

NSI Conference Support

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One of the many services NSI provides as an extension of customer/user support is to attend major scientific conferences. The conference effort provides NASA/OSSA scientists with many benefits.

- Scientists get to see NSI in action. They utilize the network to read email, and have recently begun to demonstrate their scientific research to their colleagues.
- Scientists get an opportunity to meet and interact with NSI Staff; most notably Customer Service Representatives. This gives scientists a chance to get status on their requirements, ask about network status, get acquainted with our procedures, and learn about our services.
- Scientists are exposed to networking in a larger sense; particularly by learning about other NASA groups who provide valuable scientific resources over the Internet.

A Perspective

At first, there were minimal support mechanisms in place to conduct this endeavor. My job was to define, coordinate, and supervise the effort.

First, we needed to decide what type of services we wanted to provide, along with how we wanted NSI to promote those services. Of course, we needed practical mechanisms to make it happen successfully.

Goals in this area were:

To develop a program under which NSI could provide the necessary support at major scientific conferences, including:

- Defining support criterion
- Defining strategies for promoting NSI services
- Establishing practical mechanisms for success

Support Criterion

Basic criterion for attending conferences was established early in 1990 with supervision and direction from NSI Customer Service Manager Christine Falsetti.

- There must be a large NASA/OSSA contingent.

This ensures that we will be reaching our designated user communities. It also makes the effort more cost effective.

- NASA disciplines request an NSI presence.

When NSI is supporting a specific scientific project, we might be asked to attend a conference to highlight and support a particular scientific effort. (i.e., Galileo, TOS)

Because NSI has MOU's and requirements with all of the OSSA disciplines, we are getting more requests from Discipline and Division heads. . *We are often directed to support a conference at the NASA Headquarters Program level.*

2. Services

- Educational Service

NSI conveys its services at conferences by means of effective presentation materials, documentation, and informed booth participants.

A large, freestanding backdrop is set up on which are mounted photos representing the scientific disciplines we are there to support. We now have two portable backdrops, and have a growing collection of display materials. NSI "stickers" depicting our logo are given away as 'freebies'.

NSI has produced new documentation which describes the mission of the project and also provides information on how to use our services (and the Internet in general).

A complete NSI bibliography has recently been developed which we make available to users at conferences. Follow-up after conferences involves mailing users the documents which were requested. (We have mailed over 4000 email matrices as of this month.)

Documentation Includes:

NSI brochure	NSI/NASA	Sterling Software
Electronic Mail Matrix	Joan Thompson	Sterling Software
Using the Interoperability Gateway	Susan Aaron	Sterling Software
Internet Resource Guide	BBN Technologies	Cambridge, Mass
OSI in the NASA Science Internet- An Analysis	Rebecca Nitzan	Sterling Software

We are a regular contributor to the OSSA newsletter and have recently contributed major articles to EOS (magazine for the AGU) and the AAS newsletter. We are represented in all conference program announcements.

- NSI Staff Participation

Customer Service Representatives play a major part in making the conference a success. Because they are the individuals most involved with specific scientific disciplines, they are the primary resource to impart information (like the status of requirements) to scientists who are in attendance at the conference. Their presence affords our users the chance to meet their advocates in person; a big help in establishing lines of communication.

We also do a limited amount of informal training at the exhibit booth. An example of this is our instruction on how to use the Interoperability Gateway.

NASA/NSI management also participate in conferences.

At recent AGU and AAS meetings, special informational forums were conducted by Fred Rounds (Project Manager), Christine Falsetti (Customer Service Manager), and Tony Villasenor (Program Manager).

-Network Service

Because we are a service organization dedicated to providing NASA networking, it is appropriate for us to create an environment at conferences that accurately reflects the service we provide. This means providing network access.

NSI engineering is responsible for all the technical aspects of conference support; including network architecture, configuration, and routing. Our installation group procures equipment, ships it to the conference site, and tests it before the conference. We rely on our NOC for 24X7 coverage of the line at the conferences.

NSI funds the necessary line procurement and coordinates with other NASA centers (where possible) and other organizations to ensure the line is dropped at the correct location and can be tested before the conference.

NSI now provides network support at most conferences. Our basic service is to allow conference participants email access via the Internet; we bring a set of equipment to accommodate the customer requirement.

Recently, we have provided networking as a **value-added** service to scientists and scientific organizations wishing to demonstrate databases, and now, image files via the network. This value-added service is evaluated at the Project and Program level, and is provided on a case-by-case basis.

Some, but not all, of the scientists supported this year are listed below:

Dr. Tom Renfrow	Planetary Data System (PDS)	LPSC 4/90
Dr. Chuck Acton	PDS/NAIFS Database	LPSC 4/90
Dr. Joy Beier	NSSDC/NASA Master Directory	AGU 12/89,5/90,12/90
Dr. Michael Garcia	Smithsonian Astrophysics Observatory	AAS 6/90,1/91
Dr. George Helou	NASA Extragalactic Database	AAS 6/90.1/91
Dr. Elizabeth Bouten	OCEANIC Database	AGU 12/90
Mr. Ted Clarke	Galileo Earth Encounter	AGU 12/90
Dr. John Good	Astrophysics Data System	AAS 1/91

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This year, NSI has successfully supported 13 conferences. The complete list follows:

NSI Conferences Fiscal 1990-91

Conference/Discipline	Location	Date	Attendance	Networking	NASA Groups Supported
American Geophysical Union (AGU Fall Meeting) Multidisciplinary Space Physics	San Francisco CA	12/89	6000+	yes modems/9.6	
Lunar Planetary Science Conference Solar and Planetary	Houston TX	3/90	3000	yes JSC Ethernet NSI routing	PLDS NAIFS LPI
PSCN Conference Networking	Monterey CA	4/90	400	yes modems/2400	PSCN
Geoinfo Life Science	Montreal Canada	5/90	2000		International Life Science
AGU (Spring Meeting) Multidisciplinary Space Physics	Baltimore MD	5/90	1000	yes modems	collaboration with NASA Master Directory (NSSDC)
American Astronomical Society (Spring Meeting) Astrophysics Solar Physics	Albuquerque NM	6/90	3000	yes 56Kbps NM Technet	SAO NED (Sun Microsystems*) NASA Master Directory

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NSI Conferences Fiscal 1990-91

Conference/Discipline	Location	Date	Attendance	Networking	NASA Groups Supported
Evolution and Origin of Life Conference Life Science	NASA Ames	7/90	300	yes Ames Ethernet NSI routing	SETI
Division for Planetary Science Planetary	Charlottesville NC	10/90	800	yes 56Kbps	PDS
AGU (Fall Meeting) Multidisciplinary Space Physics	San Francisco CA	12/90	8000	yes T1	Galileo OCEANIC NASA Master Directory
American Meteorological Society Earth Science	New Orleans LA	12/90	2000		collaboration with NASA Master Directory
AAS (Fall Meeting) Astrophysics Solar Physics	Philadelphia PA	1-91	6000	yes 2 56Kbps UPenn	SAO ADS NED SIMBAD HEASARC Multiwave
NSI Users Working Group Networking	San Mateo CA	2-91	150	yes 56Kbps	X.500 White Pages* TGV, Incorporated* CRUSH COSMIC PLDS NSI Operations
The Oceanography Society Earth Science	St. Petersburg FL	3/91	1000*	yes T1	NODS NODC NASA Master Directory NOAA AVHRR CZCS

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