Bob Cullen:
This TLR’s speakers are Sandy Tucker, Associate Professor Emerita at Texas A&M University and chair of the TRB LIST Transportation Research Thesaurus Committee, and Janet Daly, TRB’s TRIS Indexing Manager. Their presentation is entitled “The Transportation Research Thesaurus: The History and Future of a Transportation Controlled Vocabulary.”
Transportation Research Thesaurus: Past, Present, and Future

Janet Daly, Indexing Manager, TRB
Sandy Tucker, Associate Professor Emerita, Texas A&M University Libraries
Transportation Librarians Roundtable
September 14, 2017
What is the TRT?

The TRT:

- Is a tool to improve the indexing and retrieval of transportation information.
- Provides a common and consistent language between producers and users of transportation information.
- Covers all modes and aspects of transportation.
- Primarily is used to tag records in the Transportation Research Information Services (TRIS) databases.
- Is searchable/browsable at trt.trb.org
Today’s TRT

- 12,125 terms (9591 preferred; 2534 lead-in terms)
- Terms may have definitions, scope notes, related terms
- “Mode-agnostic”—terms can be applied to any mode
- Terms are added on a regular basis to reflect new concepts. Vetted by a subcommittee of transportation library professionals.
TRT Term Arrangement

21 Facets:

A: Transportation  N: Organizations
B: Transportation operations  P: Facilities
C: Management and organization  Q: Vehicles and equipment
D: Communication and control  R: Materials
E: Planning and design  S: Physical phenomena
F: Construction and maintenance  T: Disciplines
G: Testing  U: Mathematics
H: Safety and security  V: Areas and regions
J: Environment  W: Time
K: Economic and social factors  X: Information organization
M: Persons and personal characteristics

Example Term Hierarchy:

Petroleum

- Petroleum Solids
- Petroleum Gases
- Petroleum Liquids

Asphalt  Tar  Natural Gas
Crude Oil
History of the TRT

1993-1996 TRT initially developed


2007-TRB assumes in-house maintenance of TRT. TRT integrated into TRIS. TRT published on Internet

2008-Definitions added for many terms

2016-First comprehensive assessment of the TRT launched
NCHRP Project 20-109
Enhancement of the TRT

Objective
Develop a strategic plan and action plan for enhancing the TRT and ensuring its ongoing value to the transportation community.
NCHRP 20-109
Research Methods

• Develop assessment criteria
• Assess the current TRT against the criteria by reviewing the TRT and interviewing stakeholders
• Identify thesaurus use cases to inform TRT’s future development.
NCHRP 20-109
Draft Findings

Gaps include:
• the lack of a standards-based thesaurus structure that can be easily accessed and shared with others
• limited ability to improve the scope beyond transportation research to address user needs for mode-specific, operational or project terms from the States
• inability to semantically enrich the TRT within its current architecture
• lack of “balance” across facets makes it difficult to browse the TRT to get a sense of the scope.
• lack of mode-based facets.
**Potential**
Future Directions

- New thesaurus management software that will:
  - Support a standards-based thesaurus
  - Improve administrative functions
  - Facilitate use of the TRT by other organizations
  - Eliminate dependence on strict enumerated hierarchical structure
- More transportation-focused terminology
- Communication to inform TRB and the broader community about the TRT
- Improved engagement of transportation experts
YOU can help shape the future TRT!

- How do you use the TRT?
- How would you like to use the TRT?
- What are the obstacles that keep you from using it?
- What controlled vocabularies do you use? Do you have other term lists that you use?

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Thank you for attending!
Join us October 12, 2017:

10 Years of the TLR
Amanda Wilson, Head, National Network Coordinating Office
US National Library of Medicine

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