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Introduction

Project Scope

Research shows that the organizational mission, priorities and user are the most important factors of collection development for transportation libraries.^{3,4} The curation project was undertaken as an initiative to align the collection with our Library Mission: *To provide access to free, high quality technical assistance and training materials dedicated to rural and Tribal transit systems*

This curation project encompassed a research-based, concentrated analysis of all resources in terms of relevance to our users’ unique needs, currency, training focus, and relationship to other documents in the Resource Library.

Project Objectives

There are no national perspectives or standards for retention for technical reports among transportation departments or organizations.^{2,5} This project’s goal was to develop a method for collection management for the National RTAP Resource Library with a primary objectives to design a comprehensive approach to updating resources that we publish. To achieve our goal and objectives, we developed **Removal and Retention (R2) Guidelines (Table I)** and the **FOREST Model (Figure I)**

Format (e.g., technical briefs, webinars)

Oldest

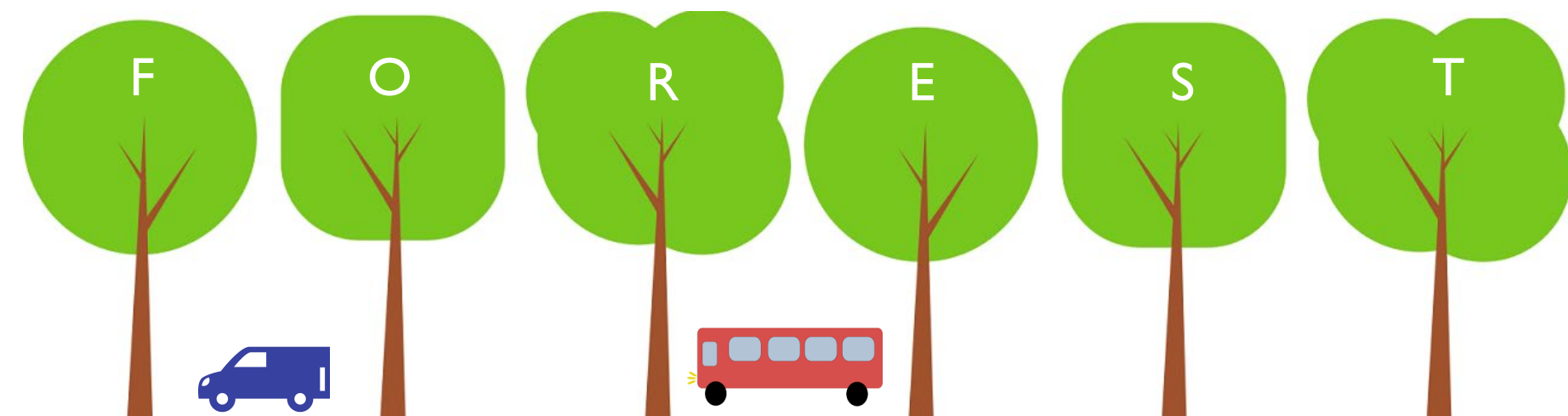
Rapidly changing topics (legislation, technology)

Ease to update

Substantial utilization

Training about a National RTAP product that was updated

Figure I. National RTAP FOREST Model



Methodology

An Excel spreadsheet was created of resources in Resource Share (n=730). A color-coding system was implemented to stratify National RTAP resources, resources slated for removal, and those needing updated links (this category included migrated resources and new versions of existing resources).

Retention criteria included a review of date, utilization and availability of similar resources. An additional subjective review from a potential user perspective was undertaken. See **Table I**. For National RTAP Resources, a list of resources that satisfied multiple **FOREST** criteria was presented to the Review Board.

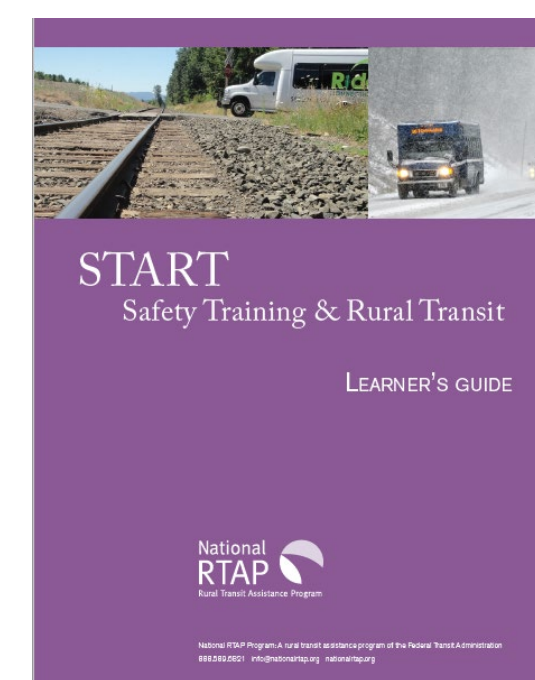


Figure 2. National RTAP Training Module



Figure 3. National RTAP DVD

Table I. Removal and Retention (R2) Guidelines

Remove	Retain
Resources only relevant for a point in time, ⁴ such as newsletters	Guidebooks, toolkits and reports with practical, user-oriented training focus ²
Out of date materials (data, technologies no longer in use)	Resources with long-term applicability ⁴ and older landmark resources
Duplicates and older versions of same or substantially similar resources	New versions or related resources where each adds something distinct
Individual agency brochures, marketing resources	Templates for usable and authoritative industry policies and best practices
Resources no longer online ⁵	Resources with persistent URLs (this requires regular review)
Web sites and web pages, lists of links	Stand-alone research-based technical assistance resources

Outcomes

There were originally over 730 resources in Resource Share in August 2017, and approximately 520 at the completion of the curation project in December 2017.

Chart I shows the application of the FOREST Model to prioritization of National RTAP-published resource updates. Previously, there was no multimodal approach to the update process. Single modality methods, such as looking at dates alone, yielded approximately 80 resources last updated more than 5 years ago. After application of the model, 4 resources correlated with the highest number of modalities (N=4), which indicated that they were priorities for updates. The Review Board were able to easily select priorities for updates using this model.

Utilization data is tracked throughout the year. From July to September 2017, orders of National RTAP products increased from 564 to 746 (**32% increase**), and downloads of National RTAP products increased from 6419 to 15,573 (**145% increase**). The data are shown in **Chart 2**. Comparing the September 2017 data with the average amount of orders and downloads over the previous five months, there was a **149% increase** in orders and downloads.

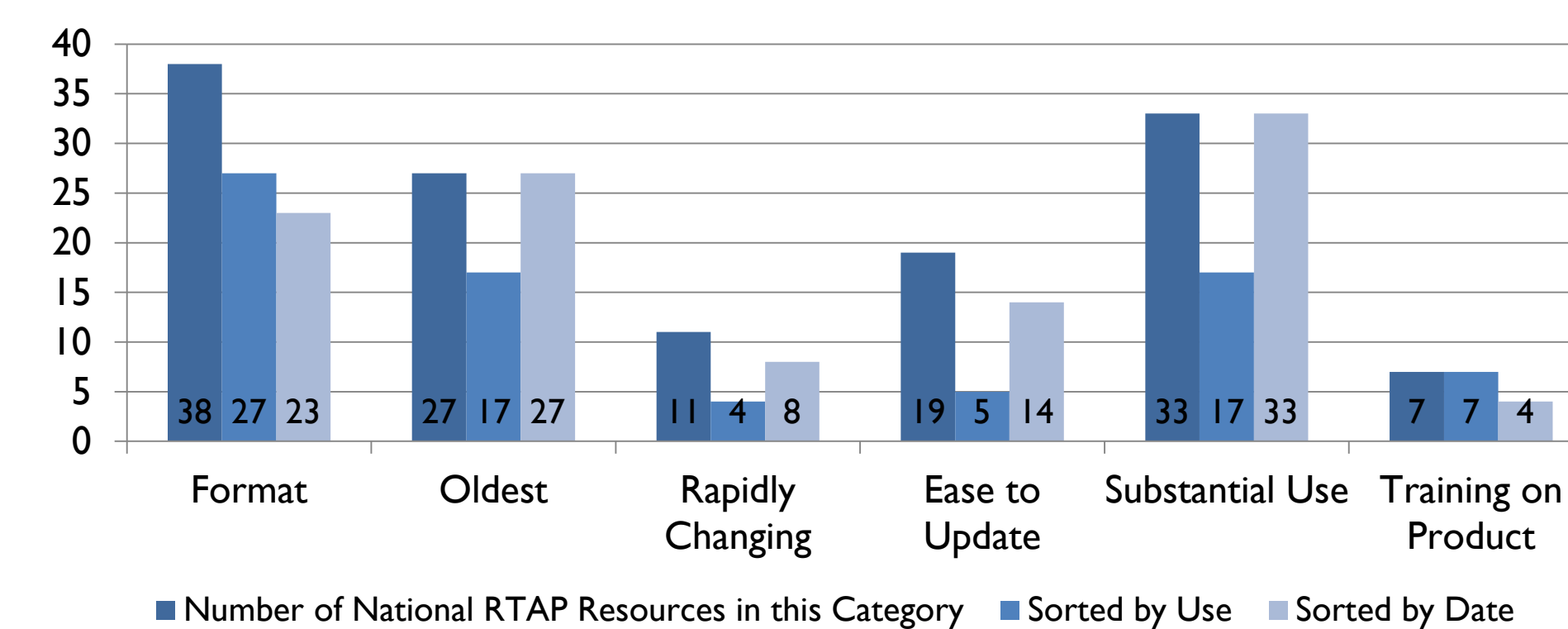


Chart I. Application of the FOREST Model to National RTAP Product Updates

Lessons Learned

- A concentrated “weeding” of a library collection can substantially improve its focus and accessibility, resulting in heightened utilization.
- Some resources may not meet the criteria defined for the library collection, but they may be used elsewhere (topic guides, newsletter, social media, etc.)
- As Harder and Tucker state, “Quality is only one aspect of content.”² Resources that were integral to library users at one time may no longer be of interest or relevant.⁴ There may be cases where it is best to “retire” resources.

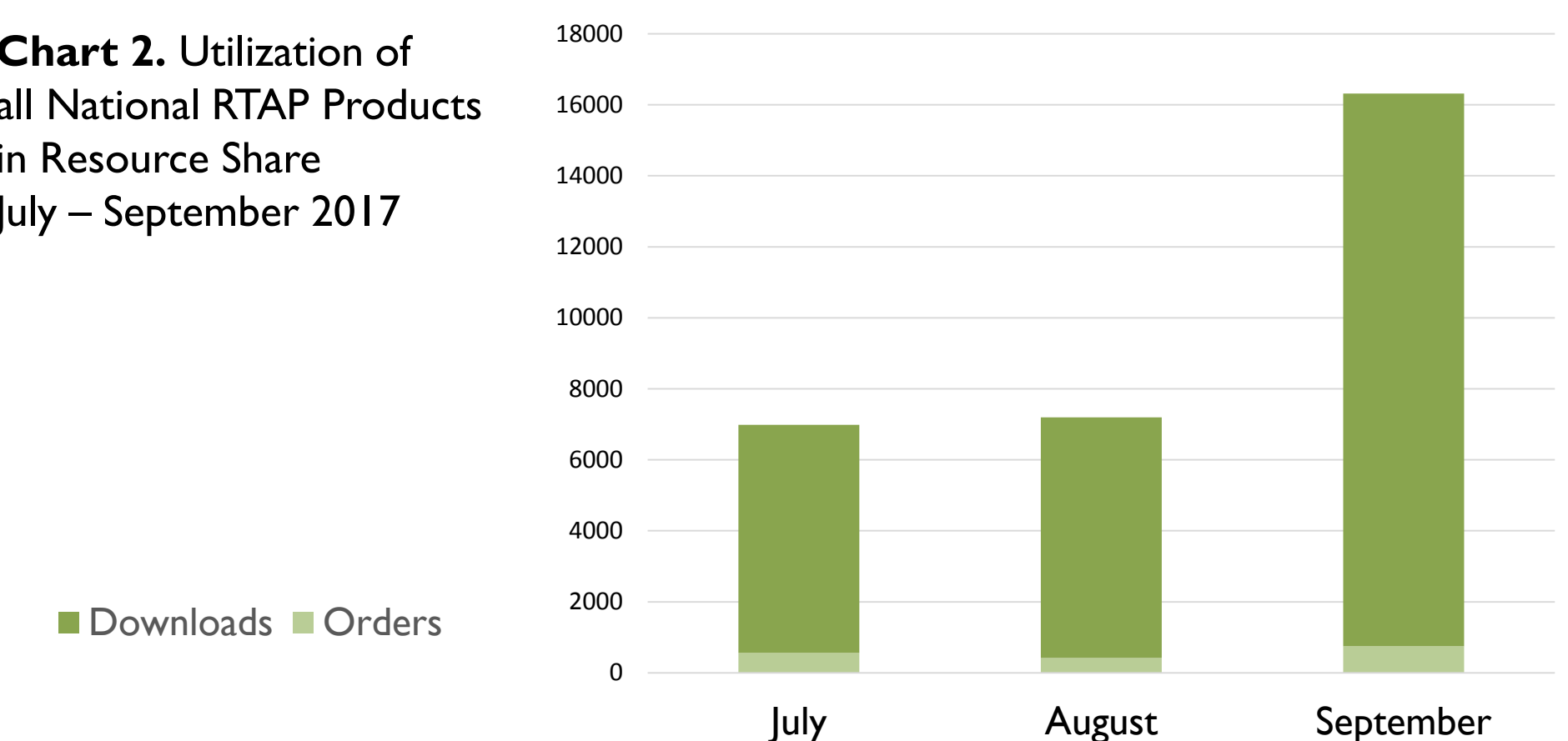
Discussion

Federal library competencies¹ state that expert librarians create standards for curation and adapt procedures in response to changes in information production and dissemination. While librarians have been performing these activities for centuries, the transition from print to digital has disrupted established collection management workflows.⁵ New paradigms need to account for the rapidity with which many resources become outdated. The library of the future may need to discard almost as many items as it acquires.^{3,4} Retention should be reviewed regularly using the same criteria as for selection. As new resources are collected, one must decide whether they will replace or compliment existing resources.

Collection development is a continuous process that requires policy revision from time to time based on user needs.³ The models that we have developed – **R2** and **FOREST**, meet our library’s current needs, and are also scalable and adaptable.

Our project resulted in a streamlined, mission-focused collection, higher resource utilization and process improvement. Directions for our future research include: adapting the **FOREST** Model to incorporate additional modalities involved in resource updates, such as expertise allocation and emerging formats.

Chart 2. Utilization of all National RTAP Products in Resource Share July – September 2017



Conclusions

The Curation Project has solidified our collection to better align with our mission. We can assess the useful life of the resources we produce and define a realistic update schedule. We have created an archive with access to the history of each document to compare iterations. As we move forward in acquiring and developing resources that play a role in maintaining the capacity and resilience of the nation’s rural and Tribal transit systems, we will continue to approach the collection from many different perspectives. You need to have the forest to see the trees . . .

Contact

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