

Proposed 2025 Research Topic

Specialized Apps, Software, and Information Services 2.0

Industry Background

The Equipment Leasing & Finance Foundation publishes research for and about the nearly \$1 trillion equipment finance sector. Equipment leasing and financing companies represent important sources of finance in the U.S. economy, contributing to capital formation and providing additional critical tools that enable all types and sizes of commercial businesses to acquire the equipment they need to conduct their business operations.

Purpose of the Study

This study, an update of the [Specialized Apps, Software, and Information Services report](#) published in 2023, aims to serve as a modernized, tactical guide that enables lenders and lessors to leverage the latest in AI-driven tools and specialized Fintech solutions to streamline their digital transformation efforts. This '2.0' version will provide an updated landscape of application and software services that can be integrated to enhance credit, risk, and operational processes.

The study will incorporate recent shifts in the Fintech space, including AI advancements and the consolidation of service providers, to equip lenders with actionable insights into the most current and effective digital tools available. This study will also examine what's happened with the services described in the original study; have they been improved, attracted new competing providers, have the providers become more established, and/or disappeared, – and what new services/technologies have been developed since the original study. This study is not meant to address products and services that are already mainstream in our industry, i.e. general IT systems and credit data providers (except to the extent mainstream providers are offering new innovative products and services).

Problem Statement

Given recent advancements in AI and shifts in the Fintech landscape, including the consolidation of many providers, this paper will examine how these changes impact the specialized tools available to lenders and lessors. **The study shall include** an overview of emerging and updated technologies provided by new and existing Service Providers including:

- Advancements in electronic contracts, fraud detection, data collection, organization, and quality assurance
- How Service Providers ensure interoperability and integration in a shifting market
- Provide criteria used to evaluate applications and software in this study including Equipment Finance applicability, customer base, maturity of technology, age of provider, and geographic factors (U.S.-based vs. International)
- Examination of how new and innovative a service/technology was, vs. how mature and stable the provider was. While it is not a requirement that these be the primary dimensions of evaluation. (If the researcher proposes different primary dimensions, they should be made clear in the proposal).

**This is not an AI study but will include AI providers for real-world problems for the equipment Finance industry.*

Suggested Researcher Resources

The Foundation and its affiliated organization, the Equipment Leasing and Finance Association (ELFA), provide a variety of resources that are relevant to this study, including:

- [The Equipment Leasing & Finance Industry Horizon Report](#)
- [Specialized Apps, Software, and Information Services for the Equipment Leasing & Finance Industry](#) (2023)
- [Going Digital](#) (2019)
- [The Archives of Annual State of the Equipment Finance Industry Reports \(SEFI\)](#)
- [Monthly Leasing and Finance Index \(MLFI-25\)](#)
- MLFI-25 & Beige Book Quarterly Review
- The Foundation [Research Library](#) of Reports.

Required Deliverables

The Foundation expects that the final study will be delivered in no more than five months from the contract date. Specifics include:

1. All deliverables should be written for the lay reader and should be well-written.
2. Monthly progress reports should be submitted via email to the Foundation's Executive Director.
3. The delivery of the final Research Study will be selected by the researcher and subsequently approved by the Research Committee. Potential delivery vehicles include but are not limited to:
 - A formal, in-depth study with an estimated page count of 60 pages.
 - An informal, short-form study that features valuable insights but with slightly less rigor than a formal study. The page count for this option is 25-30 pages.
 - An executive summary-styled study that includes related charts and graphs with an estimated page count of 5-10 pages.
 - A webinar whose prepared remarks can be transcribed, and relevant charts and graphs can be turned into an executive summary-style study. The prepared remarks would be submitted to the Foundation's Executive Director before conducting the Webinar.
 - A video whose outline and script would be submitted to the Foundation's Executive Director for approval before commencing the videography.
4. The final Research Study should be provided in Microsoft Word and PDF versions. Charts and graphs should be provided in Excel or PowerPoint and should include source data. See our Report Guidelines for more details.
5. Upon request by the Foundation, you shall be available to present findings live and/or via web seminar or podcast.

Response Details

Submit your proposal to Kelli Nienaber, Executive Director of the Foundation, at knienaber@leasefoundation.org.

Information Required:

1. Researcher (or Firm's) history and background
2. Experience/knowledge with lease finance and clean energy research

3. Experience with nonprofit associations
4. Overview of the study design
5. Credentials and qualifications of staff to be assigned the project
6. References/client list, with written permission to contact
7. Description of similar studies performed by the researcher
8. If appropriate, provide a description of how staff time and other costs are billed

Timeline and Contract Terms

- Proposals are due by the first of the month – contact the Foundation for specific dates.
- Proposal selection generally occurs within 30 days. The review committee meets on the third Wednesday of each month.
- For further information regarding contract terms, see our [Research Grant Guidelines](#).

Selection Criteria

The Equipment Leasing & Finance Foundation is an equal opportunity employer, and submissions are considered without regard to the age, religion, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, marital or veteran status, political affiliation—or any other classification protected by law—of the author. The Foundation encourages the diversity of perspectives and experiences that result in a holistic view of the ever-evolving challenges and opportunities that face the equipment finance industry. As such, all interested researchers are welcomed and encouraged to submit their proposal for consideration.

The proposal should be based on original research of a relevant topic with a forward-looking lens, benefit a major segment of the equipment finance industry, and include a detailed methodology for the proposed research project. The Foundation’s Research Committee evaluates all proposals on the following criteria:

1. Quality of the proposed study design
2. Qualifications of the individuals who will perform the work
3. Knowledge of the equipment finance industry
4. Experience in similar assignments
5. Resources/capacity to perform the required work
6. Experience with associations
7. Price
8. References
9. Intangibles

For additional information on the grant process visit: www.leasefoundation.org/grants

ABOUT THE FOUNDATION

The Equipment Leasing & Finance Foundation is a 501c3 non-profit organization that propels the equipment finance sector—and its people—forward through industry-specific knowledge, intelligence, and student talent development programs that contribute to industry innovation, individual careers, and the advancement of the equipment leasing and finance industry. The Foundation is funded through charitable individual and corporate donations.

Foundation Operating Budget: \$900,000 for fiscal year ending December 31.

IRS Classification – 501c3

Staff – 3

Website: www.leasefoundation.org

Contacts

Equipment Leasing & Finance Foundation

1625 Eye Street NW, Suite 850

Washington, DC 20006

PH: 202.238.3400

FX: 202.238.3401

foundation@leasefoundation.org

Kelli Jones Nienaber

Executive Director

knienaber@leasefoundation.org

(202) 238-3429

Stephanie Fisher

Director of Programs

sfisher@leasefoundation.org

(202) 238-3417