

SYMPOSIUM BACKGROUND

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Key Points—

This symposium is part of the Navigation Economics Technologies (NETS) research effort. This effort began with the 9/11/2001 symposium. That meeting introduced the issues that we will address over the next two days. The previous symposium made this research program and this meeting possible. For those of you who attended the last symposium, if you were wondering what ever became of that work, this is it.

The NETS research is part of IWR's larger Planning Models Improvement Program that is looking at all planning models. Our involvement (NETS) is specifically the navigation portion of the Planning Models Improvement program. NETS began with a focus on inland issues and has now grown to include similar deep draft navigation issues. This meeting is intended to kick off the inland navigation portion of this effort.

What is NETS? With NETS we are hoping to develop tools, techniques, policies and procedures usable by field practitioners and acceptable to influential outside entities. We want stakeholders to be able to see inside the navigation black box. We want to simplify without making it simple.

General characteristics:

- We want procedures developed that ensure the same assumptions are used throughout the Corps. This is to insure that regional equity projects from across the country must be evaluated on the same basis.
- The tools must be technically accurate. That means computationally correct and consistent with theory.
- Everything developed must have methods, techniques, and procedures with field ownership.
- Transparent tools and procedures accepted by outside critics and generally viewed as credible by the academic community.

NETS Specifics:

- NETS is funded for 1 year, penciled in for a total of 5 years. It enjoys a major commitment by COE leadership- people are interested and supportive of this effort.
- NES also has a commitment from leadership for independence. General Griffin wants this to be an IWR effort with HQ hands-off. This is to be a value free academic assessment of techniques, with politics kept at bay.
- Specific Topics:
 - Estimating the shape of the demand curves.
 - Enhancements related to shifting traffic- if we do one improvement how does influence the different modes or ports
 - Revealed choice survey instruments- get at Origin-Destination-Commodity triplicate (O-D-C)-
 - How do we get good quality data?

- When have data from surveys, we need to insure it is in a form that is usable by our system simulation models.
- How to demonstrate that our model is characteristic of reality?
- We must identify the cost and benefits of externalities.
 - Changes in emissions.
 - Congestion in the overland mode.
- Traffic management measures
 - Congestion fees
 - Tradable locking permits
 - Scheduling
 - Locking efficiency measures
- Deep draft desktop tools. This is an area where each district uses its own “home grown” models. It is very difficult to tell if we have uniformity across the analyses.

Symposium Purpose:

When I listened to everyone introduce themselves it was clear that we have a lot of smart people and have the right people in this room to do this work. I hope to have everyone in the room involved somehow with the research as it progresses forward. There will be many opportunities; reviewing research proposals, doing research and reviewing research. Some of the objectives that we will cover in this symposium are:

1. Gut check on what NETS should be doing. The large group exercise on Saturday morning will be an opportunity to raise any issue that any of you think should be considered in the NETS research. We don't want to limit our entire focus to the tools or models or the shape of the demand curve.
2. We want to consider what priority should be given to different tasks that we identify.
3. We will examine the data available and how it is used in the analysis. We will also talk about what data is not available.
4. I hope to get some specific accomplishments from this symposium. We need a procedure for independent peer review. I would like to have a draft of that process when we leave the meeting tomorrow afternoon. The survey design, models, and tools that are developed out of NETS must go through the peer review process. I would like to have that procedure agreed upon up front. This process must be flexible to encompass ideas of anyone developing a model and then having an appropriate procedure to identify its strengths/weakness from theory point of view; also important to be technically sound. We will present the current evaluation techniques and tools along with their weaknesses as we understand them. Given this, we want to generate a prioritized list of tasks that must be accomplished to bridge the gap between where we are with the models and where we want to go.

NOTE: This meeting is not going to talk about any models that exist. We are not going to debate the issues of specific studies. We will focus instead on what problems those studies illuminated, not necessarily the projects.

DISCUSSION:

- Is NETS looking for uniformity across different waterways?
 - Yes, the goal is uniformity across Districts in model use. We are not looking to displace any existing models, but we want all models to go through a review process that assures the outside world that the model is appropriate for the intended use. The models being used should have to go through a process that says “ACCEPTABLE”, an “underwriter’s seal of approval” type of process. This group has no way of enforcing any process. We can develop a great process but is up to leadership to implement it. It is up to leadership to grasp the process and enforce it.
- Uniformity is not the problem so much as having tools that evaluate a problem and can be replicated by someone else.
- Data and data availability greatly reflects the type of models that can be developed. Will we deal with data?
 - Yes, one of the topics of today’s discussions/presentations is on what data is available, how it is used, but also a section on what other data we need to develop.
- Years ago a process for FDR analysis was developed and forced on the field. It had great academic support but when it got to the field it was filled with errors. How to ensure that isn’t going to happen with navigation?
 - We want to make the process bottom-up, we need to listen to the Corps people as much as the academics.
- We don’t have the resources in the field any more for leadership to depend on the field developing models, but the ideas can come from the field.
- The field has to deal with sponsors that don’t want to cost share on the development of a new model if one already exists.
- The field, often done in partnership with academics, identifies most problems. The system analysis concept started in the field with academic support.