

AN EXPERIENTIAL MODEL FOR TEACHING INTERCULTURAL COMPETENCIES: INTEGRATING FEDERAL INFORMATION RESOURCES INTO MARKETING COURSES

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ABSTRACT

This paper contends that by integrating Federal Web resources into marketing courses using access and navigational experiential assignments to obtain international information published by the Federal government on STAT-USA/Internet (foreign country, industry and market reports) and USA Trade Online (U.S. export and import statistics) helps marketing students develop some of the cognitive, affective, and behavioral dimensions of intercultural competencies required of today's cross-cultural managers. A model is offer to educators for integrating Federally-collected, organized, and Web-published international information into marketing courses. Findings from interviews, a pilot-test year, and a four-year follow on integration study helped to refine the model.

INTRODUCTION

Universities have so intensely focused on second language acquisition that students' and global awareness that the development of other intercultural competencies from a holistic standpoint have been ignored. According to Finger and Kathoefer (2005), other intercultural competencies are so pivotal to university graduates' success in the global economies of today. Because of the need for an internationally-competent workforce in today's global world, schools of business are challenged to graduate globally aware students who also have specific intercultural competencies – the need is imperative (Kedia, Harveston, and Bhagat 2001). Intercultural competencies are pre-requisite for managing a business, large or small, in today's world of global business – internationalization of the business curriculum in the typical since is not enough (Han 2004). U.S. business students continue to lag behind their foreign counterparts in math, science (CNN 2000) and in global competencies (CED 2006). Business education programs need to work together to eliminate or at least shorten this lag and to prepare students with specific intercultural competencies.

Today's businesses, large and small, demand new-hires to be productivity-ready when they enter employment – there is not a margin for downtime. They are expected to produce an immediate return in the global marketplace. It is not about graduates needing to know all intercultural knowledge; it's about them having a knowledge repertoire of quality international information sources that can be easily drawn on as they enter and progress through the workforce. And, it is about enabling graduates with information investigation functionally skills that

students and future employers benefit from these skills in the long term. The ability to access international market Web resources and acquire quality international market information differentiates both individual expatriate and company from cohorts and competitors.

One way for graduates to begin acquiring basic intercultural skills is for each marketing educator to integrate U.S. Federally-collected and organized international information sources and information investigation functionalities into to his or her courses. Doing so teaches students to become interactively involved in using real-time, credible, and reliable information about global trade, foreign market access and analysis, international business issues, and cultural studies – all of which are free through Federal Web sites accessible at over 1300 Federal Depository Libraries (FDL) which are located throughout the United States. Although access is typically limited to two computer workstations located at each FDL, personal, company, and university campus-wide access can be subscribed to for a charge based on number of users.

This paper proposes that integrating Federally-collected and organized international information sources into business courses will be of considerable interest to educators. In doing so, learners become actively involved with information published on these sites and actively involved with the information investigation functionalities promoting in them “deep knowledge” about international business information and international business concepts – all part of building intercultural competencies. Pilot-test year findings and four-year follow on study findings, as described later in this paper, have shown that 98 percent of the college students (of approximately 250 junior and senior undergraduate students enrolled in an

international marketing course between 2002 and 2005 a university located in southwestern United States) did not know where the closest FDL library (government documents library) was located even with one located right on their own campus. Does this finding reflect a nationwide student lack of knowledge of FDLs and their lack of FDL locations? Undergraduate students' use of the Federally-collected, organized and published information on the STAT-USA/Internet Web site (*foreign country, industry, and market reports*) and their use of the Federally-collected, organized and published statistics on the USA Trade Online (*U.S. export and import data*) is emphasized in this paper.

PURPOSE OF PAPER

This paper is written with four purposes: (1) to survey the literature to ascertain the growing need for graduates with intercultural competencies and to identify how schools of business are changing curricula to meet this growing need, (2) to communicate the findings of two studies: (a) marketing educators' present use of Federally-collected and organized information sources in the classroom, and (b) a pilot study and four years of follow on study demonstrating the value and ease of integrating these Federal sources in marketing courses; and (3) to communicate an experiential model for teaching cultural competencies by integrating Federal information resources into marketing curricula.

METHODOLOGY OF EMPIRICAL STUDY

To determine the growing need for graduates with intercultural competencies and to determine how schools of business are changing curricula to meet this growing need a survey of literature was utilized. To determine marketing educators' present usage of Federally-collected and organized international information in the classroom, a three-phased exploratory study was utilized. In the initial phase of this exploratory study three hundred and seventeen e-mail survey forms were sent out in daily batches over a week's period of time to marketing educators who were members of a marketing educators' association. Survey questions queried about specific usage of the following Federal information Web sites: STAT-USA/Internet; USA Trade Online; Euro Trade Online; CIA World Factbook (CIA 2004); and the Economic Censuses. Dichotomous response options of yes or no were utilized to screen for usage. If usage was indicated, the specific educator was asked to respond as to integration methodology(ies) he or she used: (1) as lecture preparation material only, (2) as "suggested" collateral material for student research papers, (3) as "required" collateral material for student research papers, and/or (3) as hands-on experiential student exercises. Open-ended

response opportunities were provided for two situations: (1) other Federal Web resources and/or other methodologies utilized and, (2) feedback on the educator's "most beneficial and/or most frustrating" experience in using Federal Web in the classroom if they do so.

Because the e-mail survey technique of collecting data has limitations and typically has a low response rate (Sheehan 2001), a second phase and third phase in the exploratory study was utilized: a follow-up e-mail survey, and a personal interview. The follow-up e-mail survey was sent to non-respondents in the original research population. For the personal interview phase three different groups of marketing educators were personally surveyed (in small group settings) at two different marketing and/or international trade educator conferences (one held in the Midwestern U.S. and the other in southern U.S.). Twenty-eight educators were personally interviewed at conference one and thirty at conference two. Total marketing educators personally interviewed was fifty-eight. Data were analyzed using descriptive research techniques.

For the pilot-study, Federally-collected and organized international sources, specifically STAT-USA/Internet and USA Trade Online, were experientially integrated into an international marketing course at a major southwest U.S. university during one summer term of five weeks. The integration model offered in this paper was developed out of the pilot study findings and the model was refined based on experience gained during the four years of follow on integration study.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Global marketing is no longer the domain of large organizations; small companies, too, are venturing outside the domestic economy in search of new markets with hundreds of thousands of small businesses fueling a U.S. export boom. Using 2004 statistics to illustrate the importance of these small businesses in the U.S. export market, 95.7 percent of all goods exporters were small businesses that contributed 29.5 percent of the value of all exported goods (SBA 2004). Small services exporters likewise are also gaining in importance because exporting is no longer just "manufactured" goods and commodities being traded – the trade of services is booming. Service exports in 2002 accounted for some 21.9 percent of total exports (OECD 2004).

Increasing goods and services export practices by both small and large firms is by default driving an immediate and urgent demand for managers of all sizes of firms to be trained with, or for them to acquire on a self-directed basis, intercultural competencies. The opportunity for small business enterprises (SMEs) to expand globally has never been greater driving up the need for intercultural competencies (Vibhakar and Smith 2004).

Other factors, too, are driving the increased need for

managers with intercultural competencies: (1) increased signing of free trade agreements (FTAs), and (2) the practice of outsourcing. The signing of FTAs drives open domestic markets to foreign competitors and foreign markets to U.S. competitor which heightens world competitiveness, thus heightens the need for managers possessing intercultural competencies (Graf 2004). Outsourcing of business functions to foreign contractors, a management technique once sparingly practiced, is now a matter of course by U.S. businesses (Gartner, Inc. 2005). The dynamic and cumulative affect on world competition brought about both the signing of FTAs and by the managerial practice of outsourcing calls educators' attention to the need to train to ensure business students graduates with intercultural competence. This call must not go unheeded.

The rapidity of change in world competitiveness is also forcing managers (and business students as future managers) to acquire cross-cultural managerial competencies in shorter timeframes. U.S. small- and medium-sized businesses (SMEs) lag their foreign counterparts in terms of export orientation and U.S. students lag their international cohorts in global awareness and intercultural competencies (Graf 2004; Hise, Shin, Fahy, Davidow et al. 2004). This statistic suggests that there is an immediate and critical need for business graduates with intercultural training.

The following review of literature specifically concentrates on access to, navigation of, and value of Federally-collected and organized international information sources in training students with intercultural competencies. This review is limited to those Federal resources made available without charge to educators, students and business managers through the Federal Depository Library Program (FDLP). New information investigation functionalities built into FDL accessible Web sites are discussed.

What Are Intercultural Competencies?

Intercultural competencies are characteristics that an individual possesses which facilitates competence in intercultural interactions. Generally they are divided into three systems: the individual system, the episodic system, and the relational system (Spitzberg 2000). Intercultural competency prepares students to live and work in an interconnected world brought about by foreign outsourcing, free trade agreements, Internet technology, and foreign expansions by businesses. This paper will address only the individual system and its sub-systems (cognitive dimension, affective dimension, and behavioral dimension) of Spitzberg's intercultural competencies schematic. The cognitive dimension relates to one's knowledge about other cultures. The affective dimension relates to intercultural sensitivity. The behavioral dimension relates to skills necessary to manage in an intercultural situation.

The Increasing Demand for Managers with Intercultural Competency

As the world gets smaller due to increasing world trade levels, free trade agreements and outsourcing, it is imperative that managers know and understand how to access country-specific differences and global similarities; and to know how business management has changed or must change as the global landscape changes. All firms, large and small, are in effect international due to increasingly integrated markets (Majocchi and Zucchetta 2005). What changes have occurred in business management the past two to three decades that is causing an increasing demand for managers with intercultural competency?

Global competitiveness has influenced managers to "hollow out" U.S. corporations which has changed what is expected of managers, where they work, and for how long. Companies are "hollowed out" when their business functions are outsourced to other companies. When foreign companies are the beneficiaries of the outsourced function, this increases global competitiveness, thus outsourcing serves as a one of the drivers of the need for managers with intercultural competency skills; a need with immediacy. Today U.S. firms are distributing contract manufacturing agreements, contract assembly agreements, contract call center agreements, and other outsource agreements literally across the world. It is becoming clear that the chances are getting higher for business students to be involved in overseas job rotation (expatriate) assignments at some point in their career (Graf 2004) and the nature of these assignments is constantly changing.

As the probability of an expatriate assignment increase, likewise does the number of training programs designed specifically to fill this need. Some of these programs are in-house programs to help employees better comprehend their international co-workers and customers (Frauenheim 2005); others are third-party programs; yet other programs are developed that are self-initiated and self-directed in nature. Although American businesses have sent managers on overseas assignment for years the landscape of these expatriate assignments have changed. Cost-cutting has forced organizations to shift from long-term expatriate assignments to short-term assignments (Carter 2005) and the time frame for training and adjusting to host countries has shortened. The short-term expatriate no longer has time for overcoming jet lag, no time for becoming truly acculturated (which comes only with duration of time in the foreign environment), and no downtime is to be expected. Today, expatriate assignments are mission-critical assignments where the expatriate must promise and deliver a return on investment with little time to prepare and even less time spent on evaluation and training (Carter 2005). Today expatriates are expected to do a lot more in a lot more places and are faced with new challenges in getting ready for global

expatriate hopping. Although change has been seen in nature of expatriate assignments and the length of rotations, the “need” for expatriate training and preparation has not (Carter 2005). It is the “responsibility” for ensuring the training of intercultural competencies that has shifted. Who is expected to be the supplier of today’s intercultural competency training and preparation?

Some companies, like semiconductor giant Intel that derives 70 percent of its revenue outside of the United States and has its 91,000 employees stationed in more than 48 nations, have gotten very aggressive in becoming “customer-oriented” in their foreign markets and are making huge investments (\$3 million or more) in training their midlevel managers because they know that cross-cultural knowledge is crucial (Frauenheim 2005). How can small- and medium-sized businesses follow suit relative to dollars invested in training? They can’t of course. Responsibility for cross-cultural or intercultural training has shifted to schools of business (Kedia, Harveston, and Bhagat 2001) and/or to the future expatriate himself or herself. Because many expatriates are expected to have intercultural competencies at entry level, the number of third-party on-line suppliers of intercultural competency training programs has increased (Kempton 2005).

Of course, schools of business are the ideal training ground. In spite of the recognized need for internationalizing the business curriculum, few schools of business have actually done so (Han 2004). However, schools of business must move students beyond the traditional “internationalization of the curriculum” mindset to ensuring that students graduate with specific “workplace ready” intercultural competency skills both general and specific (Cant 2004) which can be met through the offering of functional international business courses (Han 2004). Without this intercultural competency skill set, U.S. students will continue to lag behind (and perhaps will lag further behind) their global counterparts.

Comparative Lag of U.S. Students in Global Awareness

Although there is a debate as to whether students as future expatriates need culture-specific skills for culture-general skills (Graf 2004), the literature suggests agreement that American students are ill prepared to deal with the realities of the global economy and to take global assignments because of two reasons: (1) because they lack basic knowledge about other societies (Hise, Davidow, and Troy 2000; Rogers and Kochunny 1994) and (2) they are naive about the cultural complexities of global business (Adlers 2002; Carlock 1991).

Intercultural competencies are necessary for students to succeed as business managers in the domestic arena (Oba 2003) as well as global careers (Cant 2004). Colleges of business must meet this need in preparing students for global commerce and this is a challenge even for the

best of schools of business. Schools need to move beyond adding a few international-oriented courses to their present string of courses and they need to do more than to integrate international case studies to their present courses. They need to add intercultural competency training, perhaps through the development and offering of functional international business courses (Han 2004) as they help students to develop their own synergistic global business approaches that build on cultural similarities while leveraging their differences (Cant 2004). What are schools of business doing in this new world order where traditional domestic business management paradigms have been rendered ineffective for many SMEs?

Schools of Business Change in Meeting Intercultural Competency Training Challenge

Schools of business in many countries, including schools of business in the U.S., have added international commerce programs and degrees specifically related to world trade. For example, The Graduate School of International Studies (GSIS) at Seoul National University contends that free trade agreements bring about international trade problems and complexities that are far different than the trade problems encountered when international trade restricted by tariffs and quotas. Thus, GSIS has added courses to their business curriculum specific to promoting student understanding of the effect on competition brought about by free trade agreements (The Graduate School of International Studies 2005).

Like many small- and medium-sized businesses, not all schools of business have budgets sizeable enough to add specific international trade-related programs and degrees. This does not mean, though, that the schools with smaller budgets are not concerned with preparing their graduates with intercultural competencies. They, like small businesses, promote the development of intercultural skills by employing less budget-eating curriculum enhancement techniques such as the following: Infusion (integration) into traditional courses (Kwok, Falks, and Arpan 1994); adding specialized stand-alone business courses (Alber-Miller, Sigerstand, and Straughan 2000); and/or adding an international business degree or major offering students an array of courses from both the business college and college of humanities and languages. Each of these instructional methodologies has advantages and drawbacks. Creating intercultural competency programs, majors, and degrees is the most comprehensive approach to the internationalization of the business curriculum (Cant 2004). The infusion (integration) approach is the most low resources required method (Manuel, Shoostari, Fleming, and Wallwork 2001).

Many specialized integration techniques do not provide an opportunity for students to examine the impact of cultural differences on business operations, such opportunities are most likely to be offered in experiential-based

courses (Paul and Mukhopadhyay 2004; Alon 2003) or functional courses (Han 2004). Based on pilot-study findings (discussed later in this paper) this author contended that infusing Federally-collected and organized Web resources of international information into marketing and other business courses overcomes the main weakness of the infusion method that Manuel (2001) wrote about. When students learn to access and use these Federally-collected and organized Web resources of international information and learn to use the accessed information in business decision making they are making giant leaps in helping to close the cultural competency gap between themselves and their international cohorts. Learning to use these Federal information sources help students to gain a competitive edge over their domestic counterparts in gaining employment after graduation (Cuda 2002). Another growing concern is that U.S. small- and medium-sized businesses, too, lags their foreign counterparts in export orientation.

Lag of U.S. Small and Medium-Sized Businesses in Export Orientation

Increasingly U.S. businesses are confronted with the need, if they are to stay globally competitive, to operate outside the comfort of their own domestic markets. This need is heightened by the increasing number of free trade agreements that are fast changing global competition. The business world now faces a new era or new order of unprecedented global economic interactions making the competitive marketplace demanding of managers with sophisticated intercultural competencies necessary to work with staff, customers, suppliers, and government officials with fundamentally different values, assumptions, beliefs, and traditions (Kempton 2005). In today's world, cross-cultural management is the norm (Frauenheim 2005) and the development of employees and managers with intercultural competencies is prerequisite (Oba 2003).

The lag by U.S. students and SME managers behind their international counterparts heightens the need for U.S. students and business managers to first know about sources of quality and reliable international information, and then to learn to use them to help narrow this lag. The following sections of this review will discuss sources of international information and specifically sources of Federally-collected and organized international information that is available free for use in schools of business for course enhancement and/or by the student in his or her self-development of intercultural competencies efforts.

Sources of International Information

Suppliers of international business information range from company in-house research departments; to independent information intermediaries; to government entities such as trade promotion organizations; economics

and statistics departments; as well as comprehensive federal websites. Other suppliers include international chambers of commerce, and trade and industry associations. Some information sets, like commodity prices, are most easily obtained from commodity exchange houses, specialized publication houses, and online databases. Yet types of international information, like information and statistics on manufactured goods and traded services, are difficult to obtain. Much of the time such specific information must be inferred from general sources such as catalogs and price lists, advertisements in the trade press and consumer magazines that publish price surveys, or extrapolated from known factors. However, marketing managers are advised to remember that the comparability of prices and other statistics on a country to country basis is limited by the lack of reporting standardization (Anonymous 1994).

With the growth of the Internet, international information sources have increased in number and complexity. Some sources are quality-based; some lack quality; some are fee-based, some are free. Single source information service companies can be used for obtaining information about developed countries; however, for many developing and underdeveloped countries market researchers must consult directly with country specific government and non-governmental trade constituencies – a time-consuming endeavor with the reliability of the data many times in question.

Fortunately it is good to know that the U.S. Federal government publishes not only quality information about our domestic economy, it is also the world's largest collector and disseminator of international market information (STAT-USA 2004). Small and medium-size companies that normally do not have qualified information analysts on staff, and trade and marketing educators can benefit by becoming aware of and using Federal Web resources. Such resources are quality and reliable in character and the Web sites are infused with new advanced information search functionalities making information access and analysis efficient and effective. Using this information and using these information investigation functionalities helps even the novice to better understand cross-cultural issues and produce professional and meaningful information and statistical reports. Such uses develop self-sufficiency in the user.

Federal Web Resources

Broadening a firm's market to include foreign markets magnify the need to know about current, accurate, and reliable international information; about advanced investigation functionalities; to understand certain international trade structures such as the harmonized commodity description and coding system, shipping export documentation, foreign trade balance of payments, foreign trade zones, and a host of other need-specific international

business concepts. Because of the efficiency and effectiveness of Federal Web sites in providing a wealth of international information, as well as “how to” information, marketing researchers have continuously stressed the need to access and understand these resources (Kozlow 2002; Williamson 1999; Ancel 1999; Calof 1997; Anonymous 1998; and others). Czinkota and Ronkainen (2001) contended that of all data sources, governments (with the U.S. government leading by a large margin) typically have the greatest variety of data available at both the macro and micro levels. The U.S. government actively promotes the expansion of U.S. businesses through international trade and generates a considerable amount of general and specific (macro and micro) market data and, makes it available to the American public free at Federal Depository Libraries located throughout the U.S., as well as makes it available for personal or company subscription at relatively little cost.

New-to-market researchers who lack familiarity with other countries’ basic social, government, and economic characteristics, not to mention the lack of resources necessary for a research trip abroad, can look to the U.S. Federal Government. Although business and economic data are also produced in other countries, differences in how statistics are measured and defined country by country often prohibits the marketer’s ability to make accurate international comparisons. Standards in how statistics are defined, collected, and measured are important for international market research comparability. Comparability is prerequisite for judging the reliability and validity of findings in a data set.

As shown in Table 1, Federal Web site resources are quite valuable when addressing a variety of global, diverse, and multicultural issues and when attempting to assess emerging markets. Some of the most useful Federal Web sources of international information are highlighted in Table 2. General international marketing information is plentiful and easily accessible from these Federal Web sites and can be used to reduce the steep learning curve typically required in international market entry. Summaries of individual, continuously updated, foreign market reports, economic reports, and marketing insight reports published by various government entities, as well as continuously updated international trade leads, are published on STAT-USA/Internet, drawing together in a comprehensive, one-stop source, user-friendly site multiple information sets published by multiple Federal entities. STAT-USA/Internet provides access to and assistance with various electronic information products as described in Table 3. STAT-USA/Internet’s *State of the Nation* database provides domestic information; the *National Trade Database* (NTDB) provides international information and foreign industry and market reports; the GLOBUS (*Global Business Opportunities*) database provides numerous international trade leads; and the *International Trade Library* database contains a vast library of

current and historical international reports, handbooks, “how to do” guides, as well as lots of other valuable materials.

Advanced Computer Investigation Functionalities Infused in Federal Web Sites

The Federal government not only provides vast information from myriad information sources, as seen in Tables 1, 2, and 3; it also is involved in setting standards for international business information collection procedures; developing advanced computer investigation functionalities; and methodologies for analyzing, sorting, ranking; and disseminating information; as well as providing technical advice of the subjects (Anonymous 1994). Examples of some of the integrated investigation functionalities infused in Federal Web sites, enabling efficiency and effectiveness in data analysis, are also shown in Table 3.

Gaining access to these Federal Web sites where the USDOC publishes information sets that are timely, credible, and accurate, and being able to analyze and use this information intelligently is the key to understanding foreign markets and ultimately the key to international marketing and expatriate success. Obtaining and processing the right information greatly reduces the likelihood of making major international blunders, mistakes and oversights. Yet, according to Taylor (2003) these Federal Web site resources are the best-kept secrets in modern day business. Are these Federal Web sites and the infused information investigation functionalities “hidden” assets seldom used by academicians in collegiate classrooms?

FINDINGS OF EMPIRICAL STUDY

The response rate for the initial phase of the exploratory study where 317 marketing educators’ were queried using e-survey techniques resulted in a very low response rate of 17/317 or .0536. The second phase of the exploratory study was a follow up phase to the non-responding marketing educators sent the first e-survey. This follow up increased the overall response rate to 25/317 or .0789. Perhaps the continued low response rate was due to extraneous variables such as the development of spam filters and/or the change of the initiating university’s name being unfamiliar to surveyed educators. Although the response rate was too small to generalize findings, it is interesting to see the geographic concentration of the 17 respondents who indicated use of the Federal Web sites. These survey respondents represented twenty-two different U.S. universities and one Canadian University: ten located in California, four in other western states, three in eastern states, and four in Texas. The fact that marketing educators in California and other western states had the most e-survey respondents are consistent with statistics found in a personal interview with the director of STAT-

TABLE 1
MULTI-USES OF FEDERAL WEB SITE RESOURCES

Federal Web site resources can be used to gain:

- A. Assess to foreign market information.
- B. Understanding of intra-market and cross-cultural diversity.
- C. Rank ordered information relative to numerous demographic, economic, and life style factors.
- D. Knowledge of quantity and value of goods shipped into and out of the United States.
- E. Country by country market/product information.
- F. Information related to conducting specific aspects of foreign market business.
- G. Knowledge of shifting trade patterns by commodity.
- H. Knowledge of foreign market trends and opportunities.
- I. Information for extrapolating further information from known factors.
- J. Statistics of import/export shipments and understand import/export flows.
- K. Insights into competitive conditions worldwide.
- L. An understanding of and perspective of consumer income and world income variability.
- M. An identification of foreign consumption patterns, purchasing power, market potential.
- N. Reliable foreign market assessment data.
- O. Information necessary for conducting a feasibility analyses; planning an entry strategy; and, planning and implementing an international marketing mix.
- P. International marketing assistance from public and private sources.
- Q. Information to address myriad other specific global marketing issues.
- R. Insight and discovery in existing and emerging export markets for your products.
- S. Comparable data for exports of related products.
- T. Statistics to determine market share of export markets for specific products.
- U. Data for monitoring trends in specific products, markets, and countries.
- V. Other information and statistics to address myriad specific global marketing issues.

USA/Internet at the Economics and Statistics Administration at the U.S. Department of Commerce in Washington, D.C. (Williams 2005). As a matter of explanation, there two types of access methods for accessing the Federally-password protected reports on STAT-USA Internet and USA Trade Online: Campus-wide access – for which universities pay a fee based on FTE so students and professors have ready access to the Federal password protected information from any computer with their university user name and password; and the password protected information – accessible only at two computer workstations physically located at the FDL requiring library visits by student and/or professor. According to the USDOC, universities in California and other western states far exceed other states in terms of providing campus-wide access subscriptions to their students. It is expected that campus-wide access universities would have more acquaintance with and more frequent use of Federal

Web resources than those universities not having campus-wide access and at times not having an FDL library.

In the personal interview third phase of the exploratory study fifty-eight marketing educators in total were interviewed. Personal interview questions, like the e-survey questions, elicited feedback relative to educators' use of Federal Web products (STAT-USA/Internet, USA Trade Online, Euro Trade Online, or Other Federal Web sites); methodology of integration into their courses; and educators' frustrations or satisfactions with using Federal Web site products and the investigation functionalities.

Because of the low response rate to the e-survey phases of this exploratory study, only data gathered from personal interviews with the fifty-eight marketing educators were analyzed beyond the geographic location of respondents as reported previously. Of the fifty-eight marketing educators personally interviewed only 18/58 (31%), used any one or more Federal Web sites in their

TABLE 2
FEDERAL WEB SITE RESOURCES

International Trade Administration provides:

1. Referrals and information on all U.S. Federal Government export assistance programs.
2. General export counseling including links *Frequently Asked Questions* and *Ask the TIC* useful for locating answers to the most commonly asked exporting questions and assistance in overcoming commercial difficulties.
3. Sources of international market research and trade leads.
4. Calendar of overseas and domestic trade events and activities including a link to Overseas Trade Mission and Commercial Service Calendar sponsored by U.S. Department of Commerce.
5. Advice on Export Licenses and Controls.
6. Country-specific and region-specific export counseling and assistance for Western Europe, Asia, Western Hemisphere, Africa, and the Near East on commercial laws, regulations, business practices, distribution channels, business travel, and other market information.
7. Lists of opportunities and best prospects for U.S. companies in individual markets including a list of *Top Targets* for U.S. Exports.
8. Import tariffs/taxes and customs procedure and a *Tariff Information* link for products when such information becomes available.
9. Lists of trade Publications and export software including a listing of *Export Software* useful for expediting information analysis and a database of trade-related publications.

Source: International Trade Administration (2004)

Commerce Department's Foreign Commercial Service provides:

An Information Network:

International trade experts to serve counsel – 90 domestic offices and 130+ international offices.

Summaries of Research:

Published on STAT-USA/Internet an electronic product of STAT-USA, Economics and Statistics Administration, Department of Commerce (*explained below*).

Mission: "To counsel, advocate for and find export leads around the world for U.S. businesses."

Responsibilities:

Gather trade leads, research markets, calculate trade statistics, and assist interested U.S. companies make contact.

Source: Foreign Commercial Service (2004)

CIA World Fact Book (U.S. Central Intelligence Agency) provides:

Valuable information sets of cultural and economic factors allowing efficient cross-cultural comparison of world economies – published and updated weekly.

The essential fields and sub-fields of basic intelligence on all areas of the world – again extremely valuable for cross-cultural analysis.

A "snapshot" of the world as of January 1, 2004 using major fields of information: Introduction, Geography, People, Government, Economy, Communication, Transportation, and numerous standard sub-fields of information with new sub-fields continuously added.

Efficient rank-order capabilities for many of the fields and sub-fields of information with more being enhanced in the near future.

TABLE 2 (CONTINUED)

Detailed individual country data and functionalities that enhances researchers ability to conduct cross-border analysis efficiently and effectively.

Source: CIA World Fact Book (2004)

STAT-USA/Internet Web site provides:

Four comprehensive databases (Access to current and historical trade-related releases, international marketing research, trade opportunities, and foreign country analysis):

(A) State of the Nation – Current and historical domestic information including *America’s Top 50 Releases*, general economic indicators, gross domestic product, consumer price index, reports on housing and construction, employment and unemployment, manufacturing and industry, monetary statistics and economic policy; as well as bond rates, daily treasury statements; and financial releases and economic data produced through the federal government and related entities. It also contains the SOTN Library.

(B) National Trade Data Base (NTDB) – Export opportunities by industry, country, and product; Ready and free or low-cost access to export opportunities by industry, country, and product; useful to foreign companies or importers looking for specific products; how-to market guides, demographic, political and socio economic conditions in hundreds of countries. Also reports international trade statistics, current exchange rates, market and country reports such as International Marketing Insights (IMIs), Multilateral Development Bank Reports (MDBs), Industry Sector Analyses (ISAs), Best Market Reports (BMRs), Global Agricultural Information Network News, Country Commercial Guides (CCGs), Country Background Notes, National Trade Estimate Reports on Foreign Trade Barriers, Annual Reports on Trade Agreement Programs, Annual Trade Policy and Agenda Reports, and Current Press Releases.

(C) GLOBUS: International trade leads and business contacts: FedBizOpps Program (includes Foreign Government) Tenders: Defense Logistics Agency Leads; Global Trade Opportunities Program (TOPS) – private company trade leads; Agricultural Trade Leads; United Nation Trade Leads; and Current and Historical Trade Leads. Included is a set of contact registries useful for searching for international partners, researching competition, and locating trade-related officials working in particular states: (1) *NTDB Global Trade Directory* (a searchable database of manufacturers, resellers, and buyer contacts around the world); (2) *National Export Directory* (provides export assistance contact and location information; and economic development centers).

(D) International Trade Library: Provides “How to . . .” documents, 40,000+ documents related to international trade, trade handbooks, world trade flow reports, and numerous other types of reports related to international and world trade.

USA Trade Online Web Site provides:

1. The official source and the most current source for U.S., import and export data.
2. Monthly and annual data on over 20,000 import and export commodities traded each month with 247 countries.
3. A powerful, but user-friendly database of twelve years of U.S. import/export data by quantity/value.
4. Current and cumulative reports on what is being shipped (exports) and where it is being shipped and what is being imported (imports) and from where it is being imported.

Euro Trade Online Web Site provides:

1. A complementary database to the popular USA Trade *Online* – reports comparable monthly and annual trade statistics in quantity and value (in euros) for the European Union.

TABLE 2 (CONTINUED)

2. Offers detailed and timely trade data straight from the European Commission's Commerce Exterior Database Comext.
3. Official trade statistics for the European Union (EU) on monthly/annual import and export data; 8-digit level of industry detail for many of the 25 EU members; Intra-and Extra-European Trade Statistics. Additional statistics for additional EU countries is being added – although it may take several years to acquire and disseminate detailed data for all 25 EU countries.

Source: STAT-USA, Economics and Statistics Administration, USDOC

marketing courses. Of the 18 respondents who did use one or more Federal websites in the marketing courses they teach, four used STAT-USA/Internet; five used the SBA; two used the Censuses, six used World Factbook, and one used USA Trade Online. As can be seen by these statistics, usage of any of Federal sites by the marketing educators was very limited. One of the limitations of the personal interviews was that the two educators' conferences at which the personal interviews were conducted were physically held at the mid-U.S. city and in a southern U.S. city, respectively, thus limiting the potential attendance of marketing educators from California and other western states because of geographic distance to travel requirements. Relative to a limitation of these personal interviews, had the personal interviews been held at national conferences, like the AMA Summer Educators' conference, findings for educators from California and other western states might have resulted in far different overall statistics based their universities high rate of campus-wide access to these Federal Websites (STAT-USA/Internet and USA Trade Online) and states with a low rate of access where access is physically available at FDLs workstations only. Only 3 of the 18 educators who did use Federal Web resources in their marketing courses indicated that he or she required students to use Federal Web sites of any type do so as only required reference material for term projects – two of these three doing so only in MBA courses. Most educators (15/18) that did use Federal Web resources in their courses did so solely for their own lecture preparation reasons – students were not required to interact with the Federal information sources. These finding supports Taylor's 2002 findings that Federal Web resources are the best-kept secret from students of marketing education.

Of those eighteen educators who did use Federal web resources into their courses for either lecture prep reasons or for student development reasons, approximately half (48%) said they had no problems using the particular Federal resources they did use. Of those educators who did use Federal Web resources and did encounter some

degree of frustration most responded that "it was not always easy to find the data you are looking for because of the vast amounts of data available."

In summary, relative to findings of this exploratory study, most of the 58 marketing educators interviewed in this study are not using Federally-collected and organized information sources in their marketing classrooms. Of the limited ones who do (32%) use these information sources, most are doing so solely for their own lecture preparation purposes, not for student development purposes. Could the non-student development use of Federal resources by educators finding be a result of the Federal web resources being difficult to integrate into marketing courses?

Pilot Study Findings

The pilot study of integrating Federally-collected, organized and published information (STAT-USA/Internet and USA Trade Online) into an international marketing course was initiated in a summer class (5-weeks in duration) of 30 students. Pilot study findings showed that students perceived they derived many benefits from Federal Web resources being integrated into marketing courses as a course using interactive course enhancement/student development methodologies. Based on the success of the pilot study, the integration has continuously been used for four years as part of a follow on study. The pilot study findings and follow-on study findings revealed that the students' perception of the benefits of integrating Federally-collected and organized international resources into an international marketing course remained consistent over time. These students perceived benefits are listed in Table 4. Based on pilot-study findings and the learning curve of integrating these Federal Web resources into an international marketing course during the four-year follow on study the following model for integration is offered to other marketing educators desiring to integrate Federally-collected and organized international information sources into their own international marketing course. Doing so will help their marketing students devel-

TABLE 3
 STAT-USA/INTERNET ELECTRONIC INFORMATION PRODUCTS AND ADVANCED
 COMPUTER FUNCTIONALITIES WITHIN THESE PRODUCTS

STAT-USA/Internet Web Site:

Single point of access to business, economic and trade-related information disseminated throughout the Federal Government – one stop Internet browsing.

Simultaneous searching for international and domestic economic information across multiple federal sources online.

Quick Search capabilities and drill down sorting capabilities in ascending and descending order.

Depict relevancy ranking.

Unique navigating and searching capabilities.

USA Trade Online Web Site:

Standardized Reports; *Standard Report* (value and quantity); *Trade by Commodity* (trade volume world wide); *Commodity by Marketing Ranking* (Rank order of top markets for commodity); *Commodity Profile* (value and quantity over time of particular commodity by country); *Commodity Time Series* (value and quantity changes over time of specific commodity and country); *Country by Commodity* (value changes over time of a specific commodity and country by current month, cumulative year to date, previous year, etc.).

Resorting of data (by commodity, country) once report is generated.

Saved query “reports” can be saved and re-executed when new data are released.

Customized tables can be created by manipulating the various fields and formats quickly.

Compare tables that would otherwise be time-consuming, cumbersome and nearly impossible using static printed tables.

Track trends using historical time series.

Download volumes of information in database, spreadsheet or ASCII formats.

Store queries and eliminate the need to rebuild most often used tables.

Statistics searchable by Harmonized System (HS) Commodity Classification Codes at the 2, 4, 6, and 10–digit levels.

Country level search capabilities by quantity and value.

Monthly exports and imports by commodity, country and districts by both quantity and value.

Current and prior month comparisons.

Four-year Annual history by commodity and country.

Ten-Year Time Series by quantity and value.

TABLE 3 (CONTINUED)

Step-by-Step matrix building allows even new data users to build useful tables like a pro.

Convenient Internet delivery assures access to data 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

CIA World Factbook:

Create customized reports or used standardized reports.

Download large volumes of information in spreadsheet, ASCII, or database formats.

Rank Order Pages downloadable tab-delimited rank order files of numerous fields and sub-fields.

Maps downloadable as PDF files.

Create cross-cultural and cross-border reports and rank-order tabulations.

op some of the basic intercultural competencies needed by them as future managers in the cross-cultural new world order.

THE EXPERIENTIAL INTEGRATION MODEL (EDUCATOR RECOMMENDATIONS)

Williamson (1999) argued that many government websites are complex database umbrellas that the novice would have to study for several months in order to determine the structure, utility, and limitations of each of the several hundred programs. On the contrary, based on the pilot-study experience of guiding more than 30 marketing students through sixteen experiential exercises using these Federal Web resources (using the Federally-published “Companion” (STAT-USA 2001) and guiding more than 200 students through the Federal Web resources integrated course during the four year follow on study (using the “Build- it-as-you-learn” training manual format described below), it can be said that Williamson’s 1999 argument holds little truth today. There was, of course, during the pilot study and thereafter, a steep learning curve that lessened each time the enhanced course was offered. Recommendations relative to the experiential model for integrating Federally-collected and organized information into an international marketing courses, based on pilot and follow on study findings are given below.

Educator Preparation

Based on pilot year study and the four year follow-on study findings recommendations are given to educators as they prepare for their own integration experience. These recommendations are given in Table 5.

Implementing the “‘Build-It-As-You-Learn’ Federal Web Resources Training Manual”

Note to Educator: This manual is designed for those educators who have access physical access to a Federal Depository Library (FDL) and/or full-access to STAT-USA/Internet and USA Trade Online via campus-wide or consortium-wide subscription by a university library or consortium of university libraries. This entire manual is especially designed to be used in an International Marketing course, however, it is applicable to many marketing courses or other business courses. Essentially it is designed such that each educator will work through the experiential exercises and as he or she does so he or she will write educator-specific questions about each of the Federal Web Resources for which the students must access the Federal Web sites and navigate the various links in the Web sites to answer the questions (similar to a scavenger hunt) learning to access and navigate various databases of Federal international market reports, industry reports, country reports and trade statistics as they answer the questions.

Sections One, Two, and Six of the following illustrated “Manual” are designed in such a way that students can complete these specific sections from any Internet connection on or off campus. Exceptions to this is a required “introductory” visit to an FDL library if one is located on the students’ own campus or one is located in fairly near vicinity. In completing Section Three, Four, and Five of the manual, students who do not have campus-wide access to STAT-USA/Internet and USA Trade Online Web sites will need to use one of the two “free” computer-access sites at any FDL library. Students who do have campus wide access can complete all sections from any Internet-connected computer. In both the pilot-test year

TABLE 4
STUDENTS' PERCEPTION OF THE VALUE OF INTEGRATING FEDERAL WEB
RESOURCES INTO MARKETING CURRICULA

1. Learned information that would continue to help us in the real world.
2. Acquired newfound knowledge of how we could find statistics we never knew about.
3. Gave us information and develop in us skills that would give us a heads up on competition in the workforce.
4. Helped us with resume building skills to make ourselves look better on a piece of paper in order to get the job we've been dreaming about for so long.
5. Gave us internal joy – the training manuals were never for a grade (only the 10-minute section exams about manual skills and subject matter were graded) the final outcome of the manual was purely for us.
6. Motivated us internally – getting college juniors and seniors to do something that wasn't required is nothing short of brain surgery – on the day binders were done with sections completed it was a surprise that so many students completed the work and turned in professional binders with smiles on their faces and joy as they rubbed the glossy fronts of their binders.
7. Taught us something we felt we could take into the business world.
8. Encouraged permanent learning – this knowledge was not just something that would be “lost” once handed in.
9. Taught us vital tools of knowledge – we all knew what treasures we had found.
10. The professor and material found a way to enter our lives and gave us true information and stimulated in us a willingness to learn more – unfortunately not characteristic of most college classes.
11. Remolded the students and in one way or the other and filled us with the passion, knowledge, and experience of others.
12. Brought to students a high level of satisfaction – we were all very lucky to have taken a course of this nature.
13. Opened for us many doors – this course structure has opened many doors of opportunity we previously knew nothing about.
14. Broadened students global perspective – this course has broadened my perspectives of international programs.
15. Involving an interactive course – we loved the highly interactive learning style.
16. Promoted continuous learning – these electronic resources will continue to be used in completing requirements for other courses and be used in the real-world place of work.
17. Interactive and user-oriented approach to teaching.
18. Promoted cross-cultural understanding – this course had a tremendous impact on our knowledge and understanding of international marketing.
19. Provided students with a lifetime of research skills.
20. Training proved to be an essential differentiator in the job market – The USDOC certificate of Training that I earned proved to be an essential differentiator in a highly competitive job market.

TABLE 5
RECOMMENDATIONS TO EDUCATOR INTEGRATING FEDERAL RESOURCES
INTO MARKETING COURSES

1. Educators need first to become acquainted with STAT-USA's publication titled, *The STAT-USA/Internet Companion to International Business . . . tips for using STAT-USA information for analyzing international business* (STAT-USA 2001), endearingly called the "Companion" by STAT-USA staff. The experiential exercises in the "Companion" were very useful for demonstrating to students the value of and use of Federal resources in making international business decisions. This "Companion" is in the process of being revised and enhanced. This new revision, now entitled *STAT-USA Training Manual* is planned for web-publication only and will be published on the STAT-USA/Internet Web site in the very near future at the writing of this paper.
2. It is imperative that each educator, his or herself, work through each and every exercise recommended for integrating Federally-collected and organized information into the classroom before attempting to integrate the Web site information and experiential exercise. Educators are advised that there is a substantial learning curve involved for the educator however based on the pilot study and the four year follow on study the effort and benefit to students is well worth the effort and very rewarding to the educator. A cursory survey of course content in other courses in a typical school of business revealed that this information is not covered in any other business course. If a particular school of business has an international business or international trade program content analysis findings may differ.
3. The pilot-semester for the integration of this experiential model should be a long-term semester not a summer semester. The learning curve, being fairly substantial, is just too intense for most undergraduate students in a summer semester of five weeks.
4. This comprehensive learning experience should not be given as a "term project" due at the end of the semester as typical with many term projects. Because of the comprehensiveness of this integration model the comprehensive assignment should be broken down into "chunks" or short specific assignments (called "Sections" in the "'Build-It-As-You-Learn' Federal Information Resources Training Manual" as described in the next section of this paper). The students should be assigned to complete each particular "section" by specific due dates with dates spaced fairly evenly throughout the semester. Students should be given instructions that each "Section" of the "Training Manual," needs to be professionally presented in a three-inch ring binder with all section labeling professionally typed and section appendices professionally labeled and placed in a three-inch ring binder. In other words, after the end of each section of the manual it is a "finished" section giving students the feeling of pride of having finished one complete section and "put it to bed," so to speak. This "completed" section gives them the feeling of a "fresh start" with each new section.
5. It is advised, on the due date of each section, to ask the students to hand write a short paragraph in class about the "new learning" he or she gained from completing that particular "Section" that he or she did not know before starting the section. This "reflection time" is highly recommended. It is rewarding to both student and professor to see each student's perception of "benefits gained" from having completed the section.
6. When students finish each section and finish the "reflections" assignment in # 5 above, it is recommended that the educator give a short hands on test (called 10 minute tests) to ensure the student had developed the required section skills necessary to use the Site and to understand the material.
7. Upon successfully passing the test in # 6 above and the sections are checked for correctness and that completeness, it is recommended that students receive 1/6th of a photocopy of an end of the semester certificate for training, perhaps signed by the local Export Assistance Center (regional divisions of the USDOC). Students seem to enjoy receiving these "partial" certificates as they complete each section.

and the four year follow on study, these students did not have campus wide access to these Federal sites. In class enrollments of 30 students during the pilot-study and two sections semester of 30 students each in the follow-on study years, no problems were encountered if the students relied on the help of the FDL librarians who are especially trained to access and navigate these Sites. This project assumes that students know how to access the Internet and use a basic Internet search engine like, Google, for many of the introductory assignments given in Sections One and Two. The overall structure of the following “Manual” is that the completed “Manual” will include six sections, each with a specified purpose, with a varied number of assignments within each section. At times there are sub-assignments (e.g., A, B, C . . .) within a particular numbered assignment and sometimes the Sections are divided into parts (e.g., Part 1, 2, 3 . . . of Section 3) to make a complex assignment more student-friendly when they are required to use some of the complex material on the Federal Web sites. The following format is given strictly as a “suggested” model as each exercise needs to be designed educator-specific depending on each educator’s goals for his or her course and professor specific questions about navigating the Web sites. Notes to the Educator are occasionally inserted in the manual exercises as points of clarification.

SECTION ONE

Purpose of Section One: Understand how the U.S.DOC (responsible for promotion of international export trade) fits into the organization of the U.S. Government and understand the STAT-USA/GPO partnership efforts ensuring free public online access to Federal Web resources.

Experiential Assignment 1.1: Using the Internet, review the three branches of the U.S. government and identify how the USDOC fits into this organizational structure. The 9–12 grade level of the <http://bensguide.gpo.gov> Web Site is recommended.¹ Note to educator: Students seemed to really enjoy this review and this website.

Experiential Assignment 1.2: Using the Internet, understand the organizational structure of the Government Printing Office (GPO) and its Federal Depository Program (FDLP) giving U.S. citizens and the business public free access to government documents and resources.

Experiential Assignment 1.3: Visit an FDL library (government documents library), if one is on campus or within a reasonable distance from campus, to become acquainted with local FDL librarians and to understand the domestic and international resources available on STAT-USA/Internet and USA Trade Online Web sites accessible to the public and business people at each of the over 1300 FDL libraries located in the U.S. and its territories.

SECTION TWO

Purpose of Section Two: Understand the three Web products electronically published by the office of STAT-USA, an agency of the Economics and Statistics Administration of the U.S. Department of Commerce and the value of these information products to international marketing and the international marketing process.

Experiential Assignment 2.1: Access the STAT-USA/Internet Website (Note to educator: Access to STAT-USA/Internet “home page” and introductory material is accessible from any Internet-connected computer. Only the specific reports on this Federal site are password protected accessible only at an FDL library or through proprietary subscription). Understand the organizational structure of the U.S. Department of Commerce; how the Economics and Statistics Administration and the office of STAT-USA fits into the USDOC structure; understand the electronically published resources the office of STAT-USA provides (STAT-USA/Internet, USA Trade Online and Euro Trade Online); and understand the assistance the office of STAT-USA provides U.S. companies in their international marketing efforts.

Experiential Assignment 2.2: (A) Access the STAT-USA/Internet home page to understand the nature of and international marketing-related value of STAT-USA/Internet as a one-stop, easy to access and navigate Federal information Web site and the four main comprehensive databases housed on this Web site: State of the Nation; NTDB; GLOBUS (trade leads); and the International Trade Library. Using the links and icons learn what types of information is available on each database within this Web site; and, (B) Understand the value of other STAT-USA electronic Federal information products useful to international marketers: USA Trade Online and Euro Trade Online (both with an access “link” on the STAT-USA/Internet Web site).

SECTION THREE

Purpose of Section Three: Understand the Federally-published USA Trade Online Web site where real-time U.S. export and import data is recorded: by numbers of units exported from or imported into the U.S.; by U.S. dollar (USD) values of these exports or imports; by HS code (exports) or HTS code (imports); by country of exchange; by date of exchange; and by the most recently added Port of shipment.

Part One of Section Three

Experiential Assignment 3.1.1: Using the USA Trade Online Web site home page and the Web sites of government entities and resources, understand the basic issues involved in U.S. Merchandise Traded Statistics. (See note to Educator at the end of Section Three.)

Part Two of Section Three

Experiential Assignment 3.2.1: Using the USA Trade Online Web site and the Web sites of government entities and resources, become familiar with trade Statistics, Export/Import Controls, and Export/Import Processes. (See note to Educator at the end of Section Three.)

Part Three of Section Three

Note to Participants: Using the USA Trade Online Web site, complete the following experiential USA Trade Online navigation and analytical exercises.

Experiential Assignment 3.3.1: Download home page of USA Trade Online to learn about U.S. export and import trade statistics from the following perspectives: World totals; country totals; port totals; two-digit, four-digit, six-digit- to ten-digit HS, and HTS code totals by value and by number of units.

Experiential Assignment 3.3.2: Learn to use the computerized report generating capabilities (investigation functionalities) on USA Trade Online which includes the capabilities of generating reports by country, by product, world totals, by time frames, by port, and by other factors.

Note One to Educators: The following resources were used in addition to the USA Trade Online Web site to help students learn about how U.S. export and import trade statistics are collected, analyzed, organized and reported: *Census Bureau, International Trade Administration (ITA)*; *Manual on Statistics for International Trade in Services (MSITS)*; *Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA)*; *The Harmonized Coding System for the International Trade of Products*; *Balance of Trade, Trade Deficit and Trade Surplus*; *using proxy variables, content analysis and scenario analysis when international statistics/information data is not available*; and *the USDOC as publishing the greatest variety and most reliable and up to date foreign market research*.

Note Two to Educators: In the pilot-study and follow-on study years the professor provided these “lessons” about the role each of the above government entities or the role the listed resources serve in understanding foreign trade statistics and understanding the benefits of and the limitations of published international trade statistics. These “lessons” were provided by lectures in class with the applicable Power Point overheads published on the Blackboard electronic system so the students could easily refer to the material as they completed this section of the manual. For the students to “harvest” this same information from various Web sites would be too comprehensive and complex.

SECTION FOUR

Purpose of Section Four: To offer students the opportunity to complete, as a team member of a two-

member team a comprehensive exercise where students are asked to complete a *Foreign Market Opportunity Analysis (Market Factor Assessment)* to determine which of two countries would be the most “ideal” foreign market for specific American manufactured or produced products. This comprehensive project gave students the opportunity to gain “hands on” experience accessing and navigating the vast number of Federally-collected, organized and published international information resources they learned in “Manual” Sections One, Two, and Three and gave them experience in analyzing the data published within these Federal Web sites: *STAT-USA/Internet (Background Notes, Country Commercial Guides, National Trade Estimate Report of Foreign Trade Barriers, Current Exchange Rates, and others important links)*; *USA Trade Online (U.S. export and import data by commodity; by country level; by date; by HS or HTS code; by port level; and by other measurement parameters)*; *CIA World Factbook (using the new rank-ordering functionalities)*; and other Federal Web sites.

Experiential Assignment 4.1: In this team project the two team members of a two-member team choose one U.S. product to market in one of two foreign markets.

Note to Educator: In the pilot-study and in the follow on years study students could not choose beer, wine, or alcoholic products or fire arms for their “product” to be marketed because of the legal restrictions in marketing those products domestically and internationally. Students were encouraged to choose a natural resource or a product grown or manufactured in or near their hometown so they could better relate to the project from a real-world basis.

Experiential Assignment 4.2: In the Completion of the Foreign Market Assessment, each member of the two-member team was asked to use the Federally-collected, organized, and published Web resources studied previously in this course to research one of the two countries for Foreign Market Assessment Factors: Demographic/Physical Factors, Political Factors, Economic Factors, and Social/Cultural Factors, and the individual sub-factors within these factors, as shown in Table 6.

Experiential Assignment 4.3: Following the assessment Foreign Market Factors, each team member was asked to determine the following: (A) an overall aggregate Foreign Market Factor Condition Score for each of the individual factors shown in Table 7; an Aggregate Group Score, as also shown in Table 7, for each group of market factors.

Experiential Assignment 4.4: Each team member was to use the summation process to determine the aggregate Market Factor Condition Score based on the individual groups of market factors discussed in Step Three above and shown in Table 7.

Experiential Assignment 4.5: Each team member then shared his or her country’s aggregate Market Factor Condition scores with his or her team mate to determine which country of the two received the highest score –

TABLE 6
 MARKET ASSESSMENT PLAN (FOREIGN MARKET
 ANALYSIS) FACTORS

DEMOGRAPHIC/PHYSICAL FACTORS

Factor	Factor Score
1. Population	_____
2. Population density	_____
3. Urban, suburban and rural distribution	_____
4. Climate	_____
5. Shipping distance or estimated time for door to door shipment	_____
6. Transportation infrastructure	_____
7. Telecommunication infrastructure	_____
8. Shipping ports	_____
<i>Aggregate Group Score</i> _____	

ECONOMIC FACTORS

Factor	Factor Score
1. Economic growth potential	_____
2. GDP and balance of payments ratio	_____
3. Import and export % of total economy	_____
4. Import and export ratio of the U.S.	_____
5. Current exchange rate	_____
6. Last year's exchange rate	_____
7. Per capita income (disposable income)	_____
<i>Aggregate Group Score</i> _____	

POLITICAL FACTORS

Factor	Factor Score
1. Government system	_____
2. Attitudes toward importation	_____
3. Political stability	_____
4. Fair/free trade mind set	_____
<i>Aggregate Group Score</i> _____	

SOCIAL/CULTURAL FACTORS

Factor	Factor Score
1. Literacy rate	_____
2. Existence of middle class	_____
3. Target market similarities	_____
4. English speaking ability	_____
5. Export documentation requirements	_____
6. Presence of competition	_____
<i>Aggregate Group Score</i> _____	

FOREIGN MARKET CONDITION SCORE (FMCS) _____
 (Summation of all aggregate group scores – high FMCS is a rough, however not mutually exclusive indicator of market potential).

indicating in a rough sense the country with the highest market potential.

Experiential Assignment 4.6: Team members were then asked to go beyond the numerical scores assessing factors such as market entry, channel member availability, pricing structures in the country, and promotional requirements in the country, as well as product adaptability requirements.

SECTION FIVE

Purpose of Section Five: To understand trade leads and trade events, and the resources available to research each respectively, provided by the STAT-USA/Internet Web site, the Export.gov Web site, and the trade leads and trade events. USDOC's Buy USA's Export Program.

Part One of Sections Five

Experiential Assignment 5.1: Use the STAT-USA/Internet Web site's Foreign Trade Lead Sources to identify Foreign Trade Leads (GLOBUS) for various products and/or to identify foreign agents or distributors to help a U.S. firm market products in foreign markets.

Experiential Assignment 5.2: Use the STAT-USA/Internet Web site and the Export.gov Web site to read about issues related to international trade events (trade shows, catalog shows, trade missions, etc.).

Experiential Assignment 5.3: Use the STAT-USA/Internet Web site and the Export.gov Web site to identify quality international trade events being held in a particular country; characteristic of trade events (horizontal trade event related to a several industries or vertical trade events related to a specific industry); date of trade events; place of trade events; and registration procedures for trade events.

SECTION SIX

Purpose of Section Six: Gives course participants the opportunity to reflect on prior learning and the building of international research skills and to correspond directly with the Director of STAT-USA by e-mail. The experiential exercises in this section provides participants with the opportunity to give the office of STAT-USA Director personal feedback relative to each participant's own experience accessing and maneuvering through each Federal Web site. It also gives each the opportunity to rely directly to the Director (with a copy to the educator) the student's own perception of the value of this "Build-As-You-Learn" Federal Resources Training Manual" learning experience.

Experiential Assignment 6.1: Reflect on the new learning that has been gained in completing the prior experiential assignments in building this training manual. Reflect also on what suggestions might be offered to the

office of STAT-USA as improvement suggestions for improving these Federal Web sites; what frustrated you most in using them; and what you enjoyed most about using them. Reflect also on the value of learning to access and navigate these Federally-collected, organized and published Web sites (specifically STAT-USA/Internet and USA Trade Online) to completing assignments in your other business courses and other than business courses in college and what you think the value of learning them will be to your future work career.

Experiential Assignment 6.2: Each course participant writes an e-mail to the Director of the office of STAT-USA (educator provided e-mail address) to give the suggestions for improvement of the Federal Web sites to increase the user-friendliness of the Site. Also to give the course participant's perception of the value of his or her learning to access and navigate STAT-USA and USA Trade Online to your present and future other college courses and to your future work career.

Note to Educator: During the pilot-study year and the four-year follow on study, participating students and instructor were surprised that the office of STAT-USA/Internet "listened" to the student's (and the Professor's) suggestions for improvement to their Web sites and implement many of these suggestions immediately as witnessed by immediate changes made to the Federal Web sites after the students' suggestions were given.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

From the findings of the exploratory survey study of marketing educators, pilot-study year, and the four-year follow on study discussed in this paper, it is concluded that Federal Web resources are indeed the "best-kept secret" from the undergraduate students, graduate students, and most marketing professors. It is also concluded that integrating Federally-collected, organized and published international information into marketing courses, and in particular the international marketing course, results in many benefits as perceived by student participants shown in Table 4 of this paper. It is also concluded that any educational system where educators fail to help students become acquainted with the intercultural competencies building value, the cross-cultural understanding value, and the business information value of these free access Federally-collected, organized and published information and fail to teach students the basic access and navigation skills related to these Federal sites is remiss in their educational responsibilities.

It is recommended that universities work together to use free (or relatively low FTE fee in the case of campus-wide subscriptions) Federally-collected, organized, and Web-published international information and statistics to develop course enhancement methodologies and/or international business program characteristics and dimensions. Doing so will help U.S. students as future U.S.

business managers develop more global awareness and intercultural competencies that will aid in closing the global awareness and intercultural gap between U.S.

business students and U.S. business managers and their foreign counterparts.

ENDNOTE

¹ Although there are “higher” and more detailed educational levels on this Web site designed parent’s and teachers’ pilot-year and follow on study findings showed that the 9–12 level gave the basic review information for the college students without overloading them with extra reading material.

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