



Subject: ITS Benefits Database
Data criteria requirements

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Since December of 1994, the United States Department of Transportation's (U.S. DOT's) Joint Program Office (JPO) for Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) has been actively collecting information regarding the impact of ITS projects on the operation of the surface transportation network. To aid the distribution of the information collected, the JPO has sponsored the development of a web-based version of the ITS benefits database. The database is available by visiting www.its.dot.gov/eval/itsbenefits.htm.

Mitretek Systems has developed and maintains this electronic version of the ITS benefits database for the JPO. Visitors to the database may submit benefits information using an online form, email, or by mailing printed copies to the database administrator. Data submitted are reviewed against a set of criteria upon which the decision is made whether or not to include the source.

New data records are incorporated into the database as they are received. In addition, Mitretek is required to provide an updated version of the database quarterly. This occurs near the last working days of March, June, September, and December each year.

Data can be submitted to the database by anyone with access to a web browser by using the online form available and clicking the "Submit New Data" link. Submitting data requires that contact information be provided. Contact information is only viewable by the administrators and is used for follow up purposes if required. Database administrators then review the submitted benefits information and may modify it if necessary. If submitted information and documents meet the criteria highlighted below, they are made publicly available on the web. Documents determined not to be appropriate for public viewing are retained for future reference. Administrators may also follow up on these documents in an attempt to collect more information so that it can be included in the database at a later date. Potential contributors should review this list of criteria and use it as a guide for submitting data.

General Criteria

Data submitted to the database are reviewed by the following criteria before being accepted into the database.

- a) Benefits information should be derived from sound evaluation methodology. This methodology should be stated in the source.
- b) A documented reference should exist for the data source (See Data Sources for additional detail on this requirement). It is recommended that when submitting data that either an electronic copy or printed copy be sent to the database administrators.
- c) There should be no known flaws in the analysis. Database administrators will review the submitted information. If there are any questionable analysis procedures or results the administrators may delay including the data until the analysis can be confirmed.

Data Sources

Final Evaluation Reports: Considered to be a highly reliable source of information. It is assumed that these reports are accurate and have gone through a review process. As new documents are received that reflect additional or updated information, these records are replaced with the most current information. References to the reports containing the previous information are added to the note field as a "See Also" reference.

Draft Evaluation Reports: Considered to be moderately reliable source of information. These reports are considered to be undergoing a review process. Data from these reports are conditionally accepted on a case-by-case determination based on the status of the draft report. Final Drafts are often included, while rough drafts are generally not. Database entries are revised as necessary when final reports become available.

Synthesis Reports: Considered to be a highly reliable source of information. These reports generally summarize benefits across a number of studies, and are assumed to have been through a review process. Contributing studies should be referenced in the synthesis report.

Journal Articles: Considered to be a reliable source of data. These data are considered to have been through a review process. Should an evaluation report already exist in the database or be received at a later date that contains the same information, these data are added as a "See Also" reference to the database entry containing the evaluation report.

Conference Papers: Considered to be a reliable source of data. Conference papers are assumed to have undergone a review process. Should an evaluation report already exist in the database or be received at a later date that contains the same information, conference papers are added as a "See Also" reference to the database entry containing the evaluation report.

Periodical Articles: Considered on a case-by-case basis. To be included in the database, magazine and trade journal articles should cite supporting references from the project or study and document evaluation methods used to establish reported benefits. In many cases, these articles are used to find source information and may be included as a "See Also" reference to database entries.

Conference Presentations and other Briefings: Considered on a case-by-case basis. To be included in the database, presentations and briefings should be accompanied by supporting references from the project or study and documented evaluation methods. In many cases, presentations are used to find source information and may be included as a "See Also" reference to database entries.

Web Pages: Data from web sites are considered for inclusion in the database on a case-by-case determination. They require supporting documentation, source information, and documented evaluation approach. Due to the nature of web pages constantly changing and being updated, these sources of information are generally not linked to from entries in the database. Exceptions are made for web sites that contain a library of documents.

Specialized Benefits Brochures: Considered on a case-by-case basis. Typically these brochures are considered to contain accurate and reliable information. In many cases they are used as a "See Also" reference to existing database entries.

Fliers/Handouts: Not included, since they are considered a less reliable source of data. Often fliers and handouts are used as a source to find additional information.

Company Brochures / Product Literature: In many cases, company-produced literature tends to be biased toward an individual product. Therefore, this type of source information is not included unless it reports benefits experienced by a variety of systems and a general or overarching conclusion is highlighted. This type of source may be used to find additional data from the implementation or usage of the product.

Newspaper Articles & Press Releases: Generally not included in the database. These articles are sometimes biased to one particular viewpoint. On a case-by-case basis these articles and releases are used to inquire or attempt to find more information from data sources. However, they may be included as a "See Also" reference in the notes section of existing database entries.