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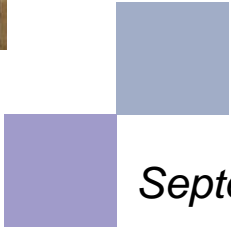
**KNOW**  
**THE**  
**FLOW**



# National Agricultural Library



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NAL User Needs Assessment  
Phase Four Report

*September 21, 2006*

# Study Background



- **The NAL Director's strategic vision includes revitalizing the NAL and launching a U.S. National Digital Library for Agriculture (NDLA).**
- **To develop the NDLA, a thorough understanding of NAL users' needs was necessary.**
- **NAL contracted Outsell to conduct a strategic assessment/plan and a user needs assessment study.**

# Study Phases



- **Phase One: Strategy Meeting**
  - **Strategy meeting at NAL in August 2004 between senior NAL staff members and Outsell.**
- **Phase Two: NAL Staff Interviews**
  - **Interviews with NAL staff to determine who uses the NAL and to understand the target market.**
  - **Outsell completed the Phase Two report on December 30, 2004.**

# Study Phases (cont'd)



- **Phase Three: Marketing Training Session**
  - A planned marketing training session for NAL staff that will be designed based on the findings of Phase Two and Phase Four.
  
- **Phase Four: User Needs Assessment**
  - Web-based user needs survey of the user segments determined in Phase Two. Phase Four was completed in July 2006.

# Phase Four: User Needs Assessment

# User Needs Study Objectives

- **Users' information needs – where they are being met and where there are gaps**
- **The information sources users rely on**
- **Users' preferences and behaviors with regard to information**
- **What information users need that they don't currently get**
- **Where users obtain information**
- **How users use and view the current set of NAL services**
- **The preferred future roles of the NAL, particularly digital**

# User Needs Survey Design and OMB Approval

- **Outsell designed the questionnaire with input and final approval from the NAL.**
- **The final survey was reviewed by the U.S. Office of Management and Budget (OMB) and approved under OMB No.: 0518-0044, expiration date 03/31/2009.**



# User Needs Survey Methodology and Sample

- **Outsell programmed and hosted the user needs questionnaire on its Web-based server.**
- **Invitations were e-mailed by NAL staff to listservs and government departments on April 18, 2006.**
- **The Web survey closed on May 16, 2006.**
- **6,113 responses were received from USDA and non-USDA (government and non-government) respondents.**

# User Needs Survey Topics

- **Information needs and usage**
- **Where respondents go to find information on agriculture and nutrition**
- **Success of finding information online**
- **Use of the NAL, both in person and on the Internet**
- **Reasons for not using the NAL**
- **Rating the NAL information services**
- **Challenges in obtaining information from the NAL**
- **Services respondents would like to see the NAL offer**

# Respondent Profile: USDA and Selected USDA Departments

Segment	Population	Survey Response	99% Confidence Rating
<b>Total USDA</b>	99,251	3,920	+/- 2.1 %
<b>Agricultural Research Service (ARS)</b>	5,495	917	+/- 3.9%
<b>Animal Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS)</b>	7,906	1,284	+/- 3.3%
<b>Forest Service</b>	31,458	1,212	+/- 3.6%

# User Needs Report Data Highlights

# Key Findings



Segment	Total	USDA	Non-USDA
<b>Top three information types used</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Web sites (81%)</li> <li>▪ Books (63%)</li> <li>▪ Journals (62%)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Web sites (78%)</li> <li>▪ Sci/Tech (60%)</li> <li>▪ Journals (57%)</li> <li>▪ Books (57%)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Web sites (81%)</li> <li>▪ Journals (72%)</li> <li>▪ Books (60%)</li> </ul>
<b>Difficult to find</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Invasive species (24%)</li> <li>▪ Food/Agri product info (22%)</li> <li>▪ Water quality (20%)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Invasive species (28%)</li> <li>▪ Food/Agri product info (19%)</li> <li>▪ Water quality (18%)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Water quality (23%)</li> <li>▪ Invasive species (23%)</li> <li>▪ Diet/Nutrition (22%)</li> </ul>
<b>Where respondents go to find information</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Internet (66%)</li> <li>▪ NAL (22%)</li> <li>▪ Academic library (18%)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Internet (65%)</li> <li>▪ NAL (25%)</li> <li>▪ Colleagues (21%)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Internet (73%)</li> <li>▪ NAL (31%)</li> <li>▪ Org. library (26%)</li> </ul>
<b>Frequency of use via the Internet</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Frequent (20%)</li> <li>▪ Infrequent (67%)</li> <li>▪ Not used in 12 mos. (14%)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Frequent (25%)</li> <li>▪ Infrequent (62%)</li> <li>▪ Not used in 12 mos. (14%)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Frequent (12%)</li> <li>▪ Infrequent (76%)</li> <li>▪ Not used in 12 mos. (12%)</li> </ul>
<b>Top three NAL service ratings (5 high;1 low)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Accuracy (4.3)</li> <li>▪ Quality (4.0)</li> <li>▪ Comprehensive (3.9)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Accuracy (4.2)</li> <li>▪ Quality (3.9)</li> <li>▪ Comprehensive (3.8)</li> <li>▪ Understanding requests (3.8)</li> <li>▪ Delivery medium (3.8)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Accuracy (4.5)</li> <li>▪ Quality (4.3)</li> <li>▪ Comprehensive (4.2)</li> </ul>

# Key Findings (cont'd)

Segment	Total	USDA	Non-USDA
<b>Top three problems encountered</b> <i>(Percentage is sum of minor and major problems)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Not knowing what is available (60%)</li> <li>Insufficient training (48%)</li> <li>Information hard to find (44%)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Not knowing what is available (60%)</li> <li>Insufficient training (52%)</li> <li>Information hard to find (46%)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Not knowing what is available (51%)</li> <li>Information hard to find (40%)</li> <li>Information hard to access (37%)</li> </ul>
<b>Top three NAL services respondents would use</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Links to authoritative Web sites (60%)</li> <li>Library catalog (54%)</li> <li>Reference (43%)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Links to authoritative Web sites (55%)</li> <li>Library catalog (52%)</li> <li>Reference (41%)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Links to authoritative Web sites (73%)</li> <li>Library catalog (56%)</li> <li>Online bibliographies (40%)</li> <li>Reference (40%)</li> </ul>
<b>Top five most frequently used NAL services</b> (5 high; 1 low)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>AGRICOLA (2.8)</li> <li>DigiTop (2.8)</li> <li>Food and Nutrition Information Center (2.1)</li> <li>Document delivery service (2.1)</li> <li>General reference services (2.1)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>DigiTop (2.9)</li> <li>AGRICOLA (2.7)</li> <li>Document delivery service (2.3)</li> <li>General reference services (2.2)</li> <li>Serials collection (2.0)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>AGRICOLA (2.9)</li> <li>Food and Nutrition Information Center (2.5)</li> <li>General reference services (2.4)</li> <li>Food Safety Information Center (2.2)</li> <li>Document delivery service (2.2)</li> <li>Serials collection (2.2)</li> </ul>

# Study Respondents Have Trouble Accessing Information on:

- **Invasive Species – total respondents (24%), forestry (39%), and agricultural scientists (30%)**
- **Food/Agricultural Product Information – total respondents (22%), technical specialists (28%)**
- **Water Quality – total respondents (20%), librarians (26%), forestry (24%), and government employees outside of USDA (23%)**
- **Diet and Nutrition – total respondents (18%), technical specialists (27%), and government employees outside of USDA (22%)**
- **Alternative Farming – librarians (26%)**

# In Outsell's Opinion: Recommendations



# Outsell Recommendations



- **Focus on building awareness and branding.**
- **Partner with Google!**
- **Make NAL Web site top priority.**
- **Converge packaging and branding strategy for DigiTop and AGRICOLA – the NAL’s strongest brands.**
- **Go deep into e-agricultural content.**

# Outsell Recommendations (cont'd)



- **Invest in developing deep integration while building awareness of current offerings.**
- **Concentrate on digital and electronic access.**
- **Consider de-emphasizing or re-orienting information centers.**
- **Focus on better content exposure and marketing to address a few hot “gaps” where respondents have trouble accessing information.**

# Biggest Surprise: Lack of USDA Employee Awareness

## **Outsell recommendation:**

- **Focus follow-up qualitative research on USDA employees.**

# Questions and Discussion



# Come By and Visit Us



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### **Outsell Background**

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