Blazing a TRAIL: Digitizing and Preserving Legacy U.S. Government Technical Reports

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Charge

Develop a collaborative project with the Center for Research Libraries to identify, digitize, archive, and provide persistent and unrestricted access to federal technical reports issued prior to 1975.
History 1

• Idea began with Maliaca Oxnam at the University of Arizona – grew out of frustration of engineering librarians at how difficult it was, especially for end users, to find individual technical reports

• Initial support from the Center for Research Libraries (CRL) and the University of Arizona

• Accepted as a Greater Western Library Alliance (GWLA) digital initiative

• TRAIL project formed - 2006

• Realized we needed greater government document librarian input – added government document librarians to the group

• Pilot site created at the University of Hawaii -- Manoa

• Funding an issue – almost all scanning initially had to be paid for – also cataloging costs
History 2

• Enter the University of Michigan, Google, and the Hathi Trust – 85% of scanning now done at no cost to the project

• 15% of scanning still to vendor - that content now stored at the University of North Texas

• Early 2010, TRAIL moves entirely to CRL as newest Global Resource Network – now a member organization

• New set of funding issues – with library budgets depressed, fewer schools than expected became members – less funding currently than when a GWLA initiative

• 2010 – domain name acquired and new user interface developed

• Late 2010, new user interface debuts – www.technicalreports.org
Process

Contributor → Node → Print Archive → Scanning Partner → Digital Archives → Central
Accomplishments

• Completed an inventory of all defunct federal agencies and report series that were issued by those agencies
• 17,575 page-views of the pilot site in the first year (~ 200 reports available)
• Over 23,000 items cataloged & scanned; over 2.2 M pages scanned
• Establishing collection sets of MARC records in OCLC
• Digital archives at Michigan / Hathi Trust and at the University of North Texas
• Print Archive (Oklahoma State)
• Inventory control for all documents
• Award winning project
TRAIL

The Technical Report Archive & Image Library (TRAIL) is an initiative led by the University of Arizona in collaboration with CRL and other interested agencies to identify, digitize, archive, and provide access to federal technical reports issued prior to 1975. The TRAIL project began under the auspices of the Greater Western Library Alliance.

Technical reports communicate research progress in technology and science; they deliver information for technical development to industry and research institutions contributing to the continued growth of science and technology. These highly detailed reports contain valuable information serving specialized audiences of researchers. While availability to more recent (1994–current) technical report literature has greatly improved with Internet access, legacy technical report documents remain elusive to researchers. Most large research libraries across the country have sizeable collections of federally funded technical research reports—frequently a million or more ranging from several pages to several hundred pages.

An example of some report series digitized include:
Synthetic fuel from coal for supersonic aircraft

Author: Schlesinger, Martin D.
Additional Authors: Hiteshue, Raymond W.
Year: 1961
Document Type: BMRA
SUDOC: 128.23:5902
Report Number: 5902
Subjects: Coal
Jet planes--Fuel
Link: http://hdl.handle.net/2027/mdp.39015078529917
SYNTHETIC FUEL FROM COAL FOR SUPersonic AIRCRAFT

By M. D. Schlesinger and R. W. Hiteshue

... report of investigations 5902
SYNTHETIC FUEL FROM COAL FOR SUPersonic AIRCRAFT

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Useful Info

• ANY institution can join TRAIL – don’t have to be a member of CRL

• Institutions that are project members have a vote on content, project direction and priorities, can serve on project committees and task forces, etc.

• Non-members can still contribute content, either for digitization or for the print archive, if needed

• TRAIL project site - www.crl.edu/grn/trail

• User interface – www.technicalreports.org

Thank you! Any questions???