



Kansas RTAP Fact Sheet

A Service of The University of Kansas Transportation Center for Rural Transit Providers

Exploring the Rural National Transit Database With INTDAS

By Clifton Hall

The Rural National Transit Database (RNTD) is a program managed by the FTA to record and monitor performance data of all Section 5311 transit providers. This data is made available to the public in Excel format for each year from 2006 through 2012 (as of print.)

Transit agencies can use this data to review other providers' or their own performance and reporting. However, because of the way it is formatted, using this data to produce year-to-year reports, or to compare performance between providers, can be daunting for novice spreadsheet users and still labor intensive for more experienced users.

To solve this problem, researchers at Florida International University, with support from National RTAP, created a web-based database tool to make using and analyzing this data less time-consuming and more user-friendly. This article will introduce you to this system, called INTDAS, and outline the problems it can solve. We will give you a brief walk-through of some of its features and capabilities that can assist your operation's planning and performance analysis.

How INTDAS makes navigating RNTD easier

Using INTDAS can save you time—lots of it. Albert Gan, INTDAS administrator and one of its creators, says: "It may take hours to identify and retrieve the data from the annual raw data files released by FTA. In INTDAS, this can be done in minutes, if not seconds."

Gan said INTDAS was born out of necessity, and was originally a system created to work with the urban National Transit Database. It was released on CD-ROM in 2001. Gan and researchers at Florida International University were approached by National RTAP to develop a rural version in 2014, which launched in January 2015.

Gan and his colleagues had approached Florida's DOT to launch a web version of the INTDAS in 2007, which eventually including a peer selection feature (currently only available on urban INTDAS) that automatically selects peer systems for analysis and comparison. Gan hopes an equivalent feature will be available on Rural INTDAS in the near future, which would eliminate some of the guesswork



More About the National Transit Database

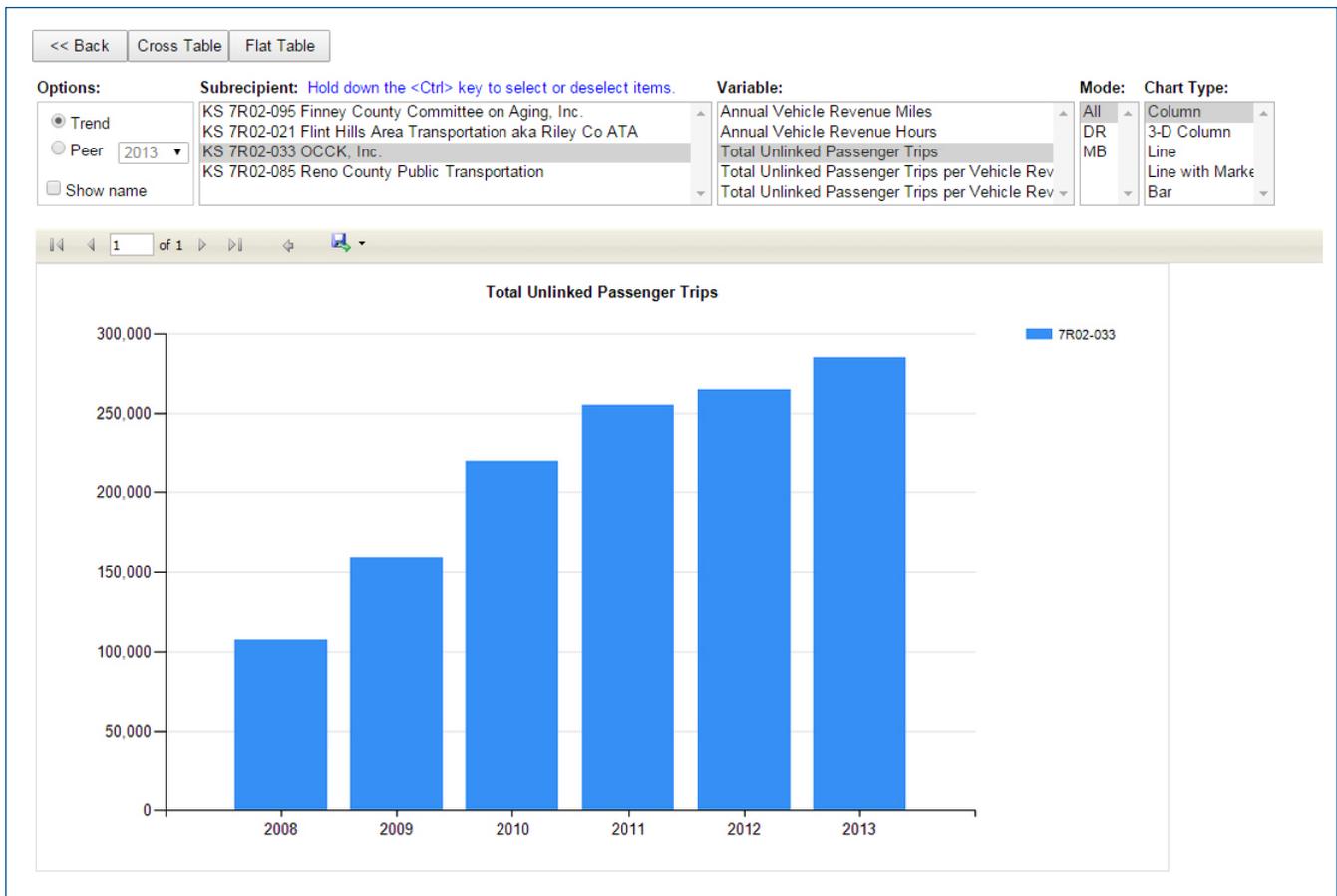
The National Transit Database (NTD) was initiated by Congress in 1974 to track and monitor transit activity and performance under the Urban Mass Transit Act. Congress based the NTD system on the Uniform Financial Accounting and Reporting Elements (FARE) the transit industry had developed for self-monitoring.

Initially only a requirement of urban agencies, the rural version (RNTD) was launched in 2006 and is used by FTA to gather performance information from all Section 5311 rural transit providers as a requirement of participation in the formula grant program.

from peer comparison analysis.

INTDAS provides easy access to each variable for each provider that receives FTA funding. This includes metrics such as vehicle-miles, ridership, revenue-hours, etc. These metrics can be used to create custom reports about the performance characteristics that interest you the most, allowing you to view how performance has changed over time, or how it compares between providers in a given year. The system also allows you to view directly the forms each

stocknapic / ianolan Puszczynski



Rural INTDAS provides flexible reporting capabilities, allowing you to compare trends over time in your own agency, or to make comparisons with selected systems that you select for “peer” comparison. In this example, we see a graph of ridership for one system from 2008-2013, from just over 100,000 rides per year to nearly 300,000 rides. The charts can be displayed in a variety of formats or output to Excel for further analysis.

provider filled out to report their data to FTA.

Using built-in tools, you can use INTDAS to see how your operation has changed over a period of years. This type of analysis would require copious duplication in Excel, and would be prone to error without hours of debugging.

The peer comparison tool of INTDAS lets you see how your operation compares to similar providers. You can also see how your peers’ service profiles have changed over the years, to posit how your transit operation might change in the future.

Now, we will take a look at how INTDAS helps you to easily report and analyze data.

How to use INTDAS

INTDAS is available at the Florida Transit Information System website, and can be easily found by doing a web search for “INTDAS,” or visiting the link in the Sources for this article. The main webpage gives you an overview of the system’s background and capabilities, which will be helpful to read before using the system.

To access the web version of the system, click on the

button that says “Enter INTDAS Web Version” in the upper left sidebar of the main page. This will take you to a login screen; the first time you visit the site, you will have to request access by clicking the “Access Request Form” hyperlink. Clicking this will take you to a disclosure agreement and then to a registration form where you enter your business and professional information. After registering, you will receive an email with your unique system-generated password giving you full access to the system.

At the login page, select the “Rural INTDAS” bubble and enter the password to gain access. Once inside the system,

Data from the Rural NTD is readily available for download from the National RTAP Resource Library (<http://www.nationalrtap.org/Resource-Library>). Search for “Rural NTD” at the Library webpage. This allows you to download all RNTD data from 2006 through 2012 in Microsoft Excel format, if you would like it in Excel for your own use.

you'll see a box in the upper-left hand corner containing all primary recipients of FTA Section 5311 funds, which are mainly state transportation agencies. There are also filters above this box for years of available data and for states and Indian tribes.

If you select Kansas Department of Transportation, the box below it will populate with all transit agencies receiving funding from KDOT. You can choose your own system by clicking on the lower left hand box, or you can select multiple systems by holding the control key while clicking and/or a consecutive range of providers by holding the shift key while clicking. The "Selected Subrecipients" group holds your selected providers, and you can save any group or individual provider by hitting the "Save" button above the lower-right box and naming your group, which will appear in the box in the upper-right hand corner.

Once you've selected providers, you have three options. The first is "View NTD Forms," which gives you direct access to the information given to FTA as a part of reporting requirements for that provider.

The next is "View Standard Reports," which gives you either a history of the provider's statistics over the years, or a comparison of that provider to other providers in the group.

The third is "Select Variables," which allows you to create your own tables to compare among providers in a given group.

Once you have tabulated data in INTDAS, it can be exported for use in reports, memos, or for further analysis.

Conclusion

If you are looking for an easy way to access and create simple reports of rural transit data, look no further than INTDAS. Using this service saves you valuable time that would be spent downloading, joining, and manipulating data in Excel or other spreadsheet software. By exploring the capabilities of INTDAS, you can easily broaden the capabilities of your transit service to plan and monitor performance.

For more information on INTDAS and its functions, visit <http://www.ftis.org/intdas.html> or web search "INTDAS" and click on "INTDAS Tutorials." A suite of video tutorials are accessible by clicking the button below the "Enter Web Version" on the main page left sidebar, or the "View Tutorial" button in the lower-left hand corner, if you are already logged in. Enjoy exploring!

Reprinted from the July 2015 issue of the *Kansas TransReporter*, a publication of the Kansas Rural Transit Assistance Program (RTAP) at the Kansas University Transportation Center.

Sources

- Florida Transit Information System, "About INTDAS." 2015. Accessed at <http://www.ftis.org/intdas.html>
- Gan, Albert. E-mail Interview, April 11, 2015.