
Technical Data Support for Foreign Military Sales Naval Air Systems Command Customers

By

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The Naval Air Technical Data and Engineering Service Command (NATEC) works in partnership with the various program executive offices (PEOs) and technical data source providers to ensure Department of the Navy (DoN) foreign military sales (FMS) customers receive current and accurate technical data in a variety of formats. Commanded by CDR James Tung, the 3.3 component of NATEC is chartered by NAVAIR to provide technical data services for the development, preparation and distribution of aeronautical technical and maintenance management information, and exercises technical guidance of systems of reproduction and distribution for specified engineering design data.

Located in San Diego, California, NATEC was commissioned in October 1998 as a result of a base realignment and closure action that combined the Naval Air Technical Services Facility (NATSF) functions with those of the Naval Aviation Engineering Service Unit (NAESU). Although NATEC has the 3.3 component which provides technical data support and the 3.7 component which provides technical representative support, this article will only discuss the 3.3 component's role in providing FMS customers technical data. Logistic element managers (LEMs) are assigned for each country and work with our distribution, technology, and JEDMICS (drawings) departments to meet the customers' requirements.

FMS customers have a wide range of requirements for technical data. As technological advances have occurred in the development of technical data, the distribution media for manuals have evolved. Media may be hardcopy (paper) or electronic files. The methods for distribution may be printing of the manuals, placing the files on CD ROMs or transferring the electronic files over the internet from a web-based source.

The Department of Defense has determined that transitioning from paper medium to electronic medium for technical data is desired for the majority of manuals. This results in both cost avoidance (printing costs for paper manuals are the most expensive method for distribution) and expands the options for delivery. Additionally, electronic files can be easily copied to CD ROMs and mailed to customers, or downloaded from a web site with minimal reproduction and distribution costs incurred. At this time, the majority of the technical manuals on NATEC's web site are in portable document format (PDF).

Realizing that not all customers may have the desire to move into a digital technical manual environment at the same time the Navy moves from paper to electronic files, NATEC works with these countries to continue delivering paper documents whenever possible. However, in those instances when domestic customers may no longer require paper deliverables as an option, the total cost to maintain a unique paper deliverable system (source providers' costs to develop new content and maintain/update existing content) will be funded by only the FMS customer.

The decision of whether to stay with paper or transition to digital media is a major milestone for many FMS customers. Is the technical infrastructure (computers, local area network system, wide area network system, internet connectivity, software requirements, security controls for data management, technology support group and operator skills) available in country, or is it even cost effective to develop this level of support at this time? At what point will the Navy no longer

support paper medium so total costs will fall to the countries? These and many other questions and concerns affect our FMS customers and are being addressed by NATEC and the rest of the NAVAIR Team.

One of the obvious concerns to FMS customers is what will be the technical data cost in its various deliverable format options (paper, CD-ROM or downloaded from a web site)? For manuals that have been converted to a digital file format such as PDF, page counts still exist, so per page pricing methodology can be applied. However, once a manual is converted to other than a page format (database, HTML, SGML, XML, etc.) other methods for pricing the deliverables must be developed.

The guiding document which provides pricing information for FMS deliverable technical data for all U.S. services is the DoD 7000.14R, *Financial Management Regulation*, Volume 15, Security Assistance Policy and Procedures. This document is presently under review to address digital data pricing issues. NATEC and representatives from the U.S. Air Force and U.S. Army technical data departments are working to establish a truly joint service application to pricing methodology for updates to the DoD 7000.14R.

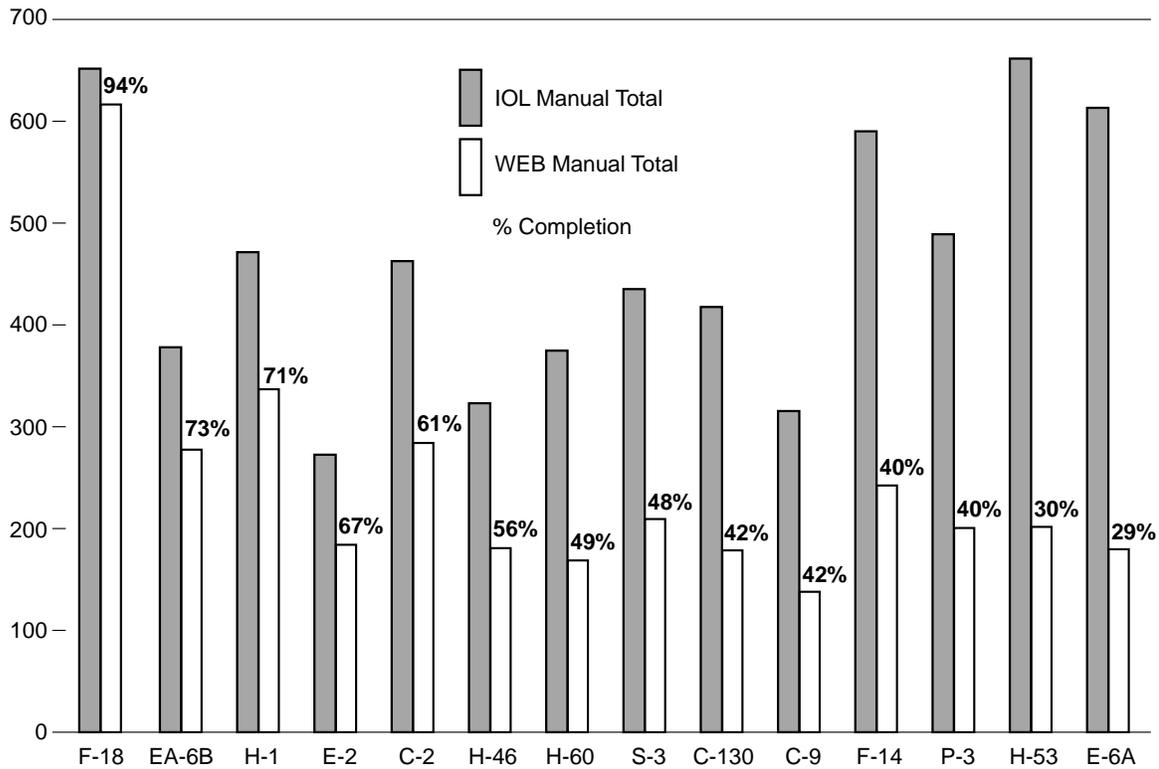
The ability to distribute technical data via the NATEC web site is central to NATEC's technical data management philosophy. Manuals are populated on the site by two methods. Suitable digital files are received from the source provider, processed and posted, or paper copies of the manuals are received, scanned, converted to PDF format and posted. For FMS customers, access to the technical manuals is not yet feasible due to regulatory constraints yet to be resolved.

Although web access to technical manual content is not yet in place, NATEC has established FMS customer access to their Automatic Distribution Requirements Lists (ADRLs). This is merely a list of all manuals a country is required to have with dates and quantity of distribution shown; no technical content is provided. As new content (updates, revisions, changes) to a country's manuals are posted to the web site, the publication's ADRL applicable line item is modified slightly indicating its availability for either paper or CD ROM output. All of a country's manuals, which are on the NATEC web site can be copied to a CD-ROM normally within five business days and mailed to the country's freight forwarder. Therefore, lack of real time access to technical content via the web has been found to be less of an immediate concern for most of our FMS customers. Domestic customers prefer to receive at least their initial set of manuals on CD-ROM due to the extensive download times from the web site. Any FMS customer may have access to their ADRL via the NATEC web site by submitting a request via e-mail to the FMS Supervisor, Joseph Hill, hillje2@navair.navy.mil. Normal processing time is one day.

The NATEC web site is being populated as rapidly as within existing funding constraints. The following list shows the level of platform postings. The posting effort is focused on the organizational level initial outfitting list requirements for a platform.

NATEC is committed to meeting the needs of our FMS customers. As noteworthy progress is made or viable options present themselves, this information will be disseminated. This information exchange may be via LEM e-mail to country representatives, forwarding our *Technical Data News Letter* known as *TPLIS*, or other means. We are in the process of preparing an options list to assist countries in identifying their minimum requirements for "going digital". One method of resolving the accessibility issues to U.S. government web sites may be to establish in-country servers with either LAN or WAN connectivity. CD-ROM manual sets sent from NATEC could then be loaded on the country server and managed locally, greatly simplifying the data transmission, encryption/decryption and access control issues.

NAVAIR Technical Manual O Level Initial
 Outfitting List (IOL)/Percent of Manuals on NATEC Web 6-01-00



All FMS customers are encouraged to visit the NATEC facilities located at the Naval Air Station, North Island, whenever in the San Diego area. Processes are improving rapidly, so for the latest information or assistance in processing a Visitor's Request please contact your designated LEM or the FMS LEM supervisor, Joseph Hill at 619-545-2437, DSN 735-2437, FAX 545-1883 or e-mail hillje2@navair.navy.mil.

About the Author

Serving as the Supervisor for Foreign Military Sales Logistics Element Managers and Quality Assurance personnel assigned to the Naval Air Technical Data and Engineering Service Command (NATEC) located in San Diego, California, Joseph E. Hill is a career civil service employee. Mr. Hill has held management and supervisory positions within the 3.3 Technical Data component of NATEC and within his prior command, the Naval Aviation Engineering Service Unit. With over 25 years of federal service in Naval Aviation as a technician, supervisor and manager and 5 years as a contractor representative, Mr. Hill applies the W. Edwards Deming common sense approach to process improvements and management practices.