



July 2008

Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives

# NIBIN NEWSLETTER

SPECIAL EDITION

Editor: Karen Molina

## CHANGE IN THE MINIMUM USAGE STANDARDS

I am writing to clarify some confusion as to ATF's position on the increase of the minimum usage level and how this will or will not be enforced. We have talked about usage levels at almost every Users Congress conference that we have held. We originally suggested 40, but now are waiting for input from the Users Congress before setting the minimum usage number. The number selected is not arbitrary and was used as the goal taking into consideration work load and the level at which we begin seeing success in the form of hits.

The original level of 15 acquisitions was set over four years ago at the recommendation of the Users Congress. In September 2004, over 25% of our 220 sites were not meeting that standard. Worse yet, most of the sites not meeting the mark had never had even one hit. We had spent \$225,000 for the DAS and an average of \$65,000 per site per year for maintenance and network access with no leads to show for the investment. If our goal was only to make available this technology to anyone that requested it with no regard to their level of participation and usage, then we met our goal. The problem is that this was not our objective. Our goal is to assist in solving violent crime and to do it in the

crime and to do it in the most efficient way possible. The cost to maintain this system, as well as the eventual cost to refresh the equipment, has risen substantially. We have to be accountable to the tax payers for the funds they have entrusted to us. Looking to the future we have to make some hard decisions. Do we continue to pay out thousands of dollars for under producing sites at the expense of those that truly use the equipment and are having unprecedented success? The answer, of course, is "no" we cannot continue to do so.

Let me discuss a little about the enforcement of this new standard. We intend to treat it the same way we did the standard of 15. Of the original 50+ sites that could not meet the 15 per month standard back in 2004, we have only removed equipment from less than 10 sites. Many of those 50 used the mandate to garner additional resources from their agency and now have no trouble exceeding the mark. We hope many of you will be able to do the same. The majority of those 50 continue to struggle each quarter to meet and exceed the minimum. It should be noted that in the majority of these cases we did not take or even threaten to take their equipment; we simply worked with them each month to help them be successful. It is our intention to do the same as we raise the bar now. I mentioned that we had removed equipment from 10 sites. In each case the deciding factor was not their failure to meet the standard; it was their lack of

success (hits) as well as their lack of ability or desire to improve from their present state. Under the new standard if a lab is only entering an average of 25 items per month but is averaging 8 to 10 hits per year, we have no intention of removing their equipment. This increase in standards will mostly affect two types of laboratories: those that simply don't have enough crime or exhibits to be effective and those that simply put in the minimum each month (mostly all test fires) for what would appear to be the purpose of merely meeting the minimum to keep the machine. It's these types of labs that are not seeing success. The only labs that will be identified for equipment removal will be those low usage sites that are having little or no success. NIBIN is a tool to fight crime. Circumstances are different in each geographic location. This tool works better in some locations and not at all in others. We will not leave a machine in place at a site that cannot or will not make use of it. If they wish to purchase a machine on their own, we will certainly make the network available to them.

I hope this better explains our position. I would encourage you to share these comments with your agency or department. I have asked for the Users Congress at the meeting in June to discuss this standard and make a recommendation no later than August 15th. We are willing to adjust the standard down from the proposed 40 per month as long as the change still holds users accountable to utilize this

tool at a significant level to see success from their efforts.

Finally, I wish to thank you for your involvement in this program. I will be the first to admit that as a criminal investigator, I do not understand all of the intricacies of your job. I do know that with your assistance, you help me do my job as an investigator in a more effective way. We as agents and officers put our life out there every day and appreciate you and programs such as NIBIN that help us take dangerous people off the street, hopefully before they pull the trigger again. I will confirm the rumors. Despite being asked to stay on with NIBIN, I have been given an opportunity by ATF to attend the Marine Corps War College in their Masters of Strategic Studies program beginning in July. I am honored to have worked with you all in this very important endeavor and wish you the best.

Steven Pugmire  
Chief NIBIN Branch

### Call for Articles:

We would like to have our users provide an article for the next newsletter. This is a good way for you to bring attention to your lab or department and highlight your success stories. Please contact Karen Molina at the NIBIN Branch or Nanette Rudolph at the Florida Department of Law Enforcement if you would like to provide an article. Email your suggestions to [Karen.Molina@atf.gov](mailto:Karen.Molina@atf.gov) or [nanetterudolph@fdle.state.fl.us](mailto:nanetterudolph@fdle.state.fl.us).

## Solutions for a Safer Society      The 13 Critical Tasks Workshop

Forensic Technology has developed a number of resources and services to help NIBIN partners maximize the benefits from the use of IBIS technology. Some of these resources and services are provided at no charge, such as our 13 Critical Tasks Workshop, and others are fee-for-service based, such as our new FastTRAX™: IBIS Data Services in which we process test fires taken from your seized guns through NIBIN for you.

Publications and posters:

The 13 Critical Tasks Work Book

[www.forensictechnology.com/13tasks](http://www.forensictechnology.com/13tasks)

White Paper on Regional Crime Gun Processing Protocols

[www.forensictechnology.com/rcgpp.html](http://www.forensictechnology.com/rcgpp.html)

New IBIS TRAX-3D Poster Set

[www.forensictechnology.com/d6.html](http://www.forensictechnology.com/d6.html)

Miscellaneous Downloads

[www.forensictechnology.com/d4.html](http://www.forensictechnology.com/d4.html)

For more information, contact:

Tony Gagliardi, ext. 4246 |

[webmaster@contactff.com](mailto:webmaster@contactff.com)

The workshop is facilitated by Forensic Technology at no charge. It is based on the premise that the successful investigation of firearm-related crimes is dependent upon the effective collection and management of information found on the inside and on the outside of a gun—or in other words, the total exploitation of the information that a firearm contains, such as the ballistics data for matching, the identifying data for crime gun tracing, plus other forensic information as well.

The workshop takes participants through the 13 Critical Tasks, identifies best practices, and perhaps most importantly, results in the formulation of strategies and tactics that foster: collaboration between all the various stakeholders, the institutionalization of sustainable and effective

processes, and the reporting of timely and valuable information for crime solving and prevention. It stresses the value of creating Regional Crime Gun Processing Protocols and Crime Gun Information Clearing Houses and Centers.

The workshop typically runs one to two days, helping attendees develop a clear outline of the people, the processes, and the technology that are needed to establish a sustainable crime gun processing protocol in their region.

For more information, contact:

Stacy Stern, ext. 4169

[stacy.stern@contactff.com](mailto:stacy.stern@contactff.com)

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## The Pro-Bono Design and Storyboard Services

Forensic Technology offers a no-charge brochure design service and storyboard design service for those state and local agencies who wish to communicate IBIS success stories and the benefits of the NIBIN Program.

The NIBIN Program Information brochure is a tri-fold, US letter-size template piece that can be customized to include your agency's success stories, logos, contact information, and state and/or local maps depicting NIBIN locations with contact numbers.

The brochure also contains standard communication items, such as a description of the NIBIN Program, its benefits, and the type of evidence to submit to NIBIN, such as fired bullets (including pristine bullets deformed bullets and bullet fragments) and cartridge cases. The brochure also stresses the importance of submitting all fired ammunition components from all crime scenes.

The storyboard summarizes a NIBIN success story in both text and graphics. It is made to be displayed on a wall or easel to promote your NIBIN accomplishments.

For more information contact:

Contact:

Tony Gagliardi, ext. 4246

[webmaster@contactff.com](mailto:webmaster@contactff.com)

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## FastTRAX: IBIS Data Services

The underlying idea is simple: every crime gun has a story to tell and our FastTRAX™ services can help you uncover the facts more quickly and with fewer resources because we process your forensic ballistic evidence for you. FastTRAX can you learn if the gun you seized from a suspect was used to commit crimes such as murders and drive-by shootings. It can also help you link multiple crimes and generate new leads. FastTRAX can be used by police departments and crime laboratories with access to the National Integrated Ballistics Information Network (NIBIN) gain more benefits from this database while they strive to deal with heavy workloads resulting from rising levels of assaults, gang violence and murders committed with firearms.

Even more importantly, FastTRAX can be of substantial benefit to those law enforcement agencies that do not have access to IBIS® or NIBIN, by empowering them to take more control of generating leads for their investigations while contributing to the collective value of NIBIN at the same time. FastTRAX can also help crime laboratories reduce ballistic evidence backlogs. By overcoming delays in ballistic

evidence processing, armed criminals may be stopped before they have the opportunity to shoot and kill again. The entire criminal justice system benefits whenever technology like IBIS and data-sharing networks like NIBIN are fully optimized.

Information about the three levels of FastTRAX services can be found on the FTI website at [www.GetOnFastTrax.com](http://www.GetOnFastTrax.com) For more information contact: Genevieve Sarmiento, ext 4337

**Please call FTI's professionals to discuss what they can do for you**

**1-888-984-4247**

**[www.forensictechnology.com](http://www.forensictechnology.com)**

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