

Minutes
Transportation Research Board
Committee on Library and Information Science for Transportation (ABG40)
TRB Annual Meeting 2005
Monday, January 10, 2005
Hilton Washington

Submitted by Dan Krummes, Committee Secretary,
and recorded by Seyem Petrites

Committee Members in attendance: Sandy Tucker (Chair), Jerry Baldwin, Matthew Barrett, Nelda Bravo, William Carr, Barbara Harder, Kathryn Harrington-Hughes, Joyce Koeneman, Wes Lum, Arlene Mathison, Nina McLawhorn, Richard McReynolds, Bonnie Osif, Chris Pringle, Ann Sweeney, and Ken Winter.

Friends of the Committee in attendance: Marcia Brink, Dustin Brinton-Wilson, Larry Decina, Cara Fitzgerald, Gary Frederick, Roger Garren, Bob Garrett, Maureen Hammer, Neil Hebert, Lyn Long, Carol Paszaman, Lisa Pogue, Michael Kleiber, Seyem Petrites, Michele Regenold, Tracey Schut, Sue Sillick, Jane Watson, and Laura Whyne.

TRB staff in attendance: Jessica Fomalont, Nan Humphrey, Tom Palmerlee and Barbara Post.

1. Sandy Tucker called the meeting to order at 8:00 a.m.
2. Committee members and friends of the Committee briefly introduced themselves.
3. Minutes from the August 2004 meeting were approved.
4. LIST Committee members presenting programs at this Annual Meeting briefly mentioned their presentations:
 - Arlene Mathison: Managing Publications and Data on the Web
 - Joyce Koeneman: Information Access
 - Jerry Baldwin: Communication Patterns of Engineers
5. Tom Palmerlee presented a summary of his Report to Committees. He reported that committees are being encouraged to liaison with other committees. Triennial strategic plans are being promoted for committees. Tom also discussed committee rotations and recruiting new members, noting that more representation from information users is desired. Sandy noted that she will post Tom's report on the Web. (It is available at: http://tti.tamu.edu/shared_documents/tucker/list/palmerlee_rpt_jan_2005.pdf)
6. Marcia Brink (Communications Manager at Center for Transportation Research and Education (CTRE), Iowa State University) and Michele Regenold (Webmaster/Editor at CTRE) introduced themselves and spoke on "Communications-based Approach to Website Information". (See their web site at <http://www.ctre.iastate.edu/index.html>.)

They began with an overview of what constitutes a centralized web publishing group and the availability of full-text documents. A relational database is used to support the information architecture. A searchable web site features centralized web publishing, where all documents are processed, and the emphasis is on providing information. A variety of report types are available, such as research reports, tech transfer summaries, and conference papers. Different formats are used, such as pdf, HTML, and Word, and these have their advantages and disadvantages. They discussed how to provide better assistance to users in finding research. This can be done by having an information architecture that features a logical file structure and consistent navigation. Relational databases are useful in that they can provide detailed information on projects.

7. Nelda Bravo gave an update on the National Transportation Library (NTL), noting that there still is no solid national effort focusing on transportation information. Nelda described what was accomplished in the past year as well as future directions. She reported on the progress of the TLCat union catalog which now has a membership of around 20 libraries. TLCat statistics indicate there are 7,000 to 8,000 users a month. Nelda mentioned the successful "Working Smarter" tutorial. The US DOT search engine is now using Google. Regarding the NTL collection, Nelda noted that there are currently 12,470 digital documents, but collection development efforts are not expanding. Focus is on entering documents from NTIS, university transportation centers, and state agencies. There is only a small amount of money available for scanning documents. TRIS Online staffing has increased. While a demonstration version of the TRT has been mounted on the NTL web site, there are still issues preventing the integration of the TRT with TRIS Online. Joyce Koeneman gave background information on the TRT. She noted that metadata guidelines and a data structure were still in development, and some improvements to TRIS Online are expected. The concept of a trusted digital repository was also briefly mentioned. Nelda also related that the NTL will most likely stay with BTS, and that both will be placed under the umbrella of the new Research and Innovative Technology Administration (RITA).

7. Barbara Post presented an update on the TRB Library, focusing on the TRIS and Research in Progress (RIP) databases. TRIS, with over 609,000 records, is migrating over to a Sequel database environment. All TRIS records have been loaded, data entry interface design is completed, and training and implementation are expected to take place in March. Barbara noted that while TRIS was previously a flat database, it will now be a relational database and will thus offer some new features. Barbara also reported that the PATH Database is no longer funded by the California Dept. of Transportation (Caltrans). The database will not have a Web presence, and no further PATH records will be added to TRIS. Barbara reported that she is looking at additional ways to cover Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) material. Looking at how TRIS can evolve into a more useful product, Barbara noted that TRIS Online has over 19,000 full-text links. Barbara gave an update on the RIP database, noting that there are currently 7,850 records, with 37 states participating in the RIP database. During the past year, there were not many improvements made to RIP. Barbara noted that there are plans to integrate RIP into TRIS, this being an easier task due to the new TRIS relational platform. A primary goal is to provide links from project information to the published reports. Barbara reported that a

better mechanism is also needed to clean up RIP and get completed information disseminated.

8. Discussion followed on the possibility of a new project for the LIST committee which would involve a list of Web-based transportation resources, both domestic and international. Sandy Tucker offered INMAGIC database software at TTI as a possible resource for the project. Larry Decina's International Guide to Highway Transportation Information (2001) was mentioned, with the suggestion that Volume 1 – Highway Transportation Libraries and Information Centers, and Volume 2- Websites, be updated. [see <<http://ntl.bts.gov/DOCS/finalrep.html>>]

Lyn Long spoke about a survey she is conducting of university centers, looking at the most-used web sites. She now wants to survey TRB committee heads and eventually come up with a list of top 10 resources. Discussion then followed on whether a survey should be conducted, or the 2 volumes of Larry's guide be updated.

Joyce Koeneman described how the NTL provides links to digital documents and portal links to Web resources. A discussion followed on how TRIS records only offer static links while the NTL provides dynamic links.

9. Mike Kleiber next presented an update on the Transportation Research Thesaurus (TRT). He started with historical background information on the TRT, beginning with TRT's mission, the need for a standardized vocabulary, and TRT research methodology and efforts. Thespak dBASE is the software used for the TRT, with TRT products including TRIS Conversion, TRT Viewer, and Lookup tables. Over 90,000 terms were reviewed, and these were then converted into 10,000 TRT terms. Mike addressed some of the issues in the current maintenance phase, including how the status of TRIS impacts TRT development. TRIS has significant influence on the TRT, especially since funding for the maintenance phase has been supplied by TRIS. Additional areas that Mike discussed included the need for new viewer technology and thesaurus maintenance software, expansion of TRT records, and efforts directed at training, outreach, and marketing. Integrating the TRT with TRIS remains a primary goal. Securing funding for linking TRT terms to TRIS records is also a goal. Mike also mentioned that the TRT version on the NTL web site refers the user from non-postable terms to usable terms and allows the user to see term relationships.

10. Bonnie Osif spoke on her study looking at the 240 different report series indexed in the International Transport Research Documentation (ITRD) Database and which are included in the TRANSPORT Database. She noted that 50% of the series that were surveyed are not held in the U.S. Issues that remain include: verifying holdings; coordination; and funding availability. Bonnie noted that the primary goal is to make more report series accessible to the U.S. She indicated that input is now needed regarding which direction the effort should proceed. It was suggested that the list be posted on the NTL. Joyce Koeneman suggested that the NTL should take a role in this effort, and support holdings for those libraries in TLCAT.

11. Barbara Harder spoke on the update to the Critical Issues in Transportation 2002 report. She began by stating that the LIST committee was asked by TRB to offer input in forming an update to the Critical Issues statement. While the report identified 14 critical issues, it was suggested that the LIST committee focus on “barriers to innovation” and “current institutional constraints” as primary issues. Nina McLawhorn offered that the LIST committee’s issues should be a stand alone issue of its own. It was suggested that “management of information” might be an appropriate term, as it encompasses issues such as content, reliability, accessibility, and dissemination.

12. Wes Lum led a discussion on program topics for 2006. Suggestions included: Transportation in 2025; Information credibility; What will Google do next? There was some discussion regarding terminology relating to the management of information management. Suggestions included “wisdom enhancement” and “knowledge management”, although concern was expressed regarding the latter, noting that it is linked too closely with the information technology and data management professions. A program featuring a “Future Thinker” speaker was also suggested.

13. Nan Humphrey gave an update on the TRB policy study looking at a future strategy on transportation information management. She noted that the tasks include: defining core services, identifying how they should be provided, and looking for funding options. It is anticipated that the report will be released in Fall 2005.

14. Nina McLawhorn reported that Wisconsin DOT had posted a pooled-fund solicitation for a library project consisting of two major components, 1., providing technical guidance to participating state agencies for cataloguing documents into the Online Computer Library Center (OCLC) and converting them to online format and, 2., encouraging and supporting the development and growth of DOT library information and knowledge networks.

15. The meeting was adjourned at noon.