DOE/ER/75527--4

FEDIX ON-LINE INFORMATION SERVICE

"Design, Develop, Test, and Implement, an On-Line
Research and Education Information Service"

DOE/EP/75527--4

DE92 013582

Annual Status Report

March 1, 1991 - February 29, 1992

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MASTER

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ABSTRACT

The FEDIX Annual Status Report provides details regarding an on-line information project designed, developed and implemented by Federal Information Exchange, Inc., a diversified information services company. This document details the project design activities, summarizes the developmental phases of the project and describes the implementation activities generated to fulfill the project's objectives. The information contained in this document illustrates FIE's continuing commitment to serve as the link that facilitates the dissemination of federal information to the education community. This report reviews the project accomplishments and describes intended service enhancements.

I. INTRODUCTION

Federal Information Exchange, Inc. (FIE) is a diversified information services company that is recognized by researchers as a leader in the field of information delivery services. FEDIX is the on-line information service designed, developed and implemented by FIE and the objectives of FEDIX are to:

1. Broaden the participation of colleges and universities in the Federal Government's research development and education programs by providing easy on-line access to information on all participating agencies;
2. Provide all higher institutions with on-line access, through a single telephone number, to an integrated, keyword-searchable system for research and educational funding opportunities at the participating Federal agencies.

FEDIX was developed by FIE in response to the expressed need from educators for easy access to accurate and timely information regarding federal agency opportunity information. Additionally, federal agencies also had been seeking mechanisms to improve the competitiveness, equity and quality of the grant/contracting process with higher education institutions. Government officials recognized the need to provide the education community with current information on agency priorities, new programs, budgets, deadlines, policy making, announcements, news and meetings. The improved exposure to updated information would increase the number of well-targeted proposals submitted from educators and researchers.

In September of 1989, FIE received a research grant from the Department of Energy to design, develop, and implement a on-line research and education information service. The initial FEDIX system included the programs at Argonne, Brookhaven, Lawrence Berkeley, Oak Ridge and Pacific Northwest Laboratories. In addition, information from the National Aeronautics and Space Administration and the Office of Naval Research was added to the FEDIX system.

At the end of the first reporting period, four Federal agencies were participating in the comprehensive FEDIX system. During the second reporting period, two additional agencies joined the FEDIX program. Currently, there are eleven agencies participating in FEDIX/MOLIS projects¹. The Department of Energy, the Office of Naval Research, the National Aeronautics and Space Administration, the Federal Aviation Administration, the Air Force Office of Scientific Research, and the National Security Agency have comprehensive information on FEDIX. The Department of Commerce, the National Science Foundation, the Department of Education, the Department of Housing and Urban Development, and the Agency for International Development have information about minority programs and current events.

¹ MOLIS and FEDIX are two databases designed and implemented by FIE. The Minority On-Line Information Service (MOLIS) supports the White House Initiative on Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) by providing minority capability information to those federal agencies seeking to strengthen and support HBCUs. One of the essential objectives of the MOLIS project is:

To develop a federal program designed to achieve an increase in the participation by HBCUs in federally sponsored programs.

Under a grant from DOE, with initial funding from Department of Commerce, Minority Business Development Agency, the MOLIS project provides free access to the federal opportunity information contained in the FEDIX database.

II. PROJECT SCOPE

Based upon recommendations and input from the education and government communities, FIE designed FEDIX to address the communication needs of a wide constituency of users.

The FEDIX service was developed to be user friendly and cost-free to persons accessing the database. Following the suggestions of the Department of Energy, FEDIX was designed so that it would not be hardware dependent. The service is accessible by anyone having any type of computer and modem, operating at 1200, 2400 or 9600 baud. The service is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week, and a helpline is available to provide callers with assistance from 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. Eastern Standard Time, Monday through Friday.

In response to requests from the education community, FIE arranged to have FEDIX become a node on INTERNET. This status greatly broadens the number of persons having access to agency information contained in the FEDIX databases. The information available to users includes:

- o equipment grants
- o research programs
- o upcoming procurements
- o faculty/student educational programs and services
- o minority assistance programs
- o resource centers
- o employment opportunities
- o contact information
- o news announcements

In addition, an electronic mail facility allows users to communicate with the system operators.

FIE staff works with designated agency contact persons at each participating agency to enhance the quality and availability of information and services to the academic community. Software programs have been revised to allow specific information files to be downloaded for each agency. During this reporting period, a major feature was added to FEDIX allowing users to download brochures, guides, and announcements in several formats that provide camera-ready copy. In addition to ASCII format, selected information was made available for downloading in WordPerfect and Ventura publishing formats.

Program descriptions were indexed with appropriate keywords and keycodes. FIE continues to survey, abstract and enter appropriate announcements from the Commerce Business Daily, the Federal Register, agency newsletters, the Chronicle of Higher Education and other publications.

FIE registers all callers and maintains user statistical profiles which include the user's name, title, address, organization, phone number and number of times called. FIE also designed the system to track specific agency usage by callers.

FEDIX major features include:

- o Significant federal agency and university customer base
- o Extensive experience in Multi-Agency Project
- o State-of-the-Art Hardware/Software/Communication Systems
- o Marketing, training and customer support
- o Evaluation, reports and record keeping

FEDIX system features include:

- o Custom Menu Driven Interfaces
- o Interactive customer designed databases
- o Both keyword and text search capability
- o Easy access to information displays or downloads
- o Access from any type of PC/terminal with communication package
- o One number access to 11 federal agencies' information

III. METHODS AND PROCEDURES

All FIE resources allocated for supporting and developing the FEDIX system were focussed on a single overall goal: to facilitate communication between the Federal government and the higher education community in order to expand the participation of colleges and universities in Federal R&D and education activities by providing easy on-line access to current, complete and accurate agency information. Toward this end, FIE technical and administrative staff have undertaken and accomplished a variety of tasks during this reporting period. These tasks are categorized as administrative activities and system enhancements.

A. Administrative Activities

An important goal for the FIE staff in FEDIX's second year of operation was to increase visibility of the system within the Federal government and educational community, in an effort to significantly increase the user base, as well as increase overall support for the system. FIE staff represented the FEDIX system at key meetings and conferences sponsored and attended by government and education professionals. FEDIX training sessions were also conducted for various groups, especially at colleges and universities for campus staff who are responsible for identifying Federal research and education opportunities for their respective institutions. The meetings attended during the reporting period by FIE staff are listed below:

Education Meetings:

National Council for University Research Administrators Regional Conference
AAAS Conference
Cooperative Education Association, Inc.
NAFEO Conference
Central State University DOD Procurement Conference
National Assistance Management Association
National Council for University Research Administrators Region V Meeting
Society of Research Administrators Southern Section Meeting
Spring Agency/Institution Representatives Meeting
Association of Black Women In Higher Education
HBCU Consortium
Youth Congress
University of Puerto Rico Meeting
Major Press Conference-University of Puerto Rico
Washington D.C. Guidance Counselors Meeting
Society of Research Administrators International Annual Meeting
National Council for University Research Administrators Annual Meeting
Benedict College/HBCU Consortium
Hotel Restaurant Management Consortium
HBCU Environmental & Waste Management Consortium

ACE Conference
NASTS Meeting
Small Business Administration/Howard University

Meetings with Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) staff:

Alabama A&M University
Alabama State University
Albany State College
Allen University
Benedict College
Bennett College
Bethune-Cookman College
Bluefield State College
Central State University
Coahoma Community College
Delaware State College
Dillard University
Elizabeth City State College
Fisk University
Florida A&M University
Fort Valley State College
Hampton University
Hinds Community College, Utica
J.F. Drake Technical College
Jackson State University
Jarvis Christian College
Kentucky State University
Langston University
Lawson State Community College
LeMoyne-Owen College
Mary Holmes College
Meharry Medical College
Miles College
Morehouse College
Morris Brown College
Norfolk State College
North Carolina A&T State University
North Carolina Central University
Oakwood College
Rust College
St. Augustine College
Shaw University
Southern University A&M College
Southern University in New Orleans
Spelman College

Talladega College
Tennessee State University
Texas College
Virginia State University
West Virginia State College
Wilberforce University
Wiley College
Xavier University

Federal Government Meetings:

DOE Science Education Meeting
ONR Officers Program Meeting
NAVY League Conference
HUD Economic Development Conference
Library of Congress/American Defense Institute
National Congress On Aviation and Space Education
Office of Federal Programs Liaison Officers Meeting
Used Energy Related Equipment Meeting
Department of Commerce/MBDA Meeting
Airway Science National Symposium
Department of Commerce/Medweek
America 2000 White House Initiative/HBCU Conference
Fall Agency/Institution Representatives Meeting
Agency for International Development/HBCU Conference
Small Business Administration/Procurement Centers Meeting
Department of Energy Science Directors Meeting
Federal Library and Information Center Committee/Library of Congress

The success of FIE's efforts to expand use and support for the system is evidenced by the extraordinary growth in the number of users calling the system. During this reporting year the number of callers climbed from 1836 to 7879, a 429% increase. In March of 1991 there were 1021 organizations compared to 4614 in February 1992 (See Appendix A). Additional Federal support for FEDIX was accomplished through the inclusion of 5 new agencies, including:

- o Agency for International Development
- o Air Force Office of Scientific Research
- o Department of Education
- o National Science Foundation
- o National Security Agency

... and two NASA space centers:

- o Goddard Space Flight Center
- o Marshall Space Flight Center

Collectively, these Federal entities provided FEDIX users with 378 additional research and education programs to access.

Concurrent with these activities, promoting the benefits of FEDIX were released in the following publications (see Appendix B):

Black Enterprise, "Helping Colleges Compete", January 1992.

The Edutech Report, "All About FEDIX", Vol.7, No.4, July 1991.

Private Pilot, February, 1992.

SRA News Vol.24, No.1, 1992.

U.S. Department of Transportation News, "FAA Offers Computer-Based Information System for Educators", April 16, 1991.

In addition to attending meetings and conferences, the FIE staff produced and disseminated two documents, the FEDIX User's Guide and the FIE Update bulletin, to increase awareness of the FEDIX system. Two updates of the FEDIX User's Guide (Summer 1992, Ver. 4.0/Release 1.0 and Spring 1992, Ver.4.0/Release 2.0) were produced and distributed during the reporting period. These documents were designed for use as reference tools and provided detailed instructions on operating FEDIX, as well as supplying new and prospective users with information on the purpose of the system and potential benefits to its users. The guides were distributed to potential new users at meetings and conferences attended by FIE staff, or mailed to current users upon request. Over 5000 user guides were distributed in the one year period since March 1, 1991 (See Appendix C).

"FIE Update" (see Appendix D) was initiated in this reporting period to alert current users and others interested in FEDIX of recent enhancements to the system and other developments affecting FEDIX and FIE. In this reporting period two issues of the bulletin have been released on a quarterly basis.

Constant evaluation of the system is crucial to the success of this effort. FIE staff, in coordination with an independent survey analyst, administered a user satisfaction survey to a random selection of 515 FEDIX users in October 1992. The survey was conducted by Dr. Michael R. Dingerson, Associate Vice Chancellor for Research and Dean of the Graduate School of the University of Mississippi. The results of this survey are presented in detail in Appendix E and will be used to improve future service. Two notable issues resulting from analysis of the survey, however, are listed below:

1. Extrapolating reported usage data from survey respondents, the estimated number of individuals receiving information from FEDIX, directly or indirectly, was 550,000.
2. The vast majority of users report positive responses about the comprehensive nature of the system, the ability of the system to provide information in a better way than they were previously gaining it, and a very strong statement about expanding the system to include additional agencies.

B. System Enhancements

The operational development of the FEDIX system continued throughout the reporting period. Enhancements in the physical development of the system can be grouped into three main categories of activity. They include:

- o Enhancing the FEDIX software
- o Upgrading the PC-LAN based hardware system
- o Increasing the quantity, quality and range of data carried on FEDIX

The three sections below describe physical improvements to the system.

1. Software Enhancements:

The FEDIX system is an evolving set of programs and databases that is constantly being upgraded in order to (1) provide users with the quickest and most convenient access to information possible and (2) streamline management and reporting tasks in order to reduce operating costs. With these goals in mind, FIE programmers and database specialists accomplished the following software enhancements:

- a) Modified the logon procedure to improve the collection of user statistics. Specifically, the new user questionnaire collects more detailed information about the callers' organization and position.
- b) Developed software to list and select agency news & administrators speeches by agency, title, deadline date, and date added to the system.
- c) Developed software to list and select agency procurement notices from the Commerce Business Daily and Federal Register by agency, title, deadline date, and date added to the system.

d) Developed software which automatically displays introductory text to new users of FEDIX. The text includes an index of FEDIX databases that give new users an overview of the information carried on the system and describe the potential benefits of using the FEDIX.

e) Conducted research and development to increase speed and efficiency of code used for searching text in FEDIX databases. Results of these successful efforts will be applied to future versions of FEDIX.

Additional software upgrades that are agency-specific are described in the section entitled "Enhancements by Agency".

2. Hardware Enhancements:

Upgrades to hardware were crucial to keep pace with the rapidly expanding user base and the increased volume of data stored and processed in the FEDIX system. These enhancements include the following:

a) Established FEDIX as a node on Internet. This necessitated the acquisition of specialized computer equipment and also involved writing new software to enable FEDIX to be carried on this new vehicle.

b) Upgraded the FIE in-house computer system by purchasing a high-powered central network server and an applications server to increase the reliability, security, and data storage capacity of the on-line system, and to streamline system management.

c) Expanded the number of telephone lines to accommodate additional dial-up (modem) users. This will increase the number of callers that can simultaneously dial into the system.

d) Made FEDIX accessible by 9600 baud modem callers.

3. Enhancements by Agency:

Agencies that elect to join the FEDIX system can choose to participate fully by uploading to FEDIX a comprehensive inventory of all research and education activities, or elect to provide minority research and education program information exclusively. In either case, FIE provides a package of services concomitant with an agency joining FEDIX which includes indexing, abstracting and uploading programs descriptions, posting agency announcements from the Commerce Business Daily and Federal Register on a daily basis, and inputting agency current events upon request. Of the eleven Federal agencies now participating in FEDIX, six are providing comprehensive information regarding their research and education activities. These include Department of Energy, Federal Aviation Administration, National Aeronautics and Space Administration, Office of Naval Research, National Security Agency, and Air Force Office of Scientific Research. The remaining five agencies - Department of Commerce, Department of Education, Department of Housing and Urban Development, National Science Foundation, and Agency for International Development - are providing minority opportunities exclusively. *(All agencies are providing some information to FEDIX about Federal minority opportunities. This information compliments data on the MOLIS system, which supplies minority related information for colleges and universities. Together, FEDIX and MOLIS provide a total picture of Federal and higher education activities directed at increasing opportunities for minorities.)*

The previous sections detailed system-wide enhancements to FEDIX. Some upgrades to FEDIX during this reporting period were specific to one or more participating agencies. The section below describes improvements to FEDIX from the agency perspective. Enhancements are described in detail for each agency, which are grouped according to their level of participation as described in the paragraph above.

PART ONE - Agencies Providing Comprehensive Providing Comprehensive Information

Department of Energy (DOE)

As the lead agency in the development and operation of FEDIX, DOE's Office of Energy Research at DOE Headquarters in Washington, DC has made a significant contribution of time and personnel to the FEDIX project. Richard Stephens, Director, University and Science Education Programs, Larry Barker, Project Manager, and other staff members have provided substantial leadership and resources to move the FEDIX project forward.

During this reporting period, DOEINFO, the DOE module of FEDIX, consistently received a high amount of user "traffic". By monitoring user activity, it is apparent that DOEINFO callers are keenly interested in data describing DOE research programs, procurement opportunities, and available used research equipment (EEGADS). During the past twelve months, DOE staff have consistently supplied current and complete information on these key categories of information, as well as other useful data. DOE's Main Menu is set up as follows:

DOEINFO
MENU [MM]

FEDIX
ON-LINE INFORMATION SERVICE (301) 975-0103

HELPLINE

Department of Energy Main Menu

- 1 - Available Used Research Equipment (EEGADS) [EG]
 - 2 - Research Program Information [IX]
 - 3 - Education Program Information [EU]
 - 4 - DOE News Articles
 - 5 - Procurements and Special Notices
 - 6 - Research & Training Reactors [RT]
 - 7 - DOE Laboratory Information
 - 8 - Search for Program Information [PI]
 - 9 - System Updates
 - 10 - Return to Agency Menu
 - 0 - Exit System (Logoff)
-

Two major developments within DOEINFO for this reporting period include:

- 1) Implementation of a database for retrieving data on university research reactors. Individuals or groups affiliated with educational institutions, at both the college and pre-college level, can apply to use the reactors through participating reactor-owning institutions. The following information about the research reactors is available in a searchable format for these categories: a) descriptions of available facilities, b) capabilities of the reactors, c) educational programs linked to the reactor facilities, and d) administrative information, including points-of-contact.
- 2) LABINFO, a set of databases carrying data on five DOE laboratories and originally developed as an independent module, has been incorporated into DOEINFO. Users can access detailed information about DOE research laboratories by selecting an option from the DOEINFO main menu. The bulk of the LABINFO data describes research and education programs sponsored by laboratories.

Federal Aviation Administration (FAA)

Under the direction of Phillip Woodruff, Director of Aviation Education at FAA Headquarters, FAAINFO has enhanced its presentation of current events during the past year. By request of Mr. Woodruff, the current events procedure of FAAINFO has been upgraded to search, list, and display current news articles and speeches presented by agency administrators, as well as to display civil penalty decisions and legal interpretations. This information is uploaded to the system on a continuous basis.

FAA's Main Menu is shown below:

FAAINFO	FEDIX	HELPLINE
MENU [FF]	ON-LINE INFORMATION SERVICE	(301) 975-0103

Federal Aviation Administration Main Menu

1-FAA News & Legal Info.	[FV]	8-Regional & State Prgms	[RS]
2-Agency Overview	[FI]	9-Aviation Industry Prgms	[AI]
3-Element. School Prgms (K-6)	[FL]	10-Additional Resources	[AD]
4-Middle/Secondary Prgms	[MS]	11-Procurement Notices	[FP]
5-College/University Prgms	[FU]	12-FAA Employment	[FN]
6-Minority Programs	[FY]	13-Search Programs	[SP]
7-FAA Resource Centers	[RC]	14-System Updates	
		15-Return to AGENCY Menu	
0-Exit System (Logoff)			

The FAA staff has also been instrumental in promoting the use of FEDIX to the aviation education community by demonstrating the system at national aviation education conferences.

Software developed by FIE during the last year now enables users to display the FAA Annual Procurement Plan, a list of proposed acquisitions by FAA such as the development of training materials, research services, equipment purchases, new construction, etc. Individual procurement records can be selected by their competitive/non-competitive status and by region.

Office of Naval Research (ONR)

ONR's Debra Hughes, Deputy Director, Special Programs Office, has worked closely with FIE staff to expand support for the FEDIX project. She has on numerous occasions endorsed FEDIX as a useful and cost effect tool for researchers and educators who acquire information about Federal opportunities.

Since March 1991, ONR has expanded the amount of information in FEDIX devoted to Accelerated Research Initiatives and Special Program Announcements. These announcements represent specific and immediate opportunities for researchers and educators, and are of keen interest to FEDIX users. All of these announcements are indexed and searchable by title and keywords and many are available in their entirety for viewing on-screen or downloading individually. These special categories of announcements are in addition to the extensive inventory of research and education programs that form the bulk of the ONRINFO database.

ONRINFO
MENU [NR]

FEDIX
ON-LINE INFORMATION SERVICE (301) 975-0103

HELPLINE

Office of Naval Research Main Menu

- 1 - Introduction
 - 2 - Research Programs-Research Programs Department [RY]
 - 3 - Research Programs-Applied Research & Tech. Directorate [AR]
 - 4 - Accelerated Research Initiatives (ARI's) [AI]
 - 5 - Special Program Announcements [ON]
 - 6 - Contract/Grant Administration [AD]
 - 7 - Labs, Detachments, Foreign Offices [LB]
 - 8 - Procurements & Special Notices (BAA's, RFP's, etc.)
 - 9 - Search for Program Information [SP]
 - 10 - System Updates
 - 11 - Return to Agency Menu
 - 0 - Exit System (Logoff)
-

National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA)

Sherri McGee, Program Manager for the University Programs Branch, has assisted the FIE staff in maintaining and updating NASA Headquarters data during this reporting year, as well as coordinating the expansion of NASAINFO to include program information on all nine NASA Space Centers. The Space Centers are the principal research sites for NASA and include the following centers: Ames Research Center, Goddard Space Flight Center, Jet Propulsion Laboratory Flight Center, Lyndon B. Johnson Space Center, John F. Kennedy Space Center, Langley Research Center, Lewis Research Center, George C. Marshall Space Flight Center, and John C. Stennis Space Center. Of these, the George C. Marshall Space Flight Center data has been on-line with FEDIX since May 16, 1991 and preliminary work for incorporating Goddard Space Flight Center research opportunities into NASAINFO (i.e. indexing, keying data into databases, etc.) is now in progress. Including and/or updating information into NASAINFO about research activities for all NASA Space Centers will be given high priority during the next reporting period.

The menu shown below depicts NASA's current Main Menu:

NASINFO
MENU [NN]

FEDIX
ON-LINE INFORMATION SERVICE (301) 975-0103

HELPLINE

National Aeronautics and Space Administration Main Menu

1-NASA Overview	[OV]	5-Space Centers	[SC]
2-Research Programs	[RP]	6-Procurements & Special Notices	
3-Educational Programs	[EA]	7-Proposal and Award Guidelines	[NA]
and Services		8-System Updates	
4-Minority Programs		9-Search for Program Information	[SP]
		10-Return to Agency Menu	
0-Exit System (Logoff)			

Shown below is the Space Flight Center Main Menu:

SFCINFO
MENU [MA]

FEDIX
ON-LINE INFORMATION SERVICE (301) 975-0103

HELPLINE

Marshall Space Flight Center

- 1 - General Center Information
 - 2 - Center Research and Technology Efforts [RT]
 - 3 - Access to Research Equipment/Instruments
 - 4 - Education Programs [EP]
 - 5 - Technology Transfer Information
 - 6 - Search for Program Information (Marshall only) [NS]

 - 0 - Exit System (Logoff) [SC] for Parent Menu
[NN] for NASINFO Main Menu
-

National Security Agency (NSA)

Point-of-contact Bruce Ginn of the Office of Equal Employment Opportunity, provided FIE staff with extensive descriptions of the nearly one-hundred computer science, engineering, language and mathematics research activities being undertaken at NSA. All program descriptions are fully indexed and searchable.

MININFO
MENU [M9]

FEDIX
ON-LINE INFORMATION SERVICE (301) 975-0103

HELPLINE

National Security Agency

- 1 - Introduction/Overview
 - 2 - Research Programs [RE]
 - 3 - Education/Training Programs [ET]
 - 4 - Used Equipment
 - 5 - Scholarships/Partnerships/Fellowships
 - 6 - Conferences, Institutes, Seminars
 - 7 - Procurements/Special Notices

 - 0 - Exit System (Logoff) [AG] for Parent Menu
[MI] for MININFO Main Menu
-

Air Force Office of Scientific Research (AFOSR)

FIE staff demonstrated the benefits of FEDIX to Col. Graham Smith, Director, Plans and Operations, and members of his staff, in August 1991 at the main FIE, Inc. office in Gaithersburg, MD. AFOSR elected to participate with its full range of research and education activities and, with assistance from Bolling AFB Librarian Gloria Miller, the AFOSR database was brought on-line two months later. AFOSR supports numerous and varied research and educational activities. Descriptions of these activities, numbering over fifty, are now available in a searchable format on FEDIX.

AFRINFO
MENU [AF]

FEDIX
ON-LINE INFORMATION SERVICE (301) 975-0103

HELPLINE

Air Force Office of Scientific Research

- 1 - Introduction
 - 2 - Research Programs [RP]
 - 3 - Education Program
 - 4 - Proposal Administration [AD]
 - 5 - Research Laboratories/Offices [RL]
 - 6 - Procurement Notices
 - 7 - Search for Program Information [PI]
 - 8 - System Updates
 - 9 - Return to Agency Menu
 - 0 - Exit System (Logoff)
-

PART TWO - Agencies Providing Minority Information To FEDIX

National Science Foundation (NSF)

NSF actively encourages minority participation in science, mathematics, and engineering by offering an array of research and education programs to minority students, faculty and institutions. With the assistance of NSF's Roosevelt Calbert, nearly thirty such opportunities have been available on FEDIX throughout this reporting period. These programs were updated in January 1992 for FY92.

Many current and potential users have expressed great interest in accessing, via FEDIX, all NSF opportunities, including minority opportunities, that are posted in the NSF Bulletin. While the NSF Bulletin has been available throughout the reporting period as a single file that can be viewed on-screen or downloaded, it was not until this reporting period that FIE programmers enabled users to list and select opportunities from the Bulletin by title, deadline date, category, and keyword/keycode. Records in this new database are replaced monthly with new opportunities sent on disc from NSF.

MININFO	FEDIX	HELPLINE
MENU [M5]	ON-LINE INFORMATION SERVICE	(301) 975-0103

National Science Foundation

1 - Introduction	
2 - Minority Programs	[SP]
3 - NSF Bulletin	
4 - Procurement/Special Notices	
5 - Budget	[SB]
6 - Unsolicited Proposal Guidelines	[UP]
0 - Exit System (Logoff)	[AG] for Parent Menu
[MI] for MININFO Main Menu
-

Department of Commerce (DOC)

John Winston, Assistant Director, Minority Business Development Agency, has solicited crucial support for the FEDIX project from within offices of his own agency. Mr. Winston recognized early on that FEDIX could be an effective tool for achieving goals of the Minority Business Development Agency. To that end, DOC has supplied numerous programs targeted for increasing the participation of minority populations in business. Each program is indexed and searchable.

MININFO
MENU [M1]

FEDIX
ON-LINE INFORMATION SERVICE (301) 975-0103

HELPLINE

Department of Commerce (DOC)

1 - Introduction

2 - Minority Programs [CP]

3 - ITA District Office Director [C3]

4 - Minority Business Development [MB]

5 - Procurements/Special Notices

0 - Exit System (Logoff)

[AG] for Parent Menu

[MI] for MININFO Main Menu

Department of Education (DOEd)

Robert Goodwin, Executive Director, White House Initiative on Historically Black Colleges & Universities, has tirelessly promoted the use of FEDIX to the Black higher education community and to the research and education community at large. In addition to representing FEDIX at numerous professional and administrative gatherings, Mr. Goodwin and the DOEd staff have supplied data for nearly fifty minority-focussed programs originating from DOEd. Each program is indexed and searchable by title and deadline date.

DOEd current events is also an important part of the DOEd databases. Throughout the reporting period, FIE staff have posted a continuous stream of up-to-date information about events both inside and outside the agency to the on-line system.

Below is the Main Menu for DOEd.

MININFO
MENU [M8]

FEDIX
ON-LINE INFORMATION SERVICE (301) 975-0103

HELPLINE

Department of Education (DOEd)

1 - Introduction

2 - Minority Programs [ED]

3 - Procurements/Special Notices

0 - Exit System (Logoff)

[AG] for Parent Menu

[MI] for MININFO Main Menu

Agency for International Development (AID)

During this reporting period, AID expressed a firm commitment to the FEDIX project and will, in the near future begin supplying data in regarding opportunities for minority researchers, educators, and students. David Rakes, Chief, Program Management Division, Research and Development, University Center for Cooperation and Development, is the point-of-contact for FEDIX-related activities.

Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)

HUD's Deputy Undersecretary for Intergovernmental Affairs, Steve Glaude, is coordinating with FIE staff to supply the most current information on the agency's activities. During this reporting period HUD maintained its level of participation by updating existing data. However, HUD administrators are anxious to significantly increase the amount and types of data in the coming year.

MININFO
MENU [M3]

FEDIX
ON-LINE INFORMATION SERVICE (301) 975-0103

HELPLINE

U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)

- 1 - Introduction
 - 2 - Minority Programs [HP]
 - 3 - Procurement/Special Notices

 - 0 - Exit System (Logoff) [AG] for Parent Menu
[MI] for MININFO Main Menu
-

Appendix A

FEDIX User Statistics

FEDIX/MOLIS USAGE

Users & Participating Organizations

USER PROFILE

Users

Appendix B
FEDIX Articles

U.S. Department of
Transportation

News:

Office of the Assistant Secretary for Public Affairs
Washington, D.C. 20590

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Tuesday, April 16, 1991

FAA 21-91
Contact: Phil Woodruff
Tel.: (202) 267-3463

FAA OFFERS COMPUTER-BASED INFORMATION SYSTEM FOR EDUCATORS

The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) announced today that teachers and other educators can now access current and historical information on the agency's aviation education programs by using the Federal Education Information Exchange System (FEDIX).

There is no access charge for the information service — except the cost of the telephone call.

The program includes elementary and high school level programs. Teachers are able to access information about aviation education programs, current events and data on the videos, books, publications and computer-stored information supplied by the agency. Topics available include FAA aviation education overviews, free classroom materials for all teachers, college and university research information, aviation industry programs and resources, as well as others.

FAA Administrator James B. Busey said, "I am pleased that we are able to extend our education services and information to educators around the country through this free computer system. Education is the key if the United States is to remain a leader in the global aviation system."

The FEDIX system has been developed to provide educational and research communities with timely, accurate and accessible information about FAA aviation education programs. Other government agencies participating in the program are the Department of Education, Office of Naval Research, NASA, the Department of Housing and Urban Development, National Science Foundation, and the Department of Commerce.

FEDIX can be accessed with any personal computer using a modem operating at the following rates of transmission of data: 1200, 2400, or 9600 baud. The access number for the system is (301) 258-0953, which operates 24 hours a day, seven days a week. A "helpline" is also available 8:30-5:00 p.m., Monday-Friday at (301) 975-0103.

##

EDUTECH

R E P O R T

The Education Technology Newsletter for Faculty and Administration

All About FEDIX

FEDIX is an on-line information service that links the education community and the federal government to facilitate research, education, and services. The system is very easy to use, and provides accurate and timely federal agency information to colleges, universities, and other research organizations.

In addition to its ease of use, there are no registration fees and no access charges for using FEDIX. The only cost involved is that of a phone call.

Agencies that are currently participating in the FEDIX system include: the Department of Energy (DOE), the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA), the Office of Naval Research (ONR), the National Science Foundation (NSF), the Department of Commerce (DOC) and the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). Additional government agencies are expected to join FEDIX in the near future.

The information available from each agency includes equipment grants, research programs, upcoming procurements, faculty and student educational programs and services, minority assistance programs, resource centers, employment opportunities, contact information, and news announcements for educators. In addition, there is an electronic mail facility for communicating with the system operators (but not with other users), and regular system-wide announcements. The announcements can be viewed for all agencies, or just for specific ones.

FEDIX is not hardware-dependent. Any microcomputer or dumb terminal with communications software and a modem

operating at 1200 or 2400 baud can access the system. The telephone number for the data line is (301) 258-0953, operating twenty-four hours a day, every day (except for occasional maintenance). For human assistance, the number is (301) 975-0103 from 8:30am to 5:00pm Eastern time, Monday through Friday, except for federal holidays.

New users logging in for the first time will be prompted for some basic identification

Although FEDIX provides a broad range of features for searching, scanning, and downloading, the system is very easy to use. While a system of menus permits the novice user to easily access information, experienced users can use a simple command language to bypass the menus and quickly locate the information they are most interested in. In addition, help screens which describe the content and use of various menu options may be accessed from almost any place in the system.

A microcomputer with communications software (as opposed to a dumb terminal) will likely have the capability of storing or capturing information as it comes across the screen. Alternatively, the system provides extensive downloading capability for users of both Macintoshes and IBM PC-compatibles.

All agencies use the FEDIX system to solicit proposals for new or current research initiatives and to announce the availability of funding for important activities. A summary of agency research projects, information on funding and application procedures, and the points within each agency are provided.

All agency files also carry information regarding educational programs and opportunities. Details on training opportunities for technicians, faculty, and students, as well as information on scholarships, fellowships, and awards is available on FEDIX.

There are about 2,500 active users on FEDIX at the moment, a number which is increasing rapidly, as information about the service is disseminated. The service is run by Federal Information Exchange, Inc.; for additional information, they can be reached in Gaithersburg, Maryland 20878; (301) 975-0103.

FEDIX is not hardware-dependent. Any microcomputer or dumb terminal with communications software and a modem operating at 1200 or 2400 baud can access the system. And it's free!

(301) 258-0953

information, and asked to choose a userid. That is all there is to it. Once in the system, it is a good idea to begin by accessing the document "What Is FEDIX," which can be read online, or can be downloaded for reading or printing later. Instructions for access are provided at each step. This guide contains general information about getting started on the system, how to work with the menus, information common to all agencies, and agency specific information. It also has a complete listing of keywords and commands.

AFFIRMATIVE-ACTION WATCH

HELPING COLLEGES COMPETE

Each year, historically black colleges and universities (HBCUs) compete for millions of dollars in research grants, procurement contracts and scholarship awards from federal government agencies. In the past, HBCUs have complained of the difficulties they face going up against larger majority institutions for these grants. The Federal Information Exchange Inc. (FIE) offers two computer systems to level the playing field in the grant wars.

The Federal Information Exchange (FEDIX) and the Minority On-Line Information Service (MOLIS) computer systems were born out of Executive Order 12677, which mandated a five-year, \$3 million small busi-

ness research grant to the Gaithersburg, Md.-based Federal Information Exchange Inc. The equipment and software to access the information systems are provided free to subscribing schools, which can then access the information for the cost of a telephone call.

The FEDIX system is a data base which provides information on 11 government agencies, such as the U.S. Department of Energy and the National Science Foundation. The system is intended to get information about grant opportunities to the educational institutions that

need it as quickly as possible.

The MOLIS database provides government agencies with a wealth of information on black and Hispanic colleges and universities. Current research capabilities, student population

listed. The system is a resource for agencies that previously said they never sought out HBCUs and Hispanic universities for contracts and grants because they knew little about them.

The MOLIS system is expected to have 107 HBCUs plus 38 Hispanic colleges and universities on-line by month's end. The FEDIX system hopes to add as many as 18 government agencies in the future. Director of customer services Patricia Deveau expects grants and contracts for HBCUs to increase.

Jean Manning, vice president of academic affairs at Langston University, welcomed FEDIX and MOLIS because her 3,400-student black college in Langston, Okla., doesn't

have the staff to research grant information year-round. "Many times, when black colleges receive information about opportunities, it was due yesterday," she says.

MOLIS and FEDIX have generally been received favorably. However, Samuel Myers, president of the National Association For Equal Opportunity in Higher Education (NAFEO), says, "It is important to have a computer system that centralizes contract and grant opportunities and information on HBCUs, but the system that is established should be in the control of the HBCUs. We don't want the government to determine what institution should be matched up with what resources."

John Rodman, FIE president, says fears are unfounded. "The information is available for use by NAFEO, the government, colleges and any other institution—nobody is controlling it... we are just a clearinghouse."

—Hamil R. Harris

Deveau showcases FEDIX and MOLIS.

profiles, educational programs and future planned facilities are

tion and pertinent weather advisory alerts and also will respond to requests for local search-and-rescue assistance. —KEB

Aviation Information Available for Teachers

Teachers and other educators can now access information on aviation programs, thanks to the Federal Aviation Administration's new FEDIX program. FEDIX stands for federal education information exchange system and it provides information about the agency's education programs.

There is no access charge for the ser-

vice, although users will, of course, be charged for their telephone call. The program includes elementary- and high-school-level programs. Teachers are able to get information on FAA videos, books and other published materials. Topics include FAA aviation education overviews, free classroom materials for all teachers, college and university research information and aviation industry programs and resources.

FEDIX can be accessed with any personal computer using a modem operating at 1200, 2400 or 9600 baud. The number is 301/975-0103. —KEB

FEDIX ON-LINE INFORMATION SERVICE

Free • No Access Charges • No Registration Fees

FEDIX is a dial-up, on-line service providing access to a collection of databases of Federal government research and education-related information including: agency research opportunities; program contacts; scholarships, fellowships, and grants; research equipment, procurement notices; and minority opportunities.

PARTICIPATING AGENCIES

DOE • DOC • DOEd • HUD • NASA • FAA • NSF • NSA • ONR • AID • AFOSR

MODEM SETUP: 8 databits, NO parity, 1 stopbit
DATA LINE: (301) 258-0953 or 1-800-232-4879
INTERNET ADDRESS: fedix.fie.com OR 192.111.228.1
At Login type: "fedix"

Available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week
For more information or a FREE User's Guide,
call our HELPLINE--(301) 975-0103

FEDERAL INFORMATION EXCHANGE, INC.
555 QUINCE ORCHARD ROAD, SUITE 200
GAITHERSBURG, MD 20878

Appendix C

FEDIX User's Guide, Spring 1992, Version 4.0, Release 2.0

Federal Information Exchange, Inc. Brochure

Cycled Separately
DOE/ER-533P

Appendix D

FIE Update Newsletter

**Federal
Information
Exchange, Inc.**

A Diversified Information Services Company

UPDATE

Volume 2, Number 1 Jan/Feb 1992

NEWS BRIEFS

HBCU Student Visits FIE

Melony Scott, a senior at North Carolina A&T University, visited Federal Information Exchange, Inc., headquarters during the recent holiday break. The Industrial Engineering honor student searched the MOLIS database for graduate scholarship and fellowship opportunities and searched the FEDIX database for minority undergraduate and graduate opportunities. The Honor student is also the chairperson for a pre-college program initiative sponsored by the Society of Black Engineers in her region.

North Carolina A&T senior engineering student, Melony Scott, logs onto MOLIS during training at FIE headquarters in Gaithersburg, MD.

FIE Databases Help Colleges Compete

Black Enterprises Magazine, the Nation's foremost Black entrepreneurial magazine, featured the FEDIX and MOLIS databases in their recent Affirmative Action Watch section. The article entitled, "Helping Colleges Compete", published in the January 1992 issue, described FIE's databases as a tool minority institutions to compete for millions of dollars from Federal Government agencies.

Advisory Panels to Continue Support

The Federal Advisory Group, representing Federal agencies, and the Institutional Advisory Panel, representing the HBCU and HSI institutions, confirmed their support of the FEDIX and MOLIS on-line services for FY92. Representatives reviewed FEDIX and MOLIS accomplishments and made recommendations on issues regarding the implementation of the database services.

FIE Demonstrates On-Line Services

FIE demonstrated the FEDIX and MOLIS services at the following meetings: Department of Energy University Science & Education Programs, National Institutes of Health, Central Intelligence Agency, National Science Foundation, Small Business Administration, Bureau of Indian Affairs, Ford Foundation, Environmental Technology and Waste Management Consortium, D.C. Public Schools, and Montgomery County Public Schools.

SYSTEM FEATURES

FIE On-Line Services Available on INTERNET

FEDIX and MOLIS on-line services are now available through INTERNET for those using workstations connected to mainframe computers and through a modem for those with a Personal Computer. FIE's INTERNET address is: fedix.fie.com. At the first login type: "fedix" for FEDIX access or "molis" for MOLIS access. At the second login type "your USERID". If you need further assistance call the HELPLINE at (301) 975-0103.

AFOSR, NSA Information Now Available

Research programs, procurement notices, and general agency information is now available on the FEDIX service for The Air Force Office of Scientific Research (AFOSR) and the National Security Agency (NSA).

MOLIS Institutional Information Upgraded

The MOLIS database now provides information on tuition and fees, room and board, and housing on and off campus.

PEOPLE ON-LINE AT FIE

FIE Welcomes New Staff

Richard Hudlin, Ph.D., has joined the FIE staff as a Special Assistant in the program development area. He comes from New York where he was Assistant Dean of Program Development and Research at State University of New York. Previously, Dr. Hudlin was Director of Pre-College Programs at New York University.

Dave Uberig is FIE's new Network Communications Specialist. He will manage and upgrade the FIE network and install networks at client sites. Mr. Uberig's expertise is in Novell network operating systems and microcomputer hardware. He comes from Canada where he was a private consultant.

WHAT PEOPLE SAY ABOUT FEDIX AND MOLIS

Lucy J. Hayes, Division of Staff, at Montgomery County Public Schools writes, "... we are excited about activating MOLIS within our division to enhance our recruitment and contact with African-American and Hispanic colleges and universities."

David L. Stratmon, Sr., Ph.D., Chair, Division of Social Sciences, at Rust College congratulates "both FEDIX and MOLIS for providing a very timely and useful service to HBCUs, which many would not otherwise be able to afford. I scan the menus frequently, and if I see an item I think will be beneficial to a teacher colleague at Rust College, or a student, I copy it and pass it along to the potential beneficiary."

FUTURE PRESENTATIONS

FIE will present and demonstrate the FEDIX and MOLIS services at the following meetings:

- HPBCU Consortium for Hospitality Management Programs Meeting in Orlando, FL on January 7-11, 1992. Clarence Henry, III, FIE Information Specialist, will discuss and demonstrate both services.
- National Association for Science, Technology and Society (NASTS) Technological Literacy Conference in Alexandria, VA on February 6-9, 1992. Patricia DeVeaux, Ph.D., Director of Customer Services, FIE, will discuss and demonstrate the FEDIX and MOLIS on-line services.

WHAT ARE FEDIX AND MOLIS?

FEDIX and MOLIS are dial-up on-line database services providing access to Federal government research and education-related information. FEDIX databases provide

timely information on agency research and education opportunities contacts, scholarships, research opportunities equipment, procurement notices, and minority opportunities. MOLIS databases provide information on Black and Hispanic Colleges and Universities' financial data; research centers, facilities, equipment, pre-college and education programs; emerging capabilities; tuition and fees, room and board, and housing information; and enrollment, degrees awarded, faculty, and administrative personnel data.

PARTICIPATING AGENCIES

Eleven agencies are now participating. They are: Department of Energy (DOE), Department of Commerce (DOC), Department of Education (DOEd), Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA), Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), National Science Foundation (NSF), National Security Agency (NSA), Office of Naval Research (ONR), U.S. Agency for International Development (AID), and Air Force Office of Scientific Research (AFOSR).

TELEPHONE NUMBERS

FEDIX

- (301) 258-0953 Washington Metro Area
- 1-800-25FEDIX Minority Institutions
- 1-800-232-4879 All Others

MOLIS

- (301) 258-5016 Washington Metro Area
- 1-800-62MOLIS All Others

Modem Setup: 8 databits, NO parity, 1 stopbit

INTERNET Address: fedix.fie.com. At the first login type: "fedix" for FEDIX access or "molis" for MOLIS access. At the second login type "your USERID".

If you need further assistance or would like a Free User's Guide, call the HELPLINE at (301) 975-0103.

The FIE UPDATE is published bi-monthly by Federal Information Exchange, Inc., 555 Quince Orchard Road, Suite 200, Gaithersburg, Maryland 20878, (301) 975-0103, FAX: (301) 975-0109. The FIE UPDATE is published free as a service to Federal agencies, public organizations, colleges and universities, businesses and the general public.

President: John A. Rodman
Chief Operating Officer: B. Michael Mongan

Customer Services: Pam DeVeaux, Ph.D.
Clarence Henry, III
Mona J. Ricketts
David I. Nesbitt

Appendix E

User Satisfaction Survey

FEDIX

USER SATISFACTION SURVEY

Prepared For
FEDERAL INFORMATION EXCHANGE, INC.

BY

Michael R. Dingerson
Associate Vice Chancellor for Research
and Dean of the Graduate School
The University of Mississippi

21 February 1992

FEDIX

User Satisfaction Survey

In this the second full year of the FEDIX operation it was determined to survey the user community to learn more about such issues as magnitude of use, agency most frequently accessed, intended dissemination and direct use of the information, user ratings about the nature of the agency information, and how users learned about FEDIX. It was also important to know the perception of users in terms of several issues such as timeliness, accuracy, and completeness of information and which aspects of the system users perceived to be most important. Additionally, it was of interest to learn what kinds of information users were most interested in receiving from the system. Overall it was of interest to know if FEDIX was a better way to access agency information than other more standard methods. The survey concluded by asking several questions relating to the training and use of the system, as well as providing the respondent with an opportunity to suggest agencies to be added, to list benefits from the system not mentioned in the questionnaire, and to make recommendations on how to improve the system.

During the annual period covered by this study, there were 4,419 individual users on the FEDIX system in the following organizational categories: "pre-college", "university", "industry", "government agency", and "other". It was determined that a random

sample across categories was responsive to the needs of this survey given the number of users overall and in each category. Accordingly, a sample of every eighth entry was taken from an alphabetical listing of users by category resulting in a sample size of 515. This process allowed a sampling of users consistent with their categorical representation. What it did not allow, however, was knowledge of location of users within colleges and universities. To assist in that determination, respondents were given the opportunity to choose between two options: the sponsored projects office or another university organizational location. The response number of 161 was considered adequate for this kind of survey and, in fact, represented a substantial increase over the previous survey. It was still the case however that there are a substantial number of users of this system who are very new and whose magnitude of use is still relatively modest. It is clear from the survey documents that respondents are eager to use the system more, to have more information available to them, and to have additional agencies added.

Of the 161 total responses, 20 were determined to be unusable. The usual reason for the unusable question was that the respondent was a first time user, or had used it just for one specific purpose and did not feel comfortable completing the range of questions asked. Many indicated a positive response in terms of their intent to use the system in the future. Nevertheless, there were 141 usable responses which provided a consistently complete and high quality

base of information. Of the usable responses, sixty came from university offices, thirty-one from industry, twenty-four from government agencies and twenty-nine from other entities. The diversity of users is most impressive. For instance, within the "other" category there was a multitude of users, few of which could be classified together. The same holds for the industrial users as well as government agency users. In the "government agency" category those users span local, county, state, and federal agencies with the latter of course being the most significant. The use of the system by individual faculty and staff was also impressive in that it indicates an individual independence in seeking this kind of information rather than always relying on a centralized office. A study of university users including all organizational locations using the system would be useful in better understanding the use patterns of this important user constituency.

More than half (56%) of the users of FEDIX in the last twelve months have used it four times or more with three reporting using it over fifty times, and nine indicating a use ranging from twenty-six to forty-nine. Slightly less than 50% of the users indicated that they had used the system between one and three times.

When asked "from which agencies do you usually retrieve information when using FEDIX" the responses, as anticipated, were very broad in range. Many respondents indicated only one agency. In most cases however, respondents asked for information from three to five

agencies. As one would expect, the respondents' type of organization dictated, reasonably directly, the agencies from which information was sought. For instance, local and county government agency respondents frequently were interested in the Department of Commerce. There were several users from the aviation industry which only accessed the FAA aspect of the database, and university users frequently asked for information from DoEd, DOE, NASA, NSF, and ONR. In terms of overall use, those responding recorded similar numbers of accesses to NASA and NSF followed by ONR and DoEd. The DOE and the FAA were used to a similar but lesser degree by these respondents. The NSA and HUD were less utilized. (These data from users are in conflict with other sources of data in terms of user patterns of agency access. For instance, it is known from other FEDIX records that access to DOE information is sought as a first priority by over one-third of those making inquiry to the system. It is known that DOE is the agency from which most users are seeking information. This is particularly the case for the college and university users. More needs to be done here to understand actual user patterns and why the anomaly in these data^{exists}.)

It is very apparent from this survey that respondents are using the information in a variety of ways. Predominant amongst those are as an end user. However, several respondents indicated that the information was not only used for their particular purposes, but was used for departmental level dissemination and particularly for a source of information for a newsletter. About half as many respondents using the information for newsletter purposes used it

for e-mail system purposes. Correspondingly, approximately two-thirds of the respondents indicated that the information was being disseminated to between one and four individuals. Four respondents indicated that the material was going to over one thousand, with two indicating over five thousand. Other respondents indicated on twenty-two occasions that material would ultimately reach between 5 and 10, on ten occasions between 11 and 20, on two occasions between 21 and 50, and on thirteen occasions between 51 and 200. It is reasonable to extrapolate total response to a population of total users that would provide a "ball park" number of total users. Using the reported usage data from the 141 usable responses to estimate an end user population results in an estimated end user population for all FEDIX activity of over 550,000.

Respondents were asked to judge the comprehensive nature of the information on a basis of "poor", "fair", "good", "excellent", "outstanding", and "don't know". In many cases the respondent did not fill in the "Don't Know" category opting to simply leave the request without a response. Because of that the "don't know" responses are spurious and will not be included as a part of the analysis. There was more than adequate response to the agencies in terms of the nature of this question to conduct a appropriate analysis. The agencies seem to be rated comparable in terms of the comprehensive nature of the information. In other words, about the same ratio of responses across agencies were received across the response categories. In summary, respondents indicated "good",

"excellent", and "outstanding" in about two-thirds of the cases across agencies. Approximately one third of the respondents selected either "excellent" or "outstanding" to describe their feelings about the comprehensive nature of the information being provided through FEDIX.

There was a very broad distribution of responses to the question about how one learned about FEDIX. In absolute responses, the most indicated was "word of mouth," followed by "advertisements" and "participating agency." A similar number indicated "other", most of them learning of FEDIX through bulletin boards or journals.

In the second section of the survey the respondent was asked to rate on a "poor", "fair", "good", "excellent", "outstanding" basis such issues as "timely information", "accurate information", "complete information", "easy access to information", "reduced time lag for information", and "less costly access to information". Again respondents were rather consistent across the categories in terms of their ranking. A substantial majority of the respondents indicated either "good", "excellent", or "outstanding", on all categories. Notable issues here include a strong sense that the information is timely and accurate. There is slightly less support for the notion that the information is complete as there is for the ease of access to it. Users seem to be pleased in terms of the reduced time lag for information and very pleased in terms of the costs of accessing the information. About one half of the

respondents indicated "excellent" or "outstanding" to the question asking if the FEDIX system is a better overall way to access information. Only ten percent of the respondents indicated "fair" or "poor" to this question.

When asked what aspects of the system were most important to users, there was again a broad distribution of responses. However, all categories received substantially strong support from the respondents. Very few respondents indicated that there were any aspects of this system unimportant to them and almost all respondents indicated on a five-point scale that these aspects of the system were either ranked "four" or "five". When asked what kinds of information a user is most interested in receiving from the system, the responses were substantially more varied. If one analyzes this question by totaling the "four" and "five" responses on a one to five scale, then information such as "program descriptions", "deadlines", "current events", and "recent RFP's and RFQ's" get similar, high responses. Receiving less support in this context were the entries "program staff information," "minority programs," and "agency background-overview".

When asked how important the key word search capability is for a program information capability, those responding "much" and "very" dominated this area of interest. Of those responding, approximately seventy percent responded to these two categories.

A surprisingly high number of users had not used the help line. Of those responding either "yes" or "no", seventy-eight indicated "no" and forty-three "yes". Of those responding "yes", twenty-eight indicated that it was either "good" or "excellent" in terms of it's usefulness.

Of all the issues pursued in this survey the question which received the most substantially one-sided response was the question "If all agencies were on the system would you use it more?" Of the ninety-six responding either "yes" or "no", ninety responded "yes". This question was an excellent tie-in to another question which asked "Which agencies would you prefer to have added to the system" Thirty- four indicated the Department of Defense. It must be noted that this is a very substantial response from this group given the fact that the question was open ended in nature. There was also expressed interest for many other agencies but most notably the National Institutes of Health, The National Endowment for the Humanities, and the National Endowment for the Arts.

Most notable were operational issues such as its quick browsing ability, independence of operation, and accessibility. Most of those responses were operational in nature rather than substantive with regard to the information.

This survey reports a very broad base of users accessing the FEDIX system and using the information in a variety of ways. In this its second year of operation, it is clear that users are using the system more and the information is being disseminated more broadly beyond the access user. While there seems to still be perceived some operational flaws in the system and/or a lack of information about improvements in the system, the vast majority of users report positive responses about the comprehensive nature of the system, the ability of the system to provide information in a better way than they were previously gaining it, and an enormously strong statement about expanding the system to include additional agencies.

APPENDIX A

Summary of Survey Responses

**Federal Information Exchange, Inc.
User Satisfaction Survey, 1991**

I. DEMOGRAPHICS

NAME (optional) _____

TYPE OF ORGANIZATION:

8 University Sponsored Projects Office 31 Industry 24 Government Agency
52 University 29 Other, Describe _____

NUMBER OF TIMES USING SYSTEM: 621-3 554-10 1111-25 926-49 3 over 50

From which agencies do you usually retrieve information using FEDIX? (check all that apply)

27 Dept. of Commerce (DOC)
41 Dept. of Education (DOEd)
35 Dept. of Energy (DOE)
6 Dept. of Housing & Urban Devel. (HUD)
36 Federal Aviation Admin. (FAA)
59 Nat'l Aeronautics & Space Admin. (NASA)
63 Nat'l Science Foundation (NSF)
9 Nat'l Security Agency (NSA)
49 Off. of Naval Research (ONR)

Generally, how are you using system information? (You may check more than one)

35 Departmental Level 9 College/Multi-departmental Level
9 University/Agency Level 21 Source of info. for newsletter
9 Source of information 83 End user
for campus E-mail system

After information is retrieved from FEDIX, to approximately how many individuals is it disseminated (include newsletters, E-mail, etc) :

861-4 225-10 1011-20 221-50 1351-200 2201-500
2500-1000 11001-2500 12501-5000 2 over 5000

In terms of the comprehensive nature of the information, how do you rate FEDIX Agencies?

	Poor	Fair	Good	Excellent	Outstanding	Don't Know
Dept. of Commerce:	<u>2</u>	<u>8</u>	<u>18</u>	<u>8</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>58</u>
Department of Education:	<u>3</u>	<u>8</u>	<u>31</u>	<u>8</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>48</u>
Department of Energy:	<u>1</u>	<u>13</u>	<u>31</u>	<u>11</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>40</u>
Dept. of Housing & Urban Development:	<u>2</u>	<u>9</u>	<u>8</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>74</u>
Federal Aviation Admin:	<u>2</u>	<u>11</u>	<u>21</u>	<u>9</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>53</u>
Nat'l Aeronautics & Space Administration:	<u>2</u>	<u>11</u>	<u>32</u>	<u>19</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>40</u>
Nat'l Science Foundation:	<u>5</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>31</u>	<u>17</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>44</u>
Nat'l Security Agency:	<u>2</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>12</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>64</u>
Off. of Naval Research:	<u>2</u>	<u>10</u>	<u>28</u>	<u>12</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>43</u>

How did you learn about FEDIX?

11 Professional meeting 50 Word-of-mouth
28 Advertisements 29 Participating Agency
24 Other, Describe _____

II. SYSTEM ISSUES

How well do you find the system providing:

	Poor	Fair	Good	Excellent	Outstanding
a) Timely information	<u>5</u> 1	<u>32</u> 2	<u>45</u> 3	<u>25</u> 4	<u>3</u> 5
b) Accurate information	<u>3</u> 1	<u>16</u> 2	<u>77</u> 3	<u>22</u> 4	<u>4</u> 5
c) Complete information	<u>7</u> 1	<u>41</u> 2	<u>58</u> 3	<u>15</u> 4	<u>0</u> 5
d) Easy access to info.	<u>11</u> 1	<u>37</u> 2	<u>47</u> 3	<u>22</u> 4	<u>6</u> 5
e) Reduced time lag for information.	<u>8</u> 1	<u>26</u> 2	<u>63</u> 3	<u>24</u> 4	<u>7</u> 5

f) Less costly access to information 3 1 11 2 28 3 12 4 23 5

Do you find the system a better overall way to access information?

Poor 3 1 Fair 12 2 Good 54 3 Excellent 43 4 Outstanding 14 5

Which aspects of the system are most important to you?

a) Timely information	<u>5</u> 1	<u>42</u>	<u>31</u> 3	<u>40</u> 4	<u>37</u> 5
b) Accurate information	<u>7</u> 1	<u>22</u>	<u>25</u> 3	<u>41</u> 4	<u>44</u> 5
c) Complete information	<u>3</u> 1	<u>62</u>	<u>33</u> 3	<u>42</u> 4	<u>26</u> 5
d) Easy access to info.	<u>6</u> 1	<u>82</u>	<u>15</u> 3	<u>48</u> 4	<u>32</u> 5
e) Less costly access to information	<u>7</u> 1	<u>32</u>	<u>29</u> 3	<u>40</u> 4	<u>35</u> 5
f) Single telephone number access to information	<u>8</u> 1	<u>52</u>	<u>32</u> 3	<u>36</u> 4	<u>35</u> 5

What kinds of information are you most interested in receiving from the system:

a) Program descriptions	<u>5</u> 1	<u>52</u>	<u>25</u> 3	<u>36</u> 4	<u>48</u> 5
b) Program staff info.	<u>7</u> 1	<u>16</u> 2	<u>46</u> 3	<u>15</u> 4	<u>9</u> 5
c) Deadlines (programs, RFPs, etc)	<u>9</u> 1	<u>10</u> 2	<u>20</u> 3	<u>37</u> 4	<u>35</u> 5
d) Current events	<u>7</u> 1	<u>62</u>	<u>27</u> 3	<u>39</u> 4	<u>25</u> 5
e) Minority programs	<u>21</u> 1	<u>14</u> 2	<u>25</u> 3	<u>21</u> 4	<u>18</u> 5
f) Recent RFPs and RFQs	<u>11</u> 1	<u>72</u>	<u>34</u> 3	<u>35</u> 4	<u>21</u> 5
g) Agency background/overview	<u>3</u> 1	<u>13</u> 2	<u>31</u> 3	<u>20</u> 4	<u>9</u> 5
h) Other, please list:					

How important is the keyword search for program information capability?

3 Not 7 Little 24 Moderately 29 Much 55 Very 16 Don't know

III. TRAINING/SYSTEM USE

Have you used the "Help-line"? 43 YES 78 NO 17 DON'T KNOW

If yes, how useful did you find it? 3 Poor 13 Fair 25 Good 3 Excellent

If all Federal agencies were on the system, would you use it more? 90 YES 6 NO 31 DON'T KNOW

Which agencies would you prefer to have added to the system?

Please describe benefits from the system not mentioned above: _____

Do you have recommendations which you feel would improve the system? _____

Please return the survey document in the enclosed envelope to:

Michael R. Dingerson
Associate Vice Chancellor for Research
125 Old Chemistry Building

NOTES:

- 1) Federal Information Exchange, Inc., expects to fully utilize the budgeted amount. No unexpected balance of unused funds is anticipated.
- 2) Provisional Indirect Costs and Fringe Benefit rates have been used in preparing this Annual Status Report. Federal Information Exchange, Inc. anticipates renegotiating these rates in the Fall of 1992.

END

**DATE
FILMED
6/19/92**