Finding Valuable Scientific, Technical, and Business Information by Using Technical Reports Databases - Transcript

Good afternoon, welcome to today's webinar, finding valuable scientific, technical, and business information using technical reports databases.

Good afternoon, welcome to the webinar finding valuable scientific, technical, and business information by using technical report databases. Today, we have our presenters, Patricia Kenly , the government documents coordinator at Georgia Tech, and Bette Finn, the head of electrical and computer engineering at the Georgia Institute of technology. Before we get started, let's have a few housekeeping reminders. If you have any questions you would like to escort technical issues, feel free to use a chat box, which is located in the bottom right-hand corner of your screen. I will keep track of all questions that common. Patricia and Betty will respond. We are recording today's session, and we will upload slides to everyone who attended this webinar. We will send a certificate of participation to the email address that you use to log into the webinar. Please include the title of today's webinar, along with the names and email addresses of those certificates. Desktop computer or laptop users may zoom in. Click on the full-screen button, and the left bottom side of your screen to enter or exit full screen mode. Click on the blue return button to get back to default view. At the end of the session we will be sharing a webinar satisfaction survey. We will let you know when the survey is available. We very much will appreciate your feedback, including comments on the presentation style and the value of the webinar. Finally, the presenters may be screen sharing their presentation at some point today. That means that once the sharing starts, you will no longer be able to see the chat box. If you would like to ask a question or follow the Chad as Patricia is preventing, once the screen share begins, mouse over the blue bar at the top, click on chat, to enable the chat box. Let's hand it over to Patricia.

Thank you so much, thank you for this opportunity. I appreciate that. Thank you to our attendees for joining us this afternoon, or morning, depending on where you are. Betty is our specialist for electrical and computer engineering. She has developed the online guide for technical reports. First of all, what is a technical report? I know of them from library school and our previous experience in the academic library, but I did not pay much attention to it. It is a working paper, discussion paper. Many different words are used and they are all just a general concept of a technical report. They are part of the series. They are issued to a target audience, potentially a member of Congress, a board member, or a boss. Especially for those targeted audiences, they expect that the recommendations, the conclusions, the pitch and the summary are something that could be understood by a layperson. Even if the accompanying technical report has high-level math, at some point there will be a graphics and summary information that many of us would be able to understand what the concept is and use it as a starting point. Another starting point example would be that students, even if your library does not subscribe to an engineering database, or a particular science or technical database, your other users would have access to the material. If it is from a federal government employee there is a lot of information that is out there that is free. So, be aware of that. This includes more than just reports. This includes photos, reports, speeches by the researchers and we will mention that as well. The focus that we are going to have is from the federal government sponsor report. We have research centers that contribute to state agencies like the Department of Transportation, for example. At Georgia Tech we have separate subscription front entity I asked reports. In addition, they tend to possess web characteristics. They were often issued quite quickly. The Department of Defense database has things that are restricted for other units that we work with. There are a lot of acronyms. Thankfully, the good reporters will mention this in full, and added in parentheses. Some of the reports that we have seen have a glossary at the end that explain every acronym. My colleague, Bette Finn will take this on to discuss key sources.

Okay, we will discuss agency databases, and websites, which Thaddeus had included the caveat that it may not be permanent retained on this website, especially an TRL. They could be permanent until they decide to weed them. Then, federal contractor recites like Rand and government publications. Next slide, please. Do I do the next slide?

Betty, you have the ball. If you could advance the slide.

Oh, okay. [Laughing] what I like to use is NTRL, the national technical reports library. The Georgia Tech library has a fee-based subscription to the equivalent , which is the national technical information service. It is full of federally funded technical reports. There are 800,000 PDF text. NTRL has a large number of science and technology reports. There are reports on every topic, because, there are reports that are done by all federal government agencies. There are the social science topics such as education. There are in-depth reports that are linked. They also have master thesis and docked oriole dissertations for which the writer receives federal funding. I can be very handy. There are reports of entire conference proceedings. They may or may not index records for the individual papers. Sometimes they do, sometimes they don't. Keep that in mind if you are looking for conference proceedings. There are a large number, maybe hundreds of pages, which is nice. There are over 60 databases from 50 agencies on science.gov. DTIC is the Department of Defense database. They have a large amount of reports funded by the Department of Defense, and a large variety of disciplines. It is amazing how many topics can be covered and funded by the Department of Defense. It is certainly not exclusively military. It ranges from the Internet, to all sorts of things. Having a search engine that I liked better, what you can do now is go to the top of the screen, for DTIC reports and more. You can sort it by relevance and date, and you can limit the records to technical reports if you want. There is selected full text. There are bibliographic records. One thing about DTIC is that there slowly going back in time, scanning reports from their other formats and putting those in the database. There will be detail reports that you get through Google that are not in the NTRL. And TRS is that NASA technical report server. They have full text reports. On the left column you can search by title and offer, and limit your search that way. TRID is a combination of the tea RIS and the ITR D database. It is to databases and one, and it is produced by the transportation research Board for fulltext reports, and the Department of Energy has -- you can search their database, they have an advanced search, which is confusing. I will show a slide in a few minutes. It is a drop-down menu on the right side of the search box. You can refine your search by title, or author. You can search for technical reports. They had a nice tips page there. There is a national agricultural database, where you can select records of reports in fulltext. NSCEP is the National Service Center for environmental publications. They have EPA reports. Patricia gave an example, of climate change indicators in the United States. At that time that we checked it, they have not updated in the past four years. The United States geological survey. There are selected reports in their, and the publications warehouse. There are additional agencies such as the Congressional research service. The Congressional budget office. The Government accountability office. We mentioned this earlier, the catalog of U.S. government publications which links to permanent fulltext when it is available. There are ways to search that. Other sources are like the half a trusted digital library. 1.4 million government documents from 40 institutions. Trail is our technical reports archive. The Rand Corporation is another example of other digitized reports. Patricia, she pointed out that the new URL is.org, not .CLM. Internet archives, like USA.gov. Patricia has indicated that there are many state-level documents. A lot of university repositories have fulltext. They are university reports, and, note that copyright with each title, the others are not federal employees. Patricia left that message. There is a URL in the chat, a little way back. You can go to our library homepage, and you can click on research help support. It is confusing, but that is the top row. The second one, the second column area if you click on that on the left side, it will say

research guides. It will open up to the most commonly used research technical reports. If you click on databases, you will have a list of selected databases, and, the ones that we are mentioning here should be in that list. That is our own research guide. There's a lot of technical reports research guides, but this one is ours. Back to NTRL, we really love our database. It is a very powerful search engine. Considering this is free, it is pretty good. There are other vendors that offers subscriptions to NTRL databases for a fee. We happen to have the Pro version. NTRL has helped tips on their page that we have linked here. For example, plurals and Cingular's are searched at the same time. There is advanced search, which is on the left side of the screen. There is advanced search, and then, you can include the bibliographic records, or locate the full text elsewhere. You can restrict it to buy fields on the drop-down menu. You can restrict it by date as well. This is an example of a NTRL database record, which, they have a nice abstract. You can get to this by clicking on the title of the report. You can also search or by the keyword. You can search by the keyword, like the field and so forth, it will give you the name and the keywords. In addition to that, you could go to the Department of Energy website. There is an advanced search, which is confusing and that there is a search box towards the top of this screen. There's a drop-down menu with this huge arrow. When you do that, you get the advanced search, which is much easier, rather than searching the entire database. This is the URL for this particular record, which has this turbine picture. Now, I will turn it back over to Patricia. Let me mute myself.

Thank you, daddy. Betty had mentioned the Department of Energy. It is a gateway to science reports. We recommend using the advanced search, sometimes I could not get to it in the past month. I will try it in a few minutes, or on another browser. Science.gov, you can see it is one of the 14 science related agencies. We are not going to focus on this today. In the advanced search, you can see that you can limit by database. You can pick your date range. A particular concept could be and the full record, which is a nice feature. One of the best advantages of the full searches that you can limited by general topic. You can limited by a particular agency. You can select any math, physics or chemistry aspect. You can be more specific and targeted in your search. You can look at images. There is a lot of flexibility for your advanced search. Another advantage on science.gov is the alert feature. If you are satisfied with the types of results that you are getting and how often it is updated, you can set up an alert. Here is an example of when you get that result in that email, the link on the PDF is there. You have a nice long summary. There are a lot of reasons to you science.gov. Also, there are practical information resources on science.gov. Like, how to build a tornado safe room with a limited amount of materials. You can see two entries here. This happens a lot, where you at the same title with different subtitles. There is a lot that is overlapping because you can see some of the authors. One is eight pages. One is 21 pages. I choose the eight page 1 for brief information, that is more focused. They are both interesting. Potentially. You can limit and refine, which is a nice feature with the visuals. For this, we show you how to build it. There is a lot that can be useful for your users. Again, this is from agriculture. You have all of the entities that are reporting to science.gov located here. As Betty had mentioned, TRID includes the OECD database that is international in scope. When you log on, have an option for recent records. You can see the same things when you click on here. The right flame -- the right frame populates. We select pedestrians and bicyclists. It is often not necessary to limit, but if you want to see with your estate Department of Transportation is done, you would want to select that under resources. In this instance, our search was on bicycles. It is from the state Transportation Department. It is from a consulting company. The good news is that it is lay language. There's a lot of photos and examples. There is a lot of good information there. On their resource list, these are active links. Whether it is a student doing something for a class, or community users, there are other agencies and units that way and on good design for bike lanes and bike facilities. There's an association. There's the federal highway of administration. There is quite a lot that they link to. Another search that we did was on scooters. Also, pedestrian and bicycle's. We are highlighting this to show that with statistics, we are looking at who has

to keep track of it. Particularly, it was universities, hospitals, and emergency rooms that were keeping track. They noticed that they were seeing significant industry. This is actually leading to a highway safety report that was penned with Georgia State University. Notice that you have a nice long summary, is that enough? You can get statistics right there without having to read the report. Congressional research services, like the Congressional budget office and the Government accountability office doing a lot of research for members of Congress when asked. It can be a different stage of the process. A member of Congress can ask them something, or they realize there are questions during a legislative session. There's a lot of issues. It is a great source for students and political science classes. The report used to be quite long. Now, they are issuing a lot of short ones. The turnaround time is much shorter. This used to be highly difficult to find. A member of Congress would have to give it to the Thurgood Marshall school of Law. Those three had many reports, but not all. They made it very open. When they update it, they let you know that there are different versions on the report. There is a very recent one on policies for the U.S. Active links, that is a great part of citing references. They give a link and that is the big feature there. The brand-new national drug assessment, as with many of the technical reports that we see, we have some nice graphics here. A student can use these in their report. Be aware of this if you are looking at the statistic. Also, March 1 there was a report about the operation works contracts. This is what they contract for the federal government to be distributed. This one statistic chart shows you what is out there, and what has happened. We see why Merck partnered with one of the other vaccine companies, because they continued their trial. That is one thing the government was hoping for and that situation as well. You catch nice little statistics. How long can it be there? What are the storage requirements? A lot of things are there with these inside reports. The Congressional budget office is been around since 1975. Again, for every legislative issue, or every bill, they are often looking at the cost estimates. They do hundreds of these per year. Even if something goes away, like raising the minimum wage, they estimate when this will take effect. Not the day after it is phased-in. They tell you how it is going to be analyzed, and how it will work because of the adjustment. As a background for members of Congress to make predictions, can be useful for the concept of what is really going on. Their website says it is an alternative to information, for other agencies in the executive branch. They do a lot of working papers as well. NASA's report server, it is an TRS. Some of these are wonderful to purchase. They can be the core topic for example. NASA scientists and engineers are out there with many speeches and journal articles. We notice challenges with the search engine. The fewer words you type, the better, that is what we have come to realize works really well with this particular database. For example, if you type in Artemis it can be many things. When you say the right frame populates after you do your first search, then there are only 20 in the past year. They are all interrelated, which is what I had expected to get. Notice one of the keywords, like Artemis three. Artemis one was no crew. Artemis number two was a crew performing a lunar flyby. It is a little bit confusing, but there are interesting other reports on this as well. The two people that wrote this article wrote a much longer technical paper that was 76 pages. The journal article is 76 pages. You don't have to worry about subscribing. It is full text right there with nicely formatted pages. They note that it is a reprint. Whether it is the longer or shorter version, these graphics have a lot about acronyms. There are nice graphics about how they are planning to make this a successful mission. Another example in the an TRS database is a book that they wrote about Cassini. Cassini was hurling through space, and, it is nice that they note that. You could use this for a display or a book talk. JPL did this nice graphic. These little teeny tiny dots are the Americans. They had explained that these are two images in one. This is a breathtaking up close view. Awe-inspiring to see exploration and what Cassini has done. USGS uses the word warehouse. It's a very powerful database. There reproductions are spectacular. Please consider using their database if you are doing something in relation to the material they publish. As you select this, then you will get the option to publish data. You do not see that until you click on advanced search category. We had decided to do something, not the more recent one, but, we give them time to reflect and have material issued. We decided to run the timeframe from 1925.

They separate the plate without reading the company report. What this was was building by building, they had major structural engineers come in and look at major buildings and recognizable names in San Francisco. For example, here is one where they listed the building names. You can see Union Square is here. The emporium still has a façade on market Street, part of this big complex. I will show you a screen where there is a big difference in what happened after the earthquake between his two buildings. Look how much we consider downtown San Francisco. I knew that there was a lot, but I was surprised that this report made a difference. The emporium, the façade is still there, but it is complete and accuracy -- inadequacy. It was sad to see how many buildings could not withstand the subsequent fire. A block or so away, it is pristine. Solid old-fashioned walls. There's a lot that can be learned from older material, the beautiful plates, and the wonderfully reproduced photographs. Trailers in their 15th anniversary. They started with the pilot project with the greater Western Library alliance. GPO is one of its members. It has membership fees, and, they combined two digit Tate over 87,000 records. Some of the funding stream goes to the University of North Texas. It is something else that they have to look at by hand and do individually. The nice thing about their interface is that it is a small interface with the University of North Texas. They focus on pre-1976 selected agencies. You think that there is not much there, but there is always something of interest there. For example, there was a horrible waste water holding retention pond leak in Florida. They talk about phosphate gypsum stacks. If you're interested in trail and what their agencies do, just click on trail and you can learn more about that. Not surprisingly to me, several were talking about Florida. You can learn a little bit more year-by-year. They give you building materials, information on phosphate in general, and the particular thing. Phosphate is the waste left behind when rock is processed to create fertilizer. One of the most unique features of the metadata is that it will give you the report number. They are very specific. It is wonderful metadata. It leads right to that report. We can see that the gypsum contains radium. In 1981, things had changed for the EPA. They were differing regulations on materials. Just be aware of that. There was a new administrator, and a lot of things were delegated to states and other agencies. You can see the Tampa Bay area is on the line of two counties. I can make a difference with regulations. You can see it was active at the time. Note that there was a Tuscaloosa research Center, at the state level and they had said that there was not enough toxins. It was less than what met the criteria at the time. Keeping with the environmental theme, like the Santa Barbara oil spill, that happened in 1969. I recommend searching at the catalog. It is the traditional all fields subject without having to worry about the full text. This works really well. You can see there is a record written by the University of California, Santa Barbara. Again, the University has the pristine copy. It is beautiful that they have more than one library submitting digitized material. This wine is from the institutions copy. The EPA was founded in 1970. There were a lot of water pollution programs in control. Not surprisingly, the officials thought that they were wrong about what was leaking. After they noticed how big the slick was and how quickly it had formed, it was really deemed accurate. This is 1969. They note a brief history about marine oil pollution. For a student that is interested in oil pollution, this would be a good starting point for more information. You can look at their references. We looked at NTRL for that title. Like many other technical reports, you can see the 300 page version, and the more brief version. We do see two versions. Even if the link is there, or even if it wasn't, we have ways to search a library near you. The Environmental Protection Agency's website has a lot of nice features. You need to scroll down to find the search option. Again, as I mentioned, it was founded in December. We have a brand-new EPA automotive trends report that has been loaded. You want to consider resorting. Always sort things. Relevance is useful. If you do not see something new, then try resorting the information. This is a very long report. From 1990 to 2000, a lot of things have changed with CO_2 emissions and fuel economy. Again, your student can use this graphic to record. If they are interested in buying a car, they can look to see the trends and particular models and companies over the past few years. There's another truck that we did not show. Tesla. They have a miles per gallon rating, and you might be wondering how is that possible? We use that concept broadly on all cars. Obviously, Tesla comes out as

number one in terms of the missions. What I had noticed is when I am reading a news report, a journal article, or listening to the news, or watching something, verbally, they will say something like according to a government study -- that is often a technical report that is issued. Sometimes you get tips with that. If you are lucky they will quote something from the report and you can use that exact quote. That helps a lot as well. If it is fairly recent you may want to consider the agency database because they're updated quite frequently. An example, with the Wall Street Journal, I bought the print edition. This particular quote was not and it. The Wall Street Journal had that quote, however. I found out quickly that there are drug shortage issues and that in-depth report. Contemporary news is very well supported by technical reports. You can see the short version, the long version, and the executive summary that was used to make a decision. You can understand the recommendations. With the brief recommendations, there is a median time of 35 years with a big shortage. Some of the recommendations from a year ago include greater transparency. A recent newsfeed, stat, if you get a recent report about the COVID-19 drug and who has the rights to that drug . The interesting thing to me is that later on in this report they talk about the Government accountability office. Interestingly, to me, this website, easily and quickly published and released this report on the same day. It was a great statistic chart about how long these had been and development, Ebola has been a long-term issue. The Department of Defense is also a source for this particular chart. There are a lot of interesting things. There's a recent chart from a nature magazine about vaccine technologies. We would not have understood the phrase supply chain a year ago. There is a lot that is out there, and we are pleased to have been able to do this today. Thank you to Kathy Carmichael for the technical assistance. Thank you. Are there any questions?

Can I mention -- I forgot to mention, the library has a large amount of technical reports, because of COVID-19, we are not adding certain resources right now. Thank you for reminding me of that.

This is Kathy. We actually have quite a few questions. There was some chatter in between the participants. I will go through these, and I will let you guys answer. Blake wants to know if white papers would also be technical reports.

I think a general definition of -- would be that it is that it. It is often done at the request of your boss or your agency. As someone who needs that kind of information. It usually leads to a conclusion or a recommendation. How does that sound, Betty?

That sounds good.

There was some chatter about whether or not DTIC requires a subscription.

There is the public version which is free to anybody. Then, there is the one that you have to register and get approved for, which, the database itself is an unclassified database, the index has classified research and that when you have to register for. It is free but you have to have federal government contracts. Yes. The public one is free, and anyone can search it.

Alice asked if this would be linked? Abby had responded. I don't know if you want to chime in. I think links from be -- would be from the CGP.

[Indiscernible] that would be an ideal link. [Indiscernible] if anyone is interested.

Could you recap, or talk more about the value added on the DQ village interface compared with NTRL?

NTRL is great because it is free. You can search it and come up with the records and the full text. The others cost money. With the engineering Village, they are very powerful search engines where you can manipulate a large number of search statement lines, proximity operators, you can use advanced Boolean logic with complicated searches. That is not possible with NTRL. However, NTRL is free.

Are all reports attributed to science.gov? Giving them a single platform?

It is many of them, but, with TRID, they can do things outside of it , as far as getting them to buy into contributing as best they can. I did not see the report from a year ago on science.gov, but, these are put on the agency website sometimes.

Okay, next, does anyone know if there is a search for a cross tech transfer offer?

Good question. I do not know that. Do you know that, Betty?

I do not know that. I think I will think about that.

Can you send an alert to receive CRS reports that cover certain topics?

Good question. I will look that up. Let me write this down. I don't think I have seen that, but I will double check that. Thank you.

Our reports with similar names to papers generally shorter in most government publications?

What we looked at was longer than the government publication. It was hard to tell if it was because of the planning. There's a significant difference, it was clearly longer than the government publication. The journal articles sometimes only has a few number of spaces. Is that what your question focused on?

The database, if it is a reprint because of government employees writing it, it will say, like NTRL, it will say where it came from. Like Patricia just said, a lot of these where there are journal articles, they get credit twice if there is a full report in the technical report database.

Sometimes they have a slightly different title, but then, you can go back and see where they are from.

Had you receive technical reports being used by students and faculty?

[Indiscernible] the site is geared towards that, I often have questions like -- [Indiscernible] that is a public policy kind of future now. There are a lot of business things in there, more specifically with NTIS, that is the first go to, or NTRL. There is quite a bit there they can be used . They can be used for contemporary issues, ethical issues around corporate responsibility. It just depends. I have used them. It is not the first go to, rather than a journal articles. It is always something for me to look at as well. There could be something that a government employee has issued to another government employee. Does that answer your question?

I think that Jennifer has a follow-up question. She asks, our reports shorter than papers?

Usually not. They are usually not shorter than a journal article. The Masters thesis and dissertations are just used as a report because they had funding from the government. They will often have journal

articles, which are very short. Every time I say that, there will be an unusual case that is the opposite. When we look for technical reports, we may not find what we are looking for, but we will find something else. That makes for a good starting point, another source to consider. These are free. These are free databases. There are good starting points.

Jane Canfield mentioned -- I don't know if this helps with the mega search question, but, GPO.gov provides a way to search across multiple agencies.

Thank you.

Jennifer commented on operational behavior recovering military reports.

Yes. Military contractors, their military.

Okay. Well, we have a few minutes if there are any more questions. We will be pushing out the link to the survey shortly. Jennifer, Betty, thank you. Here is the survey. We would appreciate it if you would complete the survey for us. Okay. I am going to give you one more minute to get questions and. Okay, Miles has asked, where do we ask questions about databases? GP or otherwise?

We would be happy to talk about this briefly. Sometimes there is an agency that speeds something up. [Indiscernible] at the in person conferences you become aware of those individuals involved with these groups. Feel free to reach out to me or my colleague.

Okay, I think that is all for the questions. I want to thank Betty and Patricia so much for this webinar. Judging from the comments, it was greatly enjoyed and helpful to our participants today.

Thank you for giving us the opportunity.

Thank you.

All right. Everyone have a great rest of your day. Bye-bye. [Event Concluded]