TRIS User Satisfaction Survey: Early Results and Next Steps

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An NTL Transportation Librarians Roundtable Presentation
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TRIS Background…

- July 2007 marked the 40th Anniversary of the Transportation Research Information Services (TRIS) Database…

- The idea dates to 1923. In 1928 $8,000 was appropriated by the HRB "to collect and distribute information of completed and current research."

- TRIS was developed over 3 years with the sponsorship of the State Highway Departments and BPR to include citations and abstracts for published highway literature.

More TRIS Background…

- In 1967, the Highway Research Information Service (HRIS) was implemented. It used computer and automated technologoy to expand the "clearinghouse" concept.

- TRIS continued to improve, expanding its coverage and becoming multi-modal.

- Partnerships developed to receive records from ITRD, Northwestern University's transportation library and the University of California Berkeley transportation library.

TRIS Today…

- A version of TRIS (TRIS Online) is available on the Web with close to 700,000 records.

- Nearly 38,000 records in TRIS Online have links to (mostly free) full-text publications.

- TRIS is the largest and most comprehensive database for published transportation research.

- TRIS is available as a subscription resource from vendors Ovid/Silverplatter (TRANSPORT) and Dialog (File 63).

TRIS Today…Enhancements Continue

- 19,000 EIS from Northwestern University were added to TRIS in 2007.

- TRIS Records for articles from "Transportation Research Record" now have links to full text.

- TRB is adding links to records of Elsevier and Taylor & Francis journal articles.

- Coming next…theses.

Why a Survey? It Started with a Photo

Which Led Us to Articles in TR News

The Idea for an Updated User Survey

- Came from discussions with Barbara Post.

- Which led to sponsorship by TRB's Library and Information Science for Transportation (LIST) committee.

- Which led to conference calls and a meeting at TRB Midyear (July 2007, Chicago) and one at TRB Annual (January 2008, Washington).

- This work has been a team effort by a committee of librarians, researchers & other transportation professionals.

Special Thanks to Committee Members

1. For Helping Develop and Test the Survey
2. For Helping Analyze Data/Presenting Findings

Barbara Post -Transportation Research Board
Sandy Tucker -Texas A&M University, LIST
Roberto Sarmiento - Northwestern University
Amanda Wilson - National Transportation Library
Rita Evans – University of California, Berkeley
Brie Schwartz – Transportation Research Board
Bonnie Osif - Penn State
Sue Sillick – Montana DOT
Barbara Harder - BT Harder, Inc.
Karen White – FHWA
Mary Kay Christopher – MKC Associates
Laura Whayne – Kentucky Transportation Center

Objectives of the Survey

1. To understand who uses the TRIS database and what they use it for.

2. To determine user satisfaction levels.

3. To let users make suggestions for short- and long-term enhancements to TRIS.

Methodology

- In November 2007 a 20-point survey was conducted using Zoomerang survey software.

- To target core users, TRB sent out a direct e-mail to members of Division A Committees and student attendees 2006-2007. The survey was also posted to the TRANLIB and AASHTO RAC Listservs.

  - Committees & Students: 7,353 total
  - Listservs: 364 total
 - Population size: 7,717 total

Methodology

The actual survey questions, their wording, order and "type" were formulated by the committee from May-October 2007.

- Significant pre testing was done.

- Some changes were made.

- Conducted November 7-30, 2007.

Methodology: Limitations

- We let respondents self select.

- We did not randomly select from antecedent population.

- We let respondents self-identify "role" and did not give them role definitions.

- There was no mechanism to prevent people from taking the survey more than once.

What the Survey Looked Like
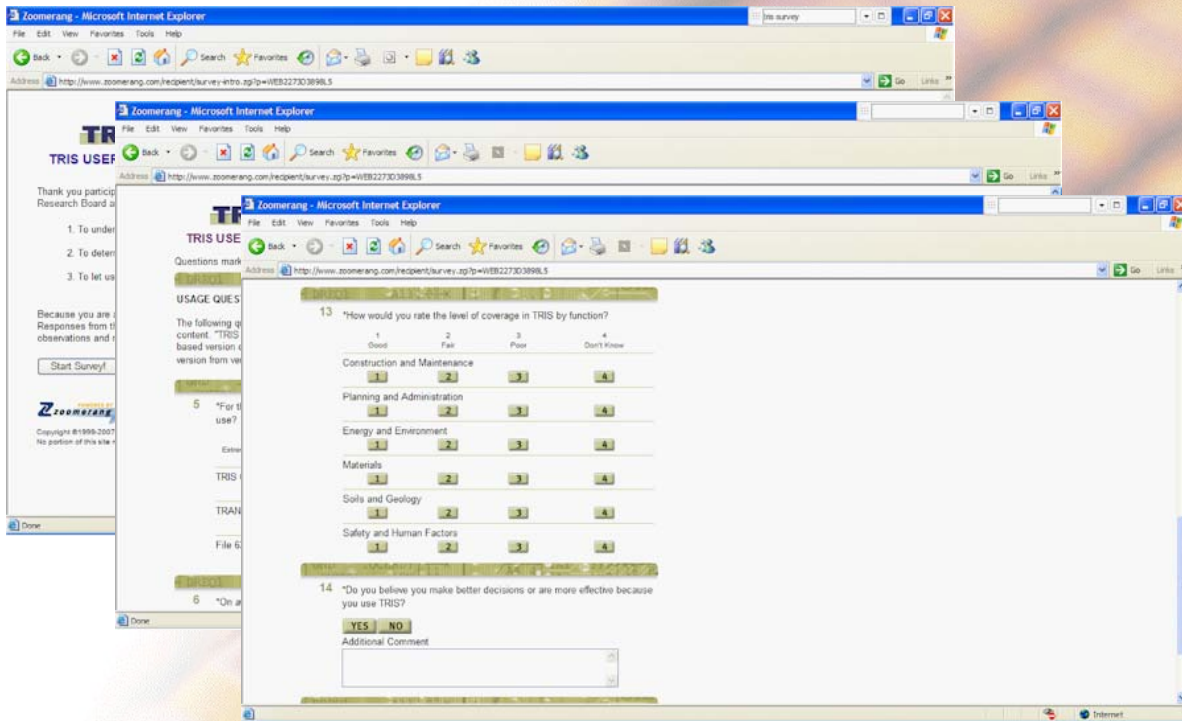
Response Rate

There were 362 responses to the survey, but 35 included <u>only</u> demographic data. They were disqualified, for a total of…
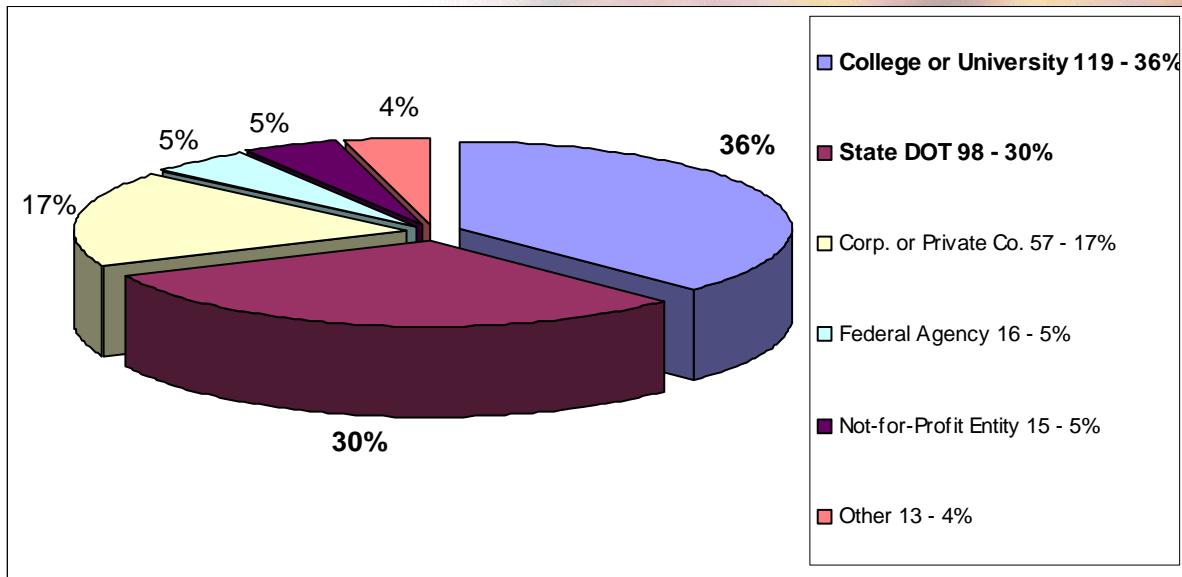
327 valid responses…a rate of 4%

NOTE: 16 respondents indicated they had never used TRIS. The Committee discussed this fact and decided to include those responses though they could skew results.

The Five "Sections" of the Survey

- ## Demographics
  - Basic information about respondents.

- ## Usage
  - How do you access TRIS?

- ## Relevancy and Impact
  - Does content coverage (mode, function) fulfill your needs?

- ## User Satisfaction
  - Overall how well does TRIS satisfy your needs?

- ## The Future of TRIS
  - Suggestions for improvement.

Demographics

1. Select the category that best describes your place of employment.

Pie chart:
- **College or University 119 - 36%** — 36%
- **State DOT 98 - 30%** — 30%
- Corp. or Private Co. 57 - 17% — 17%
- Federal Agency 16 - 5% — 5%
- Not-for-Profit Entity 15 - 5% — 5%
- Other 13 - 4% — 4%

Demographics

2. Please indicate the country where you are employed:

☐ **United States 289 - 88%**

☐ Canada 10 - 3%

☐ Australia 4 - 1%

☐ Israel 3 - 1%

☐ United Kingdom 3 - 1%

☐ Sw eden, China, Greece, Philippines (2 Reponses each)

☐ Albania, Denmark, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Mexico, Puerto Rico, Sw itzerland, United Arab Emirates (1 response each)

All other countries 12%

United States 289 (88%)
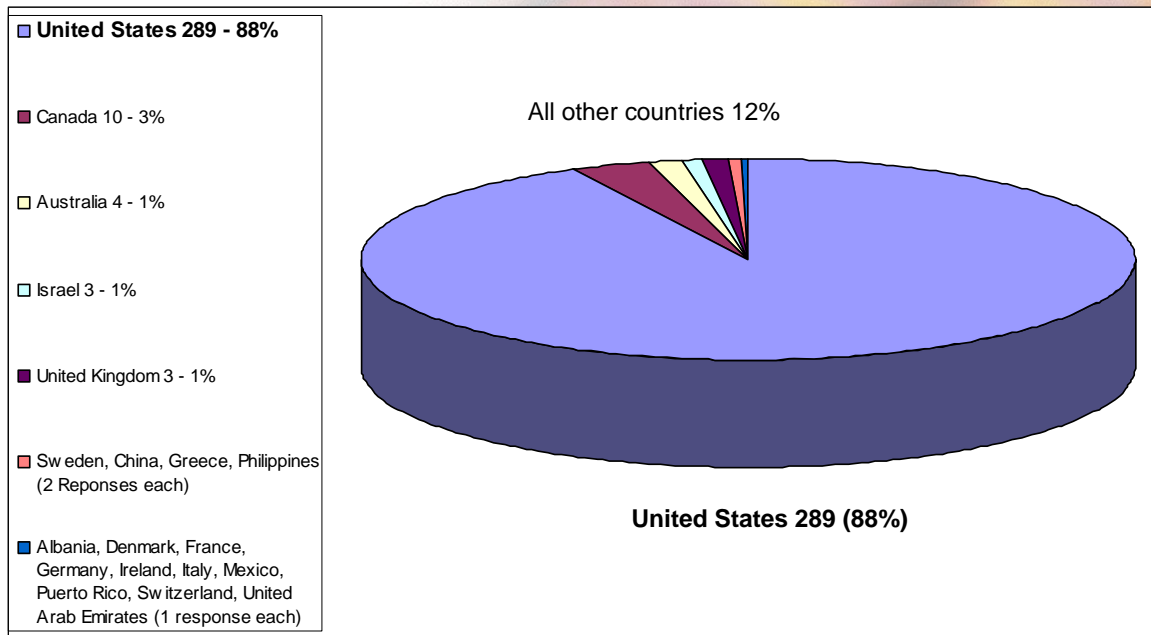
Demographics

3. Select the role or position that best describes your position…

Legend:
- **Researcher 76 - 23%**
- **Engineer 71 - 22%**
- Student 43 - 13%
- Information Professional 41 - 13%
- Faculty Member 33 -10%
- Administrator 27 - 8%
- Other 30 - 9%
- Other Support Personnel 6 - 2%

Pie chart values: 23%, 22%, 13%, 13%, 10%, 8%, 9%, 2%
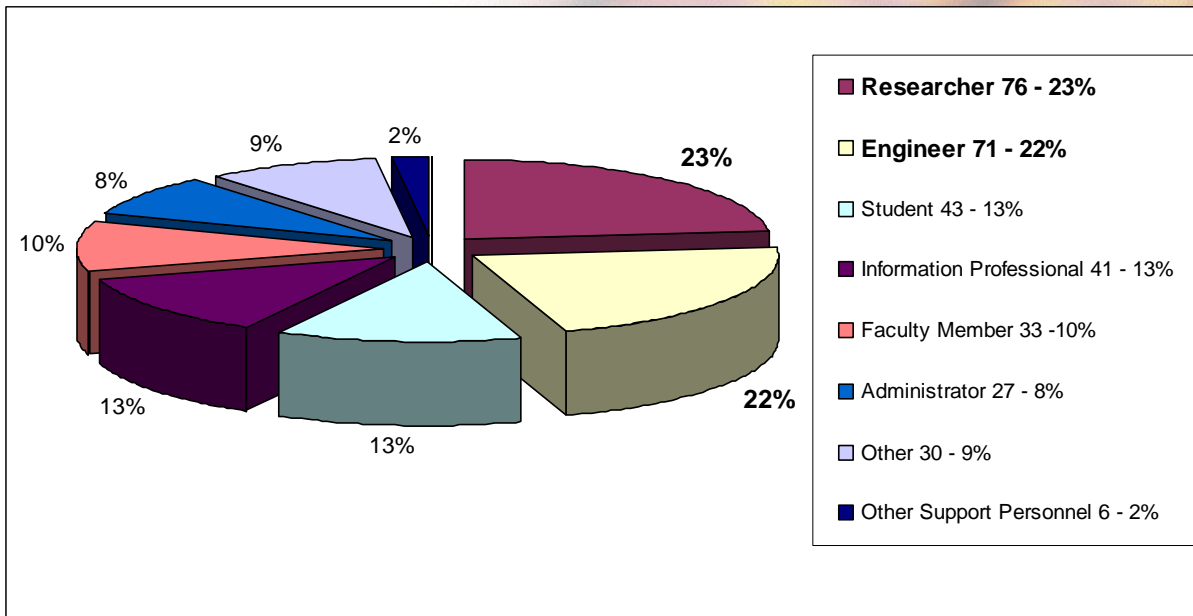
Demographics

4. Indicate your experience level:
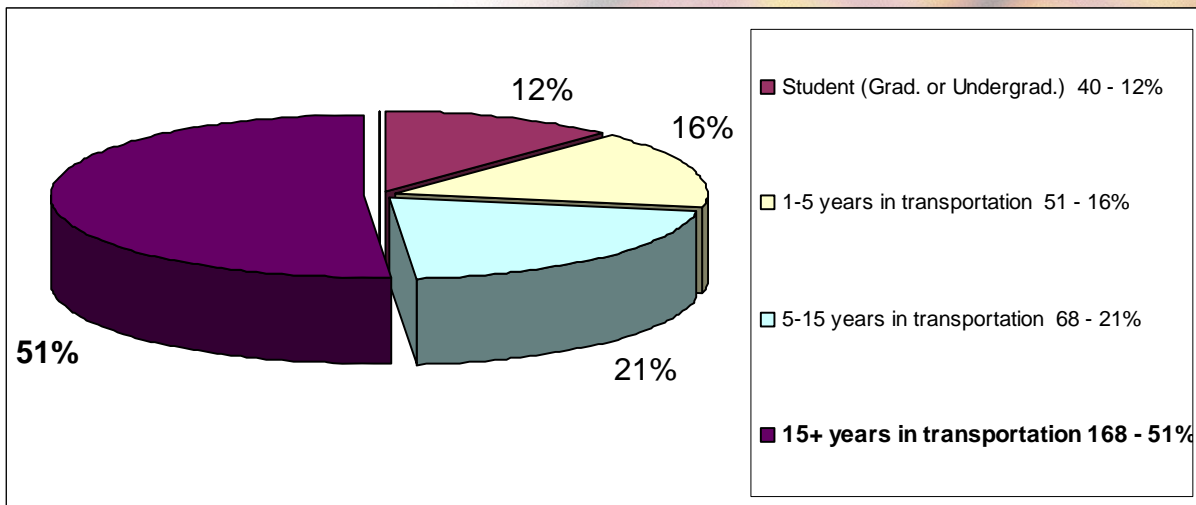
Pie chart with labels: 12%, 16%, 21%, 51%

Legend:
- Student (Grad. or Undergrad.) 40 - 12%
- 1-5 years in transportation 51 - 16%
- 5-15 years in transportation 68 - 21%
- **15+ years in transportation 168 - 51%**

Usage

5. For the version(s) of TRIS that you use, how would you rate the ease of use?

	Extremely easy	Easy	Difficult	Extremely difficult	Don't use this version
Tris Online	16%	67%	7%	1%	9%
Transport	5%	19%	4%	0%	72%
File 63	2%	8%	2%	1%	87%
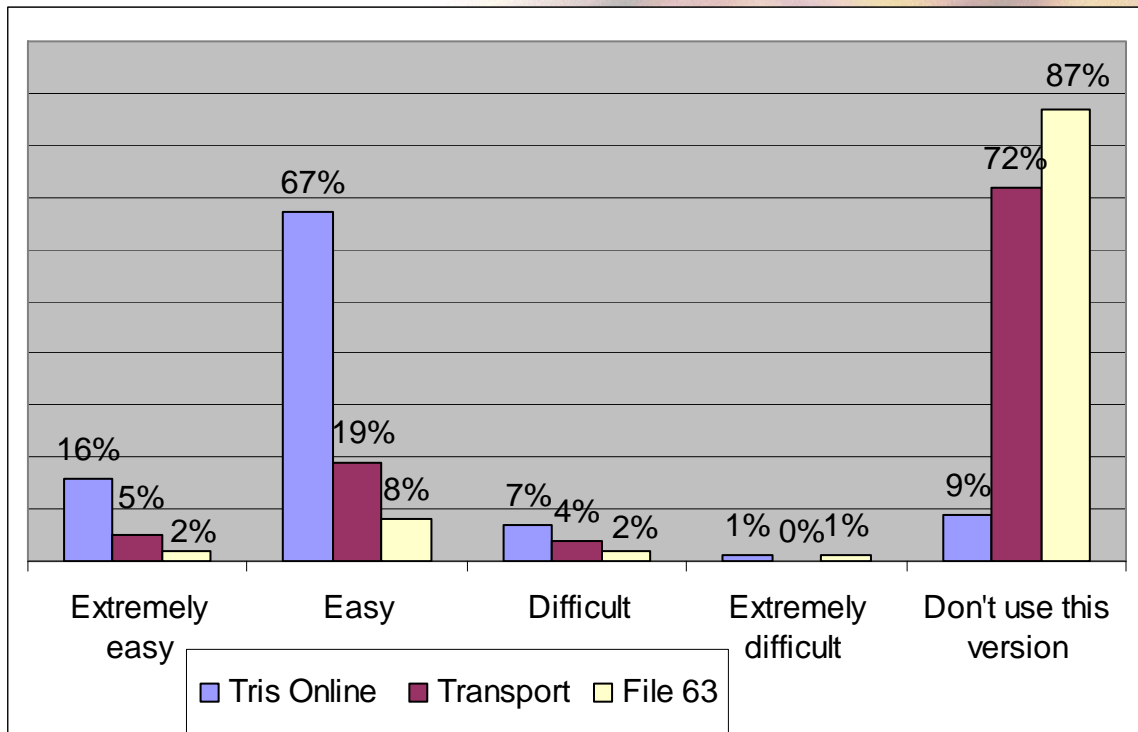
Usage

5. For the version(s) of TRIS that you use, how would you rate the ease of use?
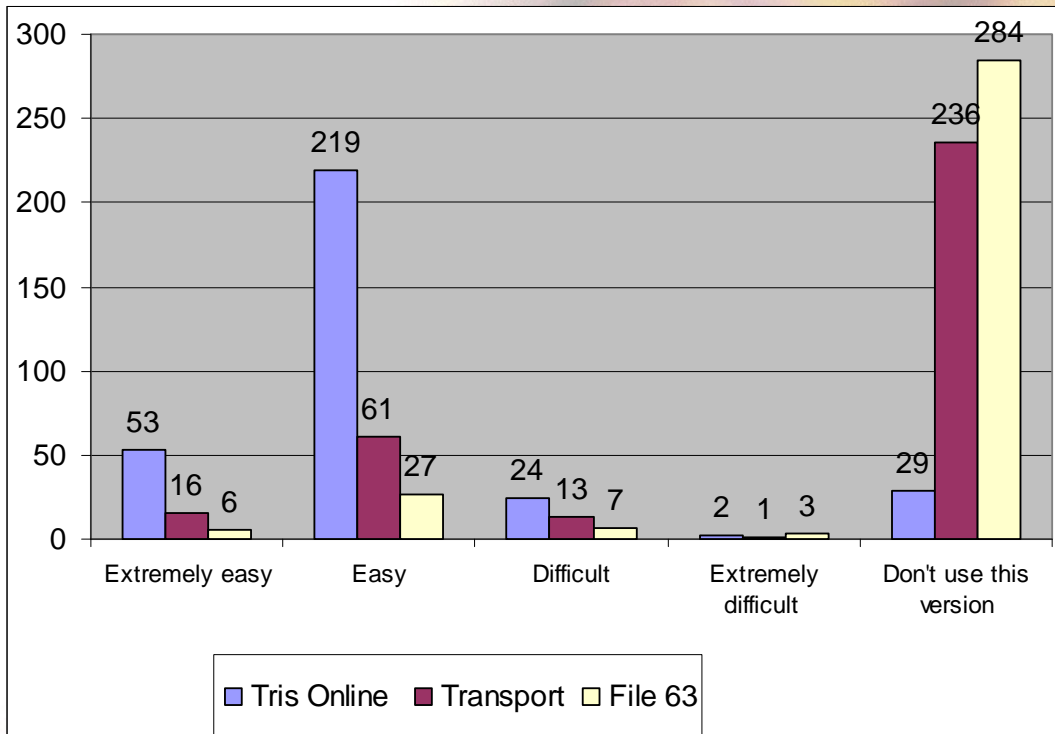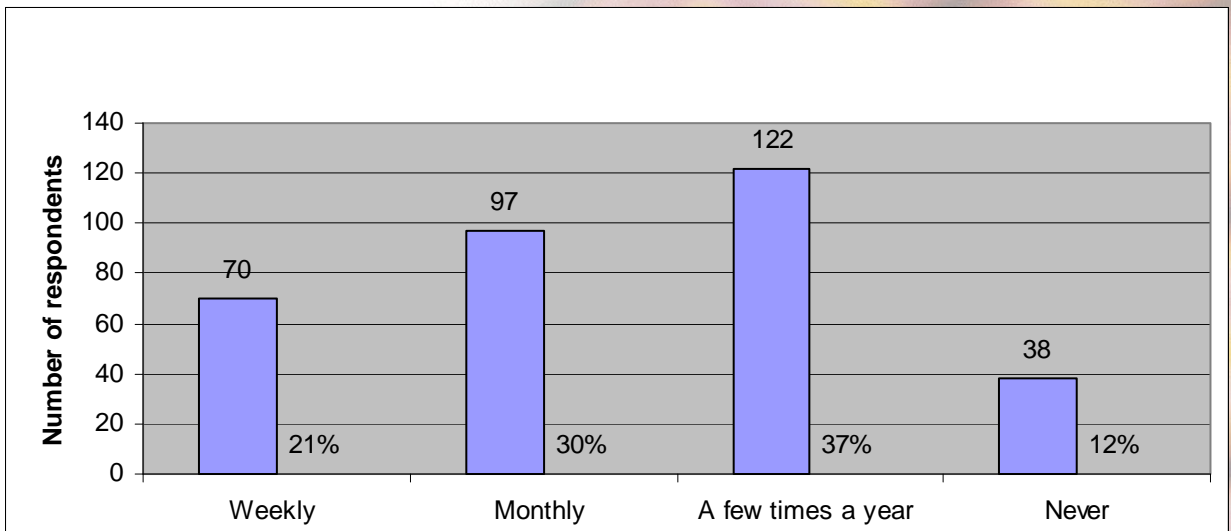
Respondents Preferred TRIS Online

- 91% of respondents reported using TRIS Online.

- About 83% of them said TRIS Online was either "Extremely Easy" or "Easy" to use.

- Only 28% of respondents reported using TRANSPORT and 13% reported using File 63.

- Only 24% of TRANSPORT users called it "Extremely Easy" or "Easy" to use.

- Only 10% of File 63 users reported that way.

Usage

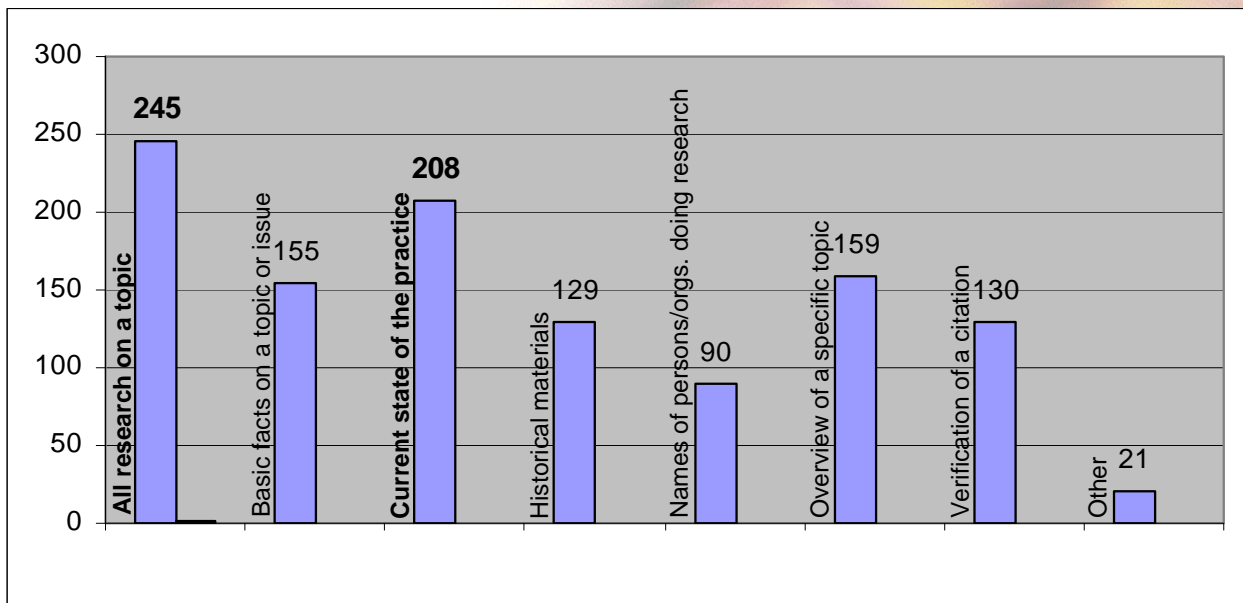*6. On average how often have you searched the TRIS database in the last 12 mo.?*

Number of respondents:

Weekly	Monthly	A few times a year	Never
70	97	122	38
21%	30%	37%	12%

Usage

7. What types of information are you looking for when you search TRIS?

Bar chart values:
- All research on a topic: 245
- Basic facts on a topic or issue: 155
- Current state of the practice: 208
- Historical materials: 129
- Names of persons/orgs. doing research: 90
- Overview of a specific topic: 159
- Verification of a citation: 130
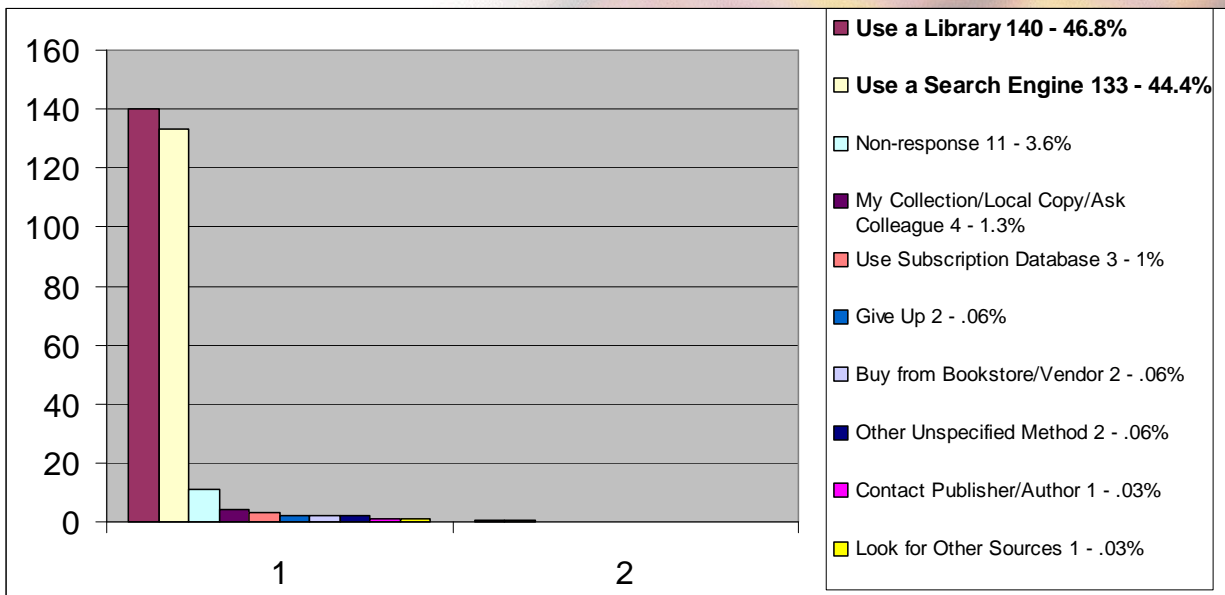- Other: 21

Usage: Getting Cited Works

8. What are the MOST TYPICAL method(s) you employ to get the documents cited?

299 Respondents Answered...

- Though not in every case, they tended to list multiple strategies, ranking their strategies in order of operation.

  - First, I do this.
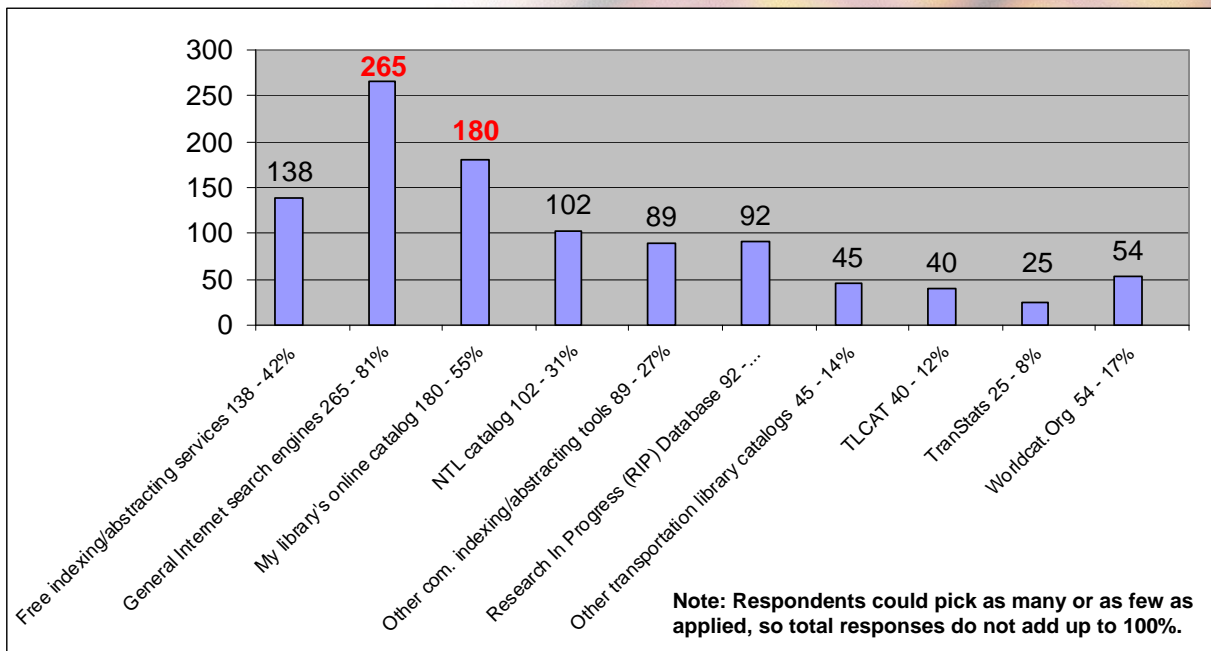 - Second, I do this.
  - Last, I do this.

Usage: Getting Cited Works

8. When you get results from TRIS that do not include a link to an online source, what is/are the MOST TYPICAL method(s) you employ to get the documents cited?

Legend:
- Use a Library 140 - 46.8%
- Use a Search Engine 133 - 44.4%
- Non-response 11 - 3.6%
- My Collection/Local Copy/Ask Colleague 4 - 1.3%
- Use Subscription Database 3 - 1%
- Give Up 2 - .06%
- Buy from Bookstore/Vendor 2 - .06%
- Other Unspecified Method 2 - .06%
- Contact Publisher/Author 1 - .03%
- Look for Other Sources 1 - .03%

Usage

9. What other resources do you use when searching for transportation info.?

Note: Respondents could pick as many or as few as applied, so total responses do not add up to 100%.

Chart values:
- Free indexing/abstracting services 138 - 42%: 138
- General Internet search engines 265 - 81%: 265
- My library's online catalog 180 - 55%: 180
- NTL catalog 102 - 31%: 102
- Other com. indexing/abstracting tools 89 - 27%: 89
- Research In Progress (RIP) Database 92 - ...: 92
- Other transportation library catalogs 45 - 14%: 45
- TLCAT 40 - 12%: 40
- TranStats 25 - 8%: 25
- Worldcat.Org 54 - 17%: 54

Relevancy/Impact

10. How relevant is information you find in TRIS to your discipline?

Sometimes Relevant 11%

Not Relevant At All 2%

Usually Relevant 46%

Extremely Relevant 41%
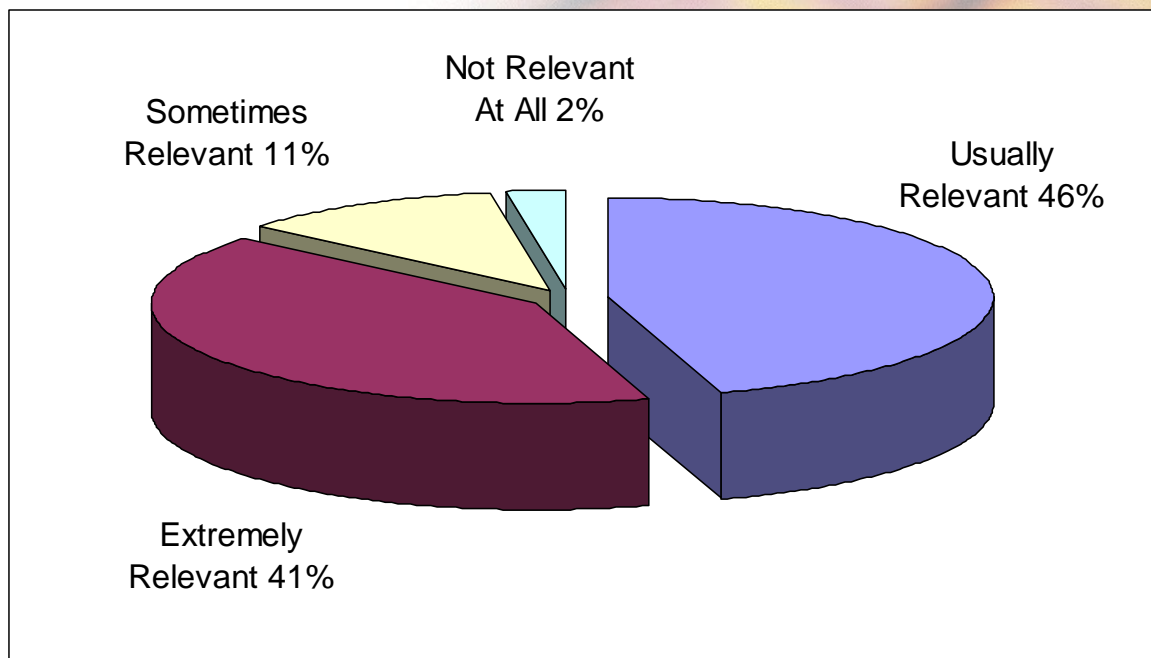
Relevancy/Impact

11. Rate how well the information you find in TRIS helps you to perform your job.

Sometimes Well 18%

Not Well At All 6%

Usually Well 51%

Extremely Well 25%
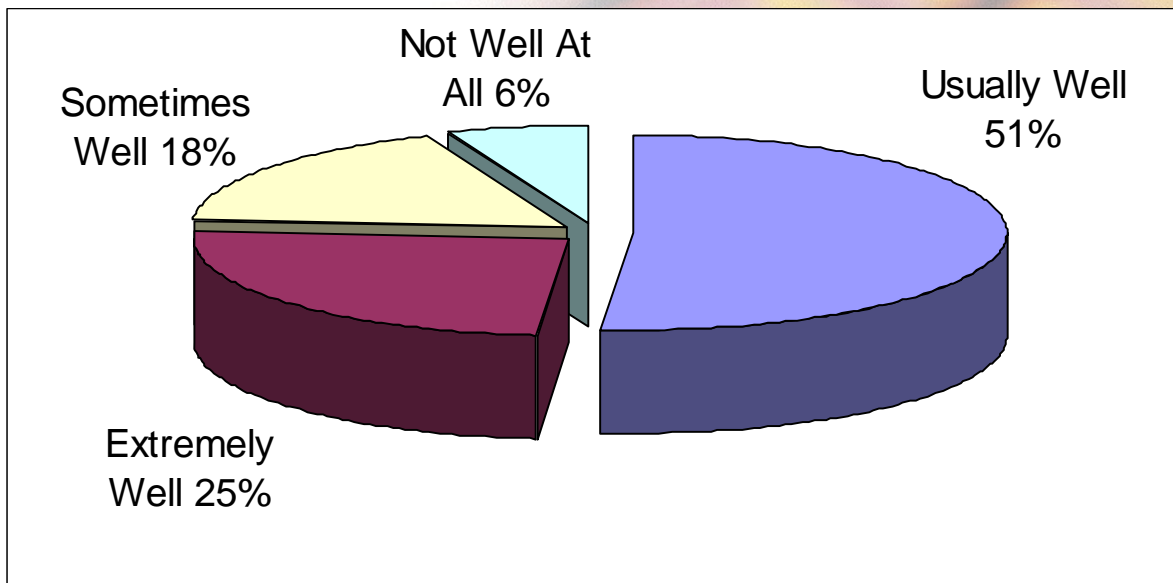
Relevancy/Impact

14. Do you believe you make better decisions or are more effective because you use TRIS?

No - 44 (16%)

**Yes - 238
(84%)**
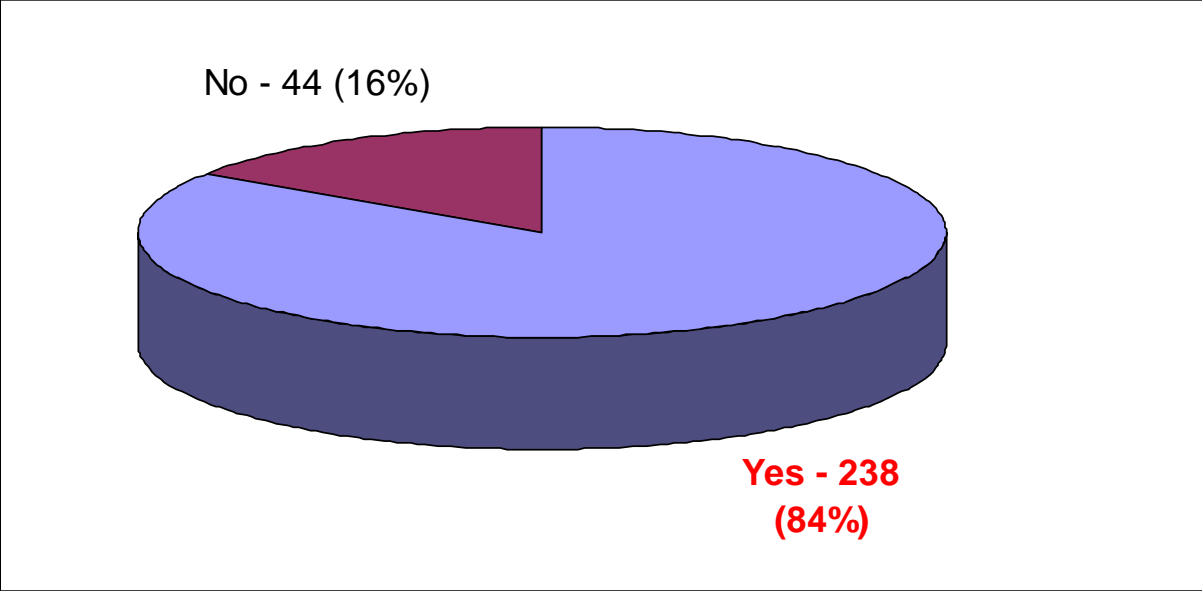
Relevancy/Impact

16. Would you recommend TRIS to other transportation researchers?

No - 11 (4%)

Yes - 263 (96%)
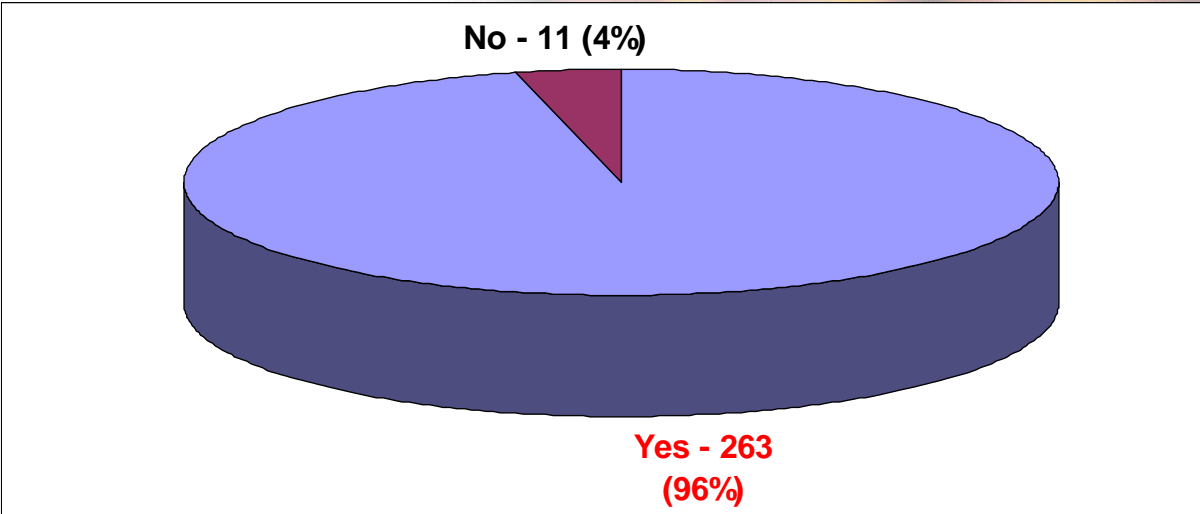
Conclusions: Frequent Requests

- Users Want More:
  - Citations in general
  - Speed getting new citations into TRIS
  - International coverage
  - Links to full text documents
  - Topical coverage: planning, environmental

- Users Want Less:
  - Duplicate records

Conclusions: Frequent Comments

- Respondents consistently requested more online links to full text documents <u>OR</u> information on how to acquire documents.

- They frequently cited libraries, librarians and library services (such as ILL) as an important part of the research process.

- They did NOT request snazzy technological changes to TRIS...they were far more likely to request something like expanded coverage.

Conclusions: User Suggestions

• Some specific suggestions for improving the technology behind TRIS included:

"A Better search interface" that "is more user friendly" or "more intuitive."

- EndNote, and the ability to do more with citations
- "User accounts" saved searches or alerts
- Link to Worldcat or other commercial sources
- The ability to search within results
- The ability to "Follow references" (Google scholar)
- Folksonomies or the ability to adding keywords

Conclusions: Respondents Value TRIS

- Respondents use the "TRIS Online" interface most of all, and often stated in comments they liked the fact that was freely accessible.

- Respondents reported using other online research tools in addition to TRIS...most notably search engines.

- When they mentioned a free Web search engine by name...that name was Google.

- Libraries were named more than Google.

Next Steps

And Now For Your Questions?