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# The National Travel & Tourism Office



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## United States Arrivals & Air Traffic Data Programs or Administrative Data/Secondary Data

Developed by:  
National Travel and Tourism Office  
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Industry & Analysis

# *USA International Arrivals*

- To report arrivals to the USA, the NTTO follows the UNWTO definition of an international visitor based upon the (UNWTO) ***International Recommendations for Tourism Statistics*** report.
- This report's purpose is to provide a common reference framework for countries to use in the compilation of tourism statistics for all countries.
- No other international air traffic, or international flight database can provide this level of detail and in fact over counts visitors and in fact over counts visitors.



# *I-94 Arrival Record*

- Monthly Department of Homeland Security (DHS) file of non-immigrant overseas travelers to U.S.
- Based upon Passport data and Visa, Electronic System for Travel Authorization and other DHS data bases to create a record of visitors.
- Non-U.S. Citizens arrival records processed while entering the country based upon residency. Provides a count of arrivals to the USA. (> 1day, less than 365)
- Includes: country of residency, citizenship, arrival port, first address in U.S., mode of transport to enter the USA, gender, age, processed for selected visa types (B, E, F, I, M, GB, GT, WB, WT) of the over 200 visa types available.



## *NTTO only Selects I-94 Records Bearing Certain Visa Types*

- B-1 Visa Holders-Business
- B-2 Visa Holders-Pleasure
- CP
- CPL
- E-1 Visa Holders-Treaty Trader
- E-2 Visa Holders-Treaty Investor
- F-1 Visa Holders-Students
- F-2 Visa Holders-Family Members of Students
- I & I1 Visa Holders-Foreign Information Media
- M-1 Visa Holders-Vocational Students
- M-2 Visa Holders-Family Members of Vocational Students
- SBP
- GB
- GT
- GMB Guam Visa Waiver-Business
- GMT Guam Visa Waiver-Tourist
- WB Visa Waiver-Business
- WT Visa Waiver-Pleasure



# *I-94 Automation Issues*

- For the last 3+ years, it has caused a growing number of problems that hinder us from providing quality and timely international arrivals data
- DHS started the I-94 automation in 2013 and early on we had issues with transit passengers being counted as visitors and no way to track visits to one night or longer
- In 2014, the NTTD moved to follow the UNWTO definition of one or more nights as data quality to track departures increased dramatically.
- In late 2014, and 2015 to present, problems started with the loss of country of residency for selected Visa Waiver Program countries due to Kiosks and other entry processing technology
- A COC = COR fix was developed for missing COR
- But, other problems also started to occur



# I-94 Automation Issues (Con't)

Year	# of records missing COR	Lowest monthly share of missing records	Highest monthly share of missing records	Year end average share of missing COR records
2015	7,071,000	3.2% (Jan)	13.2% (Feb)	8.5%
2016	3,130,000 *	2.8% (Sept)	6.8% (June)	5.3% *

\* 2016 collections only through September 2016

## Other Data Quality Issues:

- Missing mode of transport data
- Late records for Guam & Saipan
- Issue of missing & unknown airport & country codes
- Systems improvements on the border caused multiple counts from residents of Canada who used foreign documents to enter USA
- Timeliness in getting monthly data files and files coming to us with wrong month, or control total does not match records reported
- APC & Mobile APPS not collecting COR temporarily
- Cross coding of countries – China/Hong Kong and Turkey & Turkmenistan
- Timeliness of response to monthly questions we find from data processing
- Time required to re-run, review, approve and release. Cost have increase 27% each year for last 2 years with no additional resources from ITA to pay for it
- Loss of confidence by industry in data and increased complaints from clients
- Impact on balance of trade data



## *Reporting International Arrivals Data*

- NTTO reports monthly total non-resident arrivals on its website for selected world regions and for Mexico and Canada using data from their respective countries
- Monthly, quarterly, or annual report subscriptions available on international arrivals
- Annually, we report the top 50 arrival markets and regional totals. Plus, the arrivals data is also used on the 25 plus market profiles on the NTTO website
- Other reports are also available for a fee



# APIS (I-92) International Air Traffic Statistics Program

- Monthly Department of Homeland Security (DHS) database of international air traffic to and from the U.S.
- Required from all airlines flying to and from the U.S.
- Reporting of air passengers based upon the Advance Passenger Information System's (APIS) data base from airline manifests
- Includes: number of passengers, flag of carrier, schedule or charter, U.S. citizen or non-citizen, country traffic, and airport traffic counts – U.S. & foreign airports
- Only source for U.S. citizen/resident international travel estimate of the number of total air travelers departing the country
- Although, U.S. estimates of outbound not as well controlled as the inbound data, automated in July 2010 and data quality and timeliness have improved until receipt of November 2016 air traffic file
- Used to weight the U.S. outbound respondents collected from the Survey of International Air Travelers to enable the NTTO to report 30-40 countries visited by U.S. travelers going overseas





## *Reporting U.S. Outbound Data*

- NTTO reports monthly total air traffic & U.S. citizen departures on its website for selected world regions and for Mexico and Canada
- Monthly, quarterly, or annual report subscriptions available on air traffic
- Only annual estimates of total U.S. outbound are available & the NTTO posts 10 free reports to the website.
- Other reports are also available for a fee



# Comparison of I-94 to APIS

## Differences between the APIS and I-94 records (after processing by NTTO/CIC):

	APIS	I-94
<b>Record type</b>	Flight (individual airline flights, a count of the number of passengers on a flight)	Passenger (individual records)
<b>Origin &amp; Destination (Arrivals)</b>	From last foreign airport to first U.S. airport and country and regional summaries are available	From country of origin (residency) to U.S. port of entry; first intended state when indicated
<b>Mode</b>	Air only	Air, sea and land
<b>Visa types</b>	Immigrants Non-immigrants (all 200 visa types, both visitor (13) and non-visitors lumped together) with no way to pull out any subset by visa type. Also includes U.S. citizens, but they are identified.	Non-immigrant Visitors (13 specific visa types) The NTTO excludes the nearly 190 visa types that the UNWTO recommends not be counted as an international visitor
<b>Country of Traveler</b>	Citizenship	Residency
<b>Correlation</b>	All travelers	~80% of APIS alien air arrivals when compared to I-94 definition
<b>Differences/Issues</b>	Immigrants – volume change; Non-immigrant non-visitor volume changes (the 200+ less 13 visitor types) Missing flight records	Missing passenger records



# USA Travel Statistics Issues

**Issue: Land border entry by overseas visitors to the USA.**

Description: Overseas travelers entering the USA increased from virtually none to about 6% over the past decade. For many Asian countries, the proportion exceeded well over ten percent. The number and proportion peaked in 2012. The bulk of these travelers came over the northern border. Only 20,000 or so come over the southern border. The number and proportion has since lowered. Is Canada and Mexico seeing this?

Problem: This is the opposite of the fly/fly/fly issue above. Is there multiple counting when a traveler from China flies into Vancouver, takes a bus to Seattle via Blaine, Washington POE, and returns to Canada to fly back out of Vancouver airport? Similar for Mexico. How about when a USA resident drives to Canada, goes west by re-entering the USA, and then re-enters Canada?

Country: USA/Canada/Mexico

**Issue: Travel by Legal Permanent Residents (LPRs)**

Description: U.S. Department of State estimates there are 15 million legal permanent residents (non-citizens) in the USA, and another 10 million or so persons on the waiting list, many of whom are presumed to be residing in the USA. That's a sizable 8% or so proportion of the population, and if they have a higher propensity for overseas travel, means they have an even higher proportion of U.S. outbound traveler volume.

Problem: Their inclusion in the SIAT is not necessarily an issue, although it may distort some interpretation of results in terms of destination popularity and trip purpose. But these travelers, upon returning to the USA are counted as "alien" (non-citizen) in the APIS dataset of foreign port of departure to USA port of entry.

Country: USA/all countries

**Issue: Foreign Students in the USA**

Description: There are more than one million foreign students in USA universities. Top origin countries are China (350K), India (150K), Saudi Arabia, and South Korea. Brazil is five or sixth.

Problem: USA counts these persons as visitors, not travelers, against UNWTO recommendations. A million students traveling to and from the home country to visit friends and relatives could sum to a lot of trips, and for the top student origin countries, a sizable proportion of "visitors."

Country: USA/all countries

**Issue: BEA travel export/import revised definition**

Description: In June 2014, DOC/BEA released revised travel exports/imports based on a new definition of "travel export/import" and with revisions back to 1999. The changes added to "travel" export/imports spending by students (yes, including tuition), medical and seasonal/migrant workers.

Problem: 22% and growing share of USA travel exports are from these changes. Currently this category is growing at 10%, while the traditional definition of "travel receipts (in country spending) is flat.

Country: USA/all countries



## USA Visitor Arrivals/Departures/Statistical Issues

- **Issue: Drive/Fly Travelers**

- Description: Statistics Canada travel mode definition is based on mode used to clear Canada customs. There have always been travelers who drove across the border to fly out of U.S. airports. This phenomenon is reported to have increased significantly over the past few years. The Conference Board of Canada reported an estimate of 4 million a few years ago. The 2013 redo of the S.C. questionnaire got at this issue specifically, but the level from 2013 was much lower. Perhaps exchange rate and low-cost changed travel patterns.
- Problem: Air proportion are underestimated for long-haul drive/fly destinations such as Florida. For those traveling on to other foreign destinations, they are counted in USA outbound and returning inbound in the APIS air traveler dataset and thus distorts the APIS counts of “alien” arrivals.
- Country: Canada/USA
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- **Issue: Fly/Fly Travelers**

- Description: A few years ago, NTTO heard from our Customs and Border Protection agency that there was a substantial level of Mexico travelers who were flying through USA airports only to go to another Mexico airport. Either the flight options or airfare were better. This could be true of Canada as well.
- Problem: Distorts the APIS air traveler count. Distorts the USA visitor count only if CBP properly handles passengers who are only transiting through a USA airport.
- Country: Mexico/USA/Canada
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- **Issue: Fly/Fly/Fly Travelers**

- Description: If an Australian flies into San Francisco, clears customs, flies to Vancouver, clears customs, flies to Alaska, clears customs, then does it all again in reverse. How many times does Statistics Canada and USA CBP/NTTO count them.
- Problem: A potential to some extent of double-counting travelers.
- Country: USA/Canada/Mexico
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- **Issue: Country of Residence (COR) versus Country of Citizenship (COC)**

- Description: UNWTO recommends counting international travelers based on residence. All three countries do this. The USA visitor count source, DHS CBP I-94 dataset, began losing residence field beginning end of 2013 for some countries and from some parts of their system of databases. Thus only a portion of travelers.
- Problem: Visitor counts overall and especially for a few countries early in the passport kiosk program were drastically not counted based on residence. NTTO had to substitute citizenship for residence when they were available. Issue has subsided throughout 2015 and 2016.
- Country: USA/all overseas countries



## *Potential for Data-Sharing & Collaboration*

- Currently, the NTTO sells the I-94/APIS & SIAT data
- ITA management requires we sell it help pay for the cost of the program and our budget is adjusted accordingly
- We do have the ability to develop Joint Project Agreements or MOU's
- We are facing a law suit that may prevent us from selling data in the future (FOIA)
- We are also facing a downsizing of the U.S. government, so finding ways to do more with less will probably be our operating model