
Career Video Files	1,302
Occupational Outlook Handbook Files	866
O*NET Files	642
Career Kit Crosswalk Files	180
Census Files	159
SOC Files	106
CIP Files	86
Military Classifications	63

The statistics and file list fail to capture one aspect of the files on the NCSC's server: the choices presented to users, particular ALMIS Database users, in available file formats. For example, files containing BEA Personal Income for South Dakota are available formatted for use with versions 1.1 and 2.0 of the database, with both versions' files available in either delimited text or FoxPro versions. While it's likely that only one of these files will be downloaded, it's important that ALMIS customers be presented with files that they can incorporate into their particular version of the database with minimal effort on their part.

The NCSC instituted two significant improvements to the accessibility to information in the files on the center's FTP server. First, a content index was established. This index allows users to search the contents of all files on the server for specific content. For example, a search for "DOT near OES" would return a series of files containing the two terms in relatively close proximity. The second change was enabling access to the files through the World Wide Web internet protocol (HTTP) in addition to the regular FTP protocol. Customers frequently contacted the center with questions about access to files on the server when it appeared that the unit that controlled their Internet access blocked access to all FTP sites. It's not uncommon for this to be done as a security measure to protect agency/company networks. The change to the NCSC server permits those users access to the center's server.

Anticipated Activities

- ❑ Development of O*NET-based resources
- ❑ Continue the expansion of the center's classification and related data clearinghouse resources based on customer feedback survey
- ❑ Continued development of CIP (1990 and 2000) to SOC/O*NET crosswalk material
- ❑ Web site redesign
- ❑ Database management support for ACK skills database workgroup
- ❑ Expanded use of Internet surveys to gather information from customers for the NCSC, the ALMIS Database Maintenance Consortium and individual states
- ❑ Product development based for the federal interagency Crosswalk/Clusters work group

Appendix Top Files Downloaded from NCSC FTP Server

File	Downloads
/download/onet30/onetac.zip	302
/download/onet98/datadict.pdf	124
/download/onet30/data_doc.pdf	118
/download/xwalks/xwalk99.mdb	108
/download/xwalks/blsxw96.exe	75
/download/xwalks/xwalkv43.exe	62
/download/xwalks/oesxcip.exe	55
/download/xwalks/xw43ac.exe	53
/download/soc2000/socoes00.xls	49
/download/video/13011.mpg	46
/download/onet30/data_vfp.pdf	45
/download/xwalks/xwalkdoc.exe	45
/download/xwalks/blsfile.exe	44
/download/career.kit/dotsoc00.dbf	41
/almis/national/ces.txt	36
/download/onet30/onet3vfp.zip	36
/download/xwalks/ssonet.exe	36
/almis/clusters.doc	34
/download/xwalks/dotcen90.dbf	27
/almis/national/cescode.dbf	26
/almis/national/natprj99.zip	26
/almis/oes.exe	26
/almis/national/indus11.txt	25
/download/career.kit/dotxonet.dbf	25
/download/newsoc/socxoes.xls	25
/download/xwalks/cen7080.doc	24
/download/xwalks/dotcip.exe	24
/download/xwalks/oudot.exe	23
/almis/chan2_0.doc	22
/almis/dbv2_010699.doc	22
/almis/ver21/visfox/almis21.zip	22
/download/xwalks/xwalk95.exe	22
/almis/national/indust20.dbf	21
/download/military/motd99.doc	21
/download/cip2000/cip2000draft.pdf	19
/download/oeswage.99/oes_national_sic_2_1999.xls	19
/download/oeswage.99/oesnat99.xls	19
/download/xwalks/dotcen80.dbf	19
/almis/national/indus20.txt	18
/almis/national/indust11.dbf	18
/almis/ver21/txt/lookup/soccode.txt	18
/download/xwalks/cen7080.txt	18
/almis/ver11/txt/lookup/moscode.txt	17
/almis/ver11/txt/lookup/soccode.txt	17
/almis/ver20/visfox/almis20.exe	17
/download/career.kit/oesou.xls	17

