

**Transportation Research Board of the National Academies
Research and Education Section Mid-Year Meeting
TRB Committees: Conduct of Research; Transportation Education and Training;
Technology Transfer; and Library & Information Science for Transportation.
Beckman Center, Irvine, California
August 25, 2004 – August 27, 2004**

*Library and Information Science for Transportation
ABG40 Committee Meeting
Thursday, August 26, 2004
8:30am-2:30pm
Crystal Cove Room, Beckman Center, Irvine, CA*

Committee Members in attendance: Matthew Barrett, Jerry Baldwin, Nelda Bravo, William (Bill) Carr, Joyce Koeneman, Nina McLawhorn, and Sandra Tucker.

Friends of the Committee in attendance: Lyn Long, John Munro, Tom Palmerlee (via speakerphone), Lisa Pogue, and Barbara Post.

1. Tucker called the meeting to order at 8:35am.
2. The Committee reviewed the minutes from its Annual Meeting, held January 12, 2004 in Washington, D.C. Baldwin moved for approval. The minutes were approved unanimously.
3. 2005 Mid Year Meeting - Section Vice-Chair Carr asked the Committee to comment on the format of this year's mid-year meeting as compared to last year's meeting in Portland, Oregon. The Committee appreciated additional time given to committees this year.
4. Discussion of Plans for 2005 Annual Meeting – McLawhorn asked Munro if it is possible to use the FTA/USDOT/FHWA strategic plan to bring attention to our issues. Strategic plan should include transportation information management. Munro replied that Deb Elston would likely consider such a request part of her mission. FHWA research reports get out to libraries more often than policy studies. NASA benchmarking study provides a good example of a state of the art tracking system.

Tucker stated that there are articles in committee package for committee to review as homework.

Palmerlee joined the meeting via speakerphone. J. Munro continued: how we manage and communicate information is very important to the CMP process. S. Tucker stated that the Committee would be very interested in the NASA benchmarking study. Munro noted that research organizations generally do not care how long research sits

undistributed - however, once it's out, it moves rapidly. Tucker added that some research just sits while others are clamoring for it and that this is part of the gray literature/fugitive publications issue. Munro agreed that this is a significant problem. Koeneman added that NHTSA is developing a content management system using Oracle. Munro added that he has a thirty-three page report, and if it's OK, he will release it to the Committee. The National Institute of Cancer uses analysis and marketing to target their publications and research.

Carr stated that it is a quality issue with information. He asked if TRB has an appropriate role in information quality or policing poor research. Post stated that web publishing doesn't go through a selection process. Libraries select materials from authoritative sources, but ultimately it's up to the user to decide quality. Bravo stated that when a hypothesis is not confirmed, it is not always published but probably should be as it allows others to avoid the same path.

McLawhorn asked how we define quality. It might be useful to define the term, with a role for TRB to educate users on how to evaluate quality (this being more of an educational rather than policing role).

Carr asked: How would we guide the average user regarding research quality issues? Munro added that it is the librarians' role to evaluate information. Research should go through a merit, peer and scientific review process. Bravo asked Munro if he has looked at the Dept. of Agriculture as it is akin to highways for research and user group examples. Carr suggested that information quality would be a good topic for an annual meeting presentation. The presentation could be aimed at users in a broader sense and investigate how do information providers serve them and educate them on the value of good information.

McLawhorn asked that we focus on customers, that we educate users on how to be a better help to themselves. She noted that it is important to think of the end user: they want packaged information. Palmerlee volunteered to assist with the annual meeting program planning for this topic.

Koeneman added that the committee is looking at search engines as a presentation at TRB, and at differences between simple searching and guided searches with metadata. Post stated that such a topic is in the interest of our customers since most do not understand how search engines work. Koeneman asked Palmerlee about parameters for including search engine vendors. Palmerlee replied that it is okay as long as discussion is limited to industry direction and does not include specific product marketing.

Tucker reiterated that we are raising awareness of what we can contribute, both strategically and directly to our customers. Carr asked if there is a survey of transportation libraries. Post replied that there is a recent survey of University Transportation Research Centers and a survey to identify other significant transportation collections. It is an issue for the Scoping Study for National Transportation Information

Management. Carr stated that a matrix of who has what for users would be helpful. Post replied that looking at holdings was part of the background for the Scoping Study.

Carr suggested that, since this is the first year in this particular structure, we defer decision on format for next year's mid-year meeting until tomorrow. The LIST Committee would probably wish to compare the experiences of all committees between this year and last before finalizing plans. He also asked the Committee to think about / investigate big picture themes/topics for next year's meeting.

McLawhorn suggested that strategic resources of the future will be information and education in the globalized environment. She added that she would like to see it on the agenda next year. Koeneman asked for repeated emphasis on transportation -- not mode specific, but broader in perspective. Carr stated that there is a better interrelationship with this group of committees, but we need a niche in the program to communicate with others.

Tucker asked Palmerlee about the confidentiality of transportation information as a subject. Palmerlee replied that the topic hasn't been picked up yet.

10:18am-10:38am break

Koeneman reported latest information about DOT and FAA library downsizing and their discarding of materials. She noted that there is a great deal of external concern over these collections. For example, the TRB History Committee has invited Phyllis Bell to attend their annual meeting to discuss status of the DOT library. She has neither confirmed nor declined attendance at this point.

Post reminded that Committee that Nan Humphries would be phoning in at 11:30am to discuss that National Transportation Information Management Study, which is to be prepared under Federal Advisory Committee Act regulations.

The Transportation Research Thesaurus (TRT) was raised as an issue. Who is adding terms? As a committee can we nominate terms to include? Who is going to pay for on-going maintenance? Who maintains the official version? Who owns it?

Post replied that TCRP/NCHRP owns it. It is currently maintained in the TRIS budget with a small contract to maintain it. It is currently on TRB's website and available for download, though it is not searchable via the web. The goal was to have it searchable on web, though this has not occurred due to a lack of funding. According to Post, the National Transportation Library (NTL) was to take it over, hasn't happened yet.

Koeneman stated that NTL believes the TRT is an important product for the community and fits the NTL mission appropriately. NTL has purchased software to manage it, but has had some technical difficulties with the project. NTL staff are working toward creating a XML file to put the TRT on the web. The project remains unfinished.

Carr agreed that it legitimately belongs with the NTL although there are some questions about the future of NTL. Post stated that the TRT can continue on as is for a couple more years, not an ideal solution, but a workable one. Currently, TRT contractor Michael Klieber continues to work on the TRT, doing more than he's actually paid to do given the fact that its budget is flat at TRB.

McLawhorn asked about improving access to the TRTs end users through a 20-7 project, two year project with a database product at its conclusion.

Nan Humphries joined the meeting via conference call. Humphries stated that the National Transportation Information Management Study went to the head of National Academies today. It is a "big picture" project, looking at funding and core services. Humphries noted that transportation information probably needs funding similar to that provided on a national level to the National Library of Medicine (see page 32 of the Scoping Study for a list). There is definitely a need to identify core items needed for a functioning national system as well as the categories of items.

The Committee was asked to provide input on the following questions: What are the core services that need to be included in a national transportation library information management system? What are the major gaps in transportation information services today? If funding were available, what types of services would yield the biggest payoff? What are possible funding mechanisms for sustaining core transportation information services?

Committee members noted the need to look at librarian needs and user needs, long term and short term. Coordination should make it a magnet for other organizations to participate. The envisioned system should be a focal point for standards, cataloging and digital library initiatives. Core services are at a strategic level. Identification of resources needed. Preservation, access for the end user are of importance. Education of workers using standards and training of end users in how to use information are also of importance.

As Baldwin added, "We can't disseminate ourselves out of overload". There is a need for identification of information that can be pushed to users, leading towards both overall marketing and partnership building. A system of depositories with a national repository for historical and current information, digital and in print, needs be initiated; it has to have an archival aspect as well as serving as a national clearinghouse for materials. Collection development policies need to be coordinated.

Major gaps identified by Committee members: Librarians and users today can often identify items that they need but can't always get those resources. There are lots of uncataloged materials. It is difficult to find out about and collect conference proceedings. Access to international data and reports is difficult. There is a general lack of understanding and basic awareness by transportation decision-makers regarding the value of information and information: why should it be invested in? High level managers and CEOs need a well thought-out strategic approach towards educating others on the value

of information; they need a strategic way to talk about the issues. There is a need to professionalize library staff, particularly at the State Dept. of Transportation level.

If funding were available, we would want networking between existing facilities as well as improved sources. Committee members noted a halo effect provided by the NTL which supports local efforts, more cataloging, digitization, communications resources and marketing services as economic payoff, lives saved, reduced legal exposure, etc. Other needs: more professional development, scholarships for library schools, support for university libraries to serve community through Inter-Library Loans with fees waived, support for regional networks.

The Committee discussed funding issues under Title 1, 2, and 5, TEA reauthorization and other models we can look to. FTA's policy on funding Public Art for Transit was suggested as one model to examine. Reauthorization bills on AMTRAK, MagLev/High Speed Rail and other bills beyond TEA should also be looked at.

Lunch break 12:40pm-1:45pm. Lisa Pogue and Lyn Long joined as friends of the committee.

The Committee discussed services with high returns that could be provided to customers. Lyn Long suggested formalizing a web "sources of information in transportation": list the top six sites by topic, survey where subject matter experts go and publish the results.

McLawhorn suggested we look at issues of cross-discipline, cross-group information and building bridges with other communities, push technologies, input into pooled fund projects. We should target groups like AASHTO. The Scoping Study should be shopped; create a PowerPoint presentation, need to make community aware of our issues and determine how we fit into the strategic plans of the organizations we serve.

Homework assigned to the Committee by Tucker: read three articles for discussion at next morning's committee meeting.

Library and Information Science Committee Meeting

Friday, August 27, 2004

8:30am-9:45am

The Committee discussed the following three articles:

Taxonomy's not just design, it's an art. Joab Jackson. 2/9/04. Government Computer News. <http://www.gcn.com>

The twilight of the information middlemen. James Fallows. May 16, 2004. New York Times. <http://www.nytimes.com>

Thirteen way of looking at...digital preservation. Brian Lavoie and Lorcan Dempsey. Vol. 10, N. 7/8. D-Lib Magazine. <http://www.dlib.org>

