

From FX-Net to MetWise Net: Supplying Academia with a Real-Time AWIPS Emulator

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FX-Net was developed and is maintained by the NOAA Earth System Research Laboratory (ESRL) Global Systems Division (GSD) in Boulder, CO. In 2001, the FX-Net program grew out of a need to support National Weather Service (NWS) Incident Meteorologists (IMETs) with a meteorological PC workstation that could provide access to the basic display capability of an Advanced Weather Interactive Processing System (AWIPS) workstation via the Internet. The goal was to provide IMETs onsite forecasting at wildfires and a limited response to HAZMAT incidents with FX-Net.

As FX-Net popularity grew within the NWS, other potential users found out about the software and ESRL/GSD provided limited accessibility to the software and data servers for certain groups. Because the primary mission of ESRL/GSD's FX-Net program is to provide FX-Net services to IMETs, they could not efficiently support other users outside of NOAA. The solution to provide FX-Net to all users developed into a government-commercial partnership between NOAA and ENSCO, Inc. resulting in MetWise Net.

The availability of MetWise Net spurred interest in numerous disciplines in the atmospheric sciences community – one of them being academia. The availability of a tool that emulated AWIPS could provide students preparing for careers in operational meteorology the opportunity to work with the actual technology they will find in government weather offices as well as private industry.