

INL software helps improve performance of the world's largest automotive vehicle fleet

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FAST produces an annual federal fleet snapshot that includes in-depth information on vehicle type, fuel use, mileage and operating costs.

If you owned a fleet of 650,000-plus vehicles that are driven some 5 billion miles a year and use the equivalent of 390 million gallons of gasoline, how would you keep track of them all?

The federal government owns such a fleet — and it uses the online Federal Automotive Statistical Tool (FAST) developed by Idaho National Laboratory to monitor, track and improve fleet performance.

FAST data was used to help upgrade the federal fleet, increase overall fuel efficiency and reduce maintenance costs. A number of federal agencies rely on FAST to quickly produce annual reports and scorecards

to track progress.

From simple beginnings to national standard

Beginning as a handy online application built at INL in 2000/2001 for the federal government's General Services Administration and the U.S. Department of Energy, FAST has grown into a remarkable statistical tool that meets the requirements of multiple federal laws and directives — and whose use is now mandatory for any federal agency operating motor vehicles.

"We really started the application that became FAST in about 1998," said INL FAST Team Lead Ron Stewart. "We got plugged in with a DOE group now called the Federal Energy Management Program. It was tasked with collecting information on the federal use of alternative fuels and alternative-fueled vehicles."



FAST was developed in 1998 to collect information on the federal use of alternative fuels and alternative-fueled vehicles.

A short time later, when the GSA wanted to streamline its own process for collecting fleet data, INL developed an Internet-based tool. DOE and GSA funded the work; INL built the [software](#). FAST is still funded by the DOE's Federal Energy Management Program as well as the GSA Office of Governmentwide Policy and the DOE's data-gathering arm, the Energy Information Administration (EIA).

The FAST team now includes Stewart, Michelle Kirby, Jeff Caldwell, Scott Anderson, Cory McHugh and Aaron Roberts.

And their efforts have not gone unnoticed — FAST gained stature when the White House Office of Management and Budget made it the standard fleet reporting tool for federal budget and planning purposes, bringing greater consistency to fleet reporting governmentwide. The office also uses FAST as part of its initiative to prepare annual "scorecards" for each of the federal agencies. These scorecards detail each agency's effectiveness in meeting a variety of fleet-related mandates such as improved mileage and the greater use of alternative fuels.

Federal fleet reports and scorecards

One of FAST's primary uses is to produce the GSA's annual Federal Fleet Report, an 80-page "snapshot" of the entire federal fleet, broken down by agency and including in-depth information on vehicle types, fuel use, mileage, operating costs and more.

"I think it safe to say that without FAST, GSA's annual Federal Fleet Report would be too old to be useful by the time it was published," said Ed Lawler, GSA motor vehicle policy expert.

As late as the 1990s, fleet data was collected from all federal agencies on paper forms, then transcribed by hand onto oversized paper

spreadsheets, Lawler said. The annual fleet report might eventually be printed anywhere from two to five years after the end of the fiscal year it covered.

But with the help of FAST, the draft report is now ready within 90 days of the agency's annual data call — and that time is shrinking. The final report is timely enough to drive budgeting, vehicle purchases, green fuel improvements and a host of other activities across the entire federal government.

"FAST has totally transformed the process, both for us at GSA and for the agencies whose data we accumulate and publish," Lawler said. "To have a finished Fleet Report by the end of January for the fiscal year that ended the previous Sept. 30 is an amazing thing.

"One of the greatest values FAST has for us at GSA is that INL maintains the system and makes it work — an enormous burden that INL takes off our shoulders. It has made it possible to incorporate additional functionality into FAST, such as the annual budget reporting process we undertake for the Office of Management and Budget, which would not otherwise be possible."

Alternative fuel compliance tracking

FAST also helps the DOE produce annual reports for Congress and the Executive Office of the President. The reports detail federal agency compliance with, for example, alternative fuel usage directives. The DOE's EIA data clearinghouse uses FAST in two ways.

"First, we use its output directly and load federal alternate fuel vehicle data into our database," said Cynthia Amezcua, who manages the EIA's annual Survey of Alternative Fuel Vehicles, which tracks agency compliance toward increasing the use of alternate fuels. "FAST permits

respondents to further electronically refer completion of the form to others with the data, making our federal AFV data far more complete."

Secondly, EIA uses FAST as the foundation for data collection for its annual survey Amezcua, manages.

"Not having to develop an electronic superstructure ourselves saved us much time, testing and considerable resources," Amezcua said.

Kudos at FedFleet 2010

In July, FAST team member Kirby received an award from FedFleet 2010, the nation's premier conference on fleet operations and management. She was recognized for operating the FAST help hotline that serves agencies throughout the U.S. government.

"We have 219 federal agency headquarters-level people who use FAST and many times more at lower levels nationwide," Kirby said. "The best part about my job is working with the people."

Provided by Idaho National Laboratory

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