



"NSF's FastLane (1950-2012): Lessons in Human-Centered Computing?"

By Thomas J. Misa

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FastLane is the "central nervous system" for the National Science Foundation, which relies on it to manage \$7 billion in research funding. FastLane, developed in the 1990s and made mandatory in October 2000, transformed NSF from a paper-based organization to a computer-centered one. The Charles Babbage Institute has recently completed the first full-scale assessment of FastLane. We conducted more than 800 interviews with NSF staff, principal investigators, sponsored research staff, and administrators at 29 universities across the U.S. --- sampling large research universities, historically black colleges, and universities in the EPSCoR states. Our work places FastLane into the agency's history of research policies, peer review, information management, and software development. Our book-length study aims to identify lessons for software engineering, IT managers, federal agencies, and human-centered computing.

Thomas J. Misa directs the Charles Babbage Institute at the University of Minnesota, where he is a faculty member in the Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering and in the Program for the

History of Science, Technology, and Medicine. His recent books include *Gender Codes: Why Women Are Leaving Computing* (Wiley 2010) and *Digital State: The Story of Minnesota's Computing Industry* (Minnesota 2013).