

TRB 88th Annual Meeting
TRT Subcommittee Meeting
January 13, 2009
Hilton Hotel, Chevy Chase

1. Approval of minutes from June 14, 2008

Minutes approved with correction to Andy Everett's affiliation.

http://trblist.tamu.edu/subcommittees/documents/trt_mins_061408.pdf

2. TRT Principles document draft

Discussion of this document began at the previous subcommittee meeting. Previous comments can be found in "Comments to the TRT Principles Document," November 2008, and "Additional Comments from the TRT Subcommittee," January 2009 (both are appended to these minutes).

3 Scope

Note comments from Michael Kleiber regarding following LCSH practice. Kendra Levine asked about implications if we continue to use LCSH. The scope section doesn't note what the TRT is used for, or why, and something should be added regarding its domain. Sandy Tucker has written some language for problem statements related to how the TRT is used that may be applicable; she will send that text to Bob Cullen. Is the scope beyond transportation, and if so, to what extent? The scope is already beyond research since it covers many practices.

Glossary – Batty and Associates are adding definitions under contract; no one else should be adding any definitions.

Paul Burley – Where are instructions for use of lead-in terms? In Report 450?

Note that the correct term is "Used for" (UF) rather than "Lead-in."

Andrew Meier observed that thesaurus is a fabulous tool for educating people. It can be excellent way to orient someone to a discipline or some aspect of it.

Ontology can help in terms of grasping concepts – pretend you're writing a book for someone completely unfamiliar with field. Indexing is a way to tell a story.

4 Structure

Scope notes are being handled by the panel. There are scope notes for all facets except Facet X.

5 Term Suggestion

Suggestions gathered from candidate terms (TRB indexers, TLib contributors) NTL also considers new uncontrolled terms along with list of most used uncontrolled terms for that month. NTL looks at search logs. There are various

TRT suggestion forms. The difficulty in finding the suggestion form on NTL's website was noted.

Section 6 Term Selection

Paul suggested adding "national and international thesauri" to list of sources to 6.1.1 and subcommittee agreed.

Section 6.3 –Keep language as written.

Section 6.4.3 – Paul asked if Use For (aka lead-in) terms will be qualified if they're acronyms – should they be spelled out? Barbara Post noted that acronyms are spelled out in their first use within an abstract. Sandy suggested that we look at NISO standard and then determine if we need to change current practice.

Amanda Wilson said NTL plans to include scope notes for all new terms. Adding them to existing terms is not planned.

Rita Evans asked if the subcommittee agreed to all of the comments in the "Comments to TRT Principles Document." The subcommittee confirmed that all of these items were agreed to, and the comments document is to be appended to these minutes.

Metadata Committee meeting – Frances Harrison of Spy Pond Partners described the project to develop a business plan to implement TKNs and the LIST Committee's involvement in updating Directory of Transportation Libraries and Information Centers, currently produced by the SLA Transportation Division.

Kendra said that Maureen Hammer did a presentation on using metadata to pull pieces of a website together. There is a problem with the lack of standards for metadata. The Metadata Committee looked at TRT and said it was quite useless for their purpose of describing traffic data, traffic counts and asset management. Everyone who collects data has own way of collecting and organizing that reflects their own ontologies – they're creating their own controlled vocabularies

The group then engaged in a wide-ranging discussion thesauri, ontologies and related issues. Some points from the discussion:

- Tamer El Diraby said that IT's unsophisticated attempt to replace human intelligence with AI hasn't worked and the way to move ahead is via thesaurus/ontology. He is very impressed at the work of the TRT Subcommittee and said there is a golden opportunity to engage engineers in using the thesaurus. It would give us a new role – ones with the linguistic and philosophical grasp who can help engineers. He asked if the wisdom of concepts, a byproduct of developing a thesaurus, is more important than the thesaurus itself. Ontology is the future, and the semantic web is ontology. Look at the model of money going to health informatics. He encouraged us to collaborate with Urban Transportation Data and Information Systems Committee; the Metadata Committee will want to focus on programming for the annual meeting.

- Sandy Tucker asked what's the distinction between thesaurus and ontology? Tamer replied that ontology is what we know, e.g., the sky is blue, clouds form, rain occurs. Epistemology is how we know what we know. Informatics involves ontology as conceptualization of knowledge – taxonomy with relationships, triangulation of concepts, axioms that describe basic rules. Tamer sees taxonomy as the smaller, easier part of ontology. A thesaurus, as a linked, controlled vocabulary with relationships, may become taxonomy.
- Kendra Levine noted that the TRT was constructed by librarians and reflects their ontology; if it had been constructed by engineers, it would have reflected their ontology. In terms of domain analysis, Kendra asked what the TRT is for. While it works for librarians indexing material for TRIS, would it really work for engineers and their concepts? Is the TRT having a mid-life crisis?
- Barbara Post said the TRT is getting more visibility and her statistics show increasing use of TRT by visitors to TRIS Online. The TRT is used to index TRB's website. For the RiP (Research in Progress) database, an indexer reviews records from UTCs and supplements them with TRT terms.
- Leni Oman noted that the word "research" in the TRT may be keeping it from wider use. The TRT is related more to indexing and libraries than what engineers are doing. Would Transportation Resources Thesaurus or Transportation Thesaurus be better names?

Possible next steps:

- A session with a catchy title at 2010 annual meeting with a couple of other committees, tied to semantic web, maybe have whole project lead to a funded Synthesis report. Invite session speakers from other industries, maybe someone from Boeing KM.
- Teleconferences to continue discussion.
- Brainstorming session with the Data and Information Systems Section.
- Process will be to start with phone conference soon, and aim for a more formal brainstorming or other discussion at Summer TRB, with intent to have a session on annual meeting program at 2010 TRB.
- Tamer agreed to write outline for draft synthesis and will get paragraph to subcommittee for comment within the next week. Beware of scope creep and looming TRB deadlines. The Synthesis process is long and there is a lot of competition for funds.
- Subcommittee will pursue both routes, the Synthesis proposal and putting a session together for 2010 using terms like New Economy, and emphasizing that

better decision-making based on knowledge and that depends on ontology and taxonomy. Andrew Meier volunteered to assist with anything from Australia.

3. and 4. Development and Maintenance Procedures for TRT

What's status of October terms? Amanda Wilson is waiting for feedback and comments. A message from lexicographer Michael Kleiber has caused some terms to be parked. Amanda will send terms back to subcommittee with Mike's comments.

In the future, Mike will review terms and make comments and then the terms will be sent to subcommittee with his comments to save time; then comments will be solicited from the subcommittee.

Ken Winter said that Google is placing restrictions on the use of its search engines.

Matt Barrett asked to have it documented that he'll pay Michael Kleiber to review public transit terms if TRB is unable to do so.

Rita Evans noted for the record Michael Kleiber's enormous contributions to the TRT and that it's unfortunate that MK was not at this meeting to hear the subcommittee's comments, especially Tamer's, about what the TRT represents and the potential it has an educational tool.

5. Meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,
Rita Evans, Recorder

Agenda

TRB LIST Transportation Research Thesaurus Subcommittee, ABG40(2)

TRB 88th Annual Meeting, Washington DC

Tuesday, January 13, 2009, 7:30-9:30 PM

Hilton - Chevy Chase

1. Approval of minutes from June 14, 2008
(http://trblist.tamu.edu/subcommittees/documents/trt_mins_061408.pdf)
2. Principles document
3. Procedures document
4. Status of terms from the last round
5. New business

Comments to TRT Principles Document

November 2008

Entire document:

1 “I would also include a section on Domain Analysis and definitions for each of the top term facets. This will assist us in determining whether a term belongs in a certain facet or not.” (Andy Everett) –

Kim’s Comments:

I think this is a great idea. There are contractors currently creating definitions of all the terms in the TRT. I’m not certain when that project is due to be completed, but perhaps this can be done in the next version of the Principles document?

Subcommittee response:

There are scope notes for each facet within the NCHRP Report 450. This group feels that since the scope notes are circa 2001 that the subcommittee and NTL may want to review them for currency. Reviewing these definitions are currently not within the scope of NCHRP Project 20-79. Kendra Levine at UC Berkeley has been conducting domain analysis on Facet X: Information Organization as a part of her work on Intelligent Transportation Systems. She will have a paper ready for review by the subcommittee meeting in January.

“I think a glossary would be helpful at the end of the document. A combination of what is contained in the Glossary of NCHRP Report 450 (TRT and User’s Guide) (see pg. 57) & the definitions contained in the Transport Canada Thesaurus (see http://search.tc.gc.ca/thesaurus/about_e.htm#1 - under "Thesaurus Structure and Display - Definitions") would be useful.” (Seyem Petrites).

Kim’s Comments:

I think a glossary is a great idea – maybe this could be rolled into the next version too?

Subcommittee response:

Agreed. See accompanying sample Glossary that could be used as a starting point

Section 3 (Scope):

- “For WSDOT data the US Board of Geographic Names is the sole source for geographic names for our data. It replaces the FIPS 55 codes that were used for Cities and County names. So for WSDOT it is the preferred source. I would suggest that State DOTs check with their technology departments to find out what source that they use. All FHWA HPMS data use the Geographic Names Information Service from the USBGN which all state DOTs are required to report.” (Andy Everett) –

Kim’s Comments:

-I think this may be a misreading of the paragraph. We’re mostly just saying that we don’t provide geographic names and that we recommend they find a good source for them. We mentioned two of the larger sources for names in the paragraph, but the organizations using the TRT are welcome to use any geographic name source that works with their collection

Subcommittee Comments:

Editorially this is fine. At end of second paragraph, United States Board of Geographic Names should read “United States Board on Geographic Names”.

Section 5 (Term collection):

“Warrant should be under term selection. From a collection standpoint, with a web based form open to anyone, we have no control over whether the submitter is using warrant or not. So we cannot say for certain that any collection is done with deliberate warrant. We can infer it but we can say that it is so. ANSI/NISO talks about warrant in reference to selection not collection. In this section we should include our procedures for term submissions and other collection methods” (Andy Everett) –

Kim’s Comments:

I’ve left all of Andy’s comment in here because although I agreed with Andy that the warrant sections should be moved to the Term Selection section of the paper, and did so, this has left the Term Collection section empty. I liked his idea that we include guidelines for term submission, but I believe the committee is still finalizing those at this point, so these should be included once they’ve been agreed upon.

Subcommittee Comments:

Agreed. When the NTL and the TRT Subcommittee as a whole have finalized the Submission form, the forms along with a narrative about the submission process should be included.

Section 6 (Term selection):

“As lead-in terms are so woefully underrepresented, does a specific section stating that lead-in terms are a target area need to appear? Or is that a committee focus and need not appear in the principles document?” (Amanda Wilson)

Kim’s Comments:

I think this is more of a committee focus.

Subcommittee Comments:

Agree with Kim’s comments. The focus for this document is long term guidance and policy. Projects or areas of need should be within another document.

“It might be helpful to have some goals/guidelines regarding the rate of growth of the TRT, as that could impact decisions involving specificity and completeness. If the idea is to be somewhat conservative in order to keep it manageable, we need to start relying more heavily on the use and addition of lead-in (non-preferred) terms. I think most of us are in agreement that the TRT is insufficient in this area.” (Pat DeSalvo)

Kim’s Comments:

I agree across the board on this statement. I think that the rate of growth is more of a committee decision than a policy decision though. Given that there seem to be a growing number of these sorts of issues coming up (i.e., the committee-specific issues), perhaps some sort of document of intent could be written from the committee’s standpoint?

Subcommittee Comments:

Agree that this issue should be addressed by subcommittee

Section 6.2 (Ambiguity and qualifiers):

- “This only addresses one such example of using parentheticals We also need to address the use of parentheticals where the concept is the different i.e. Crane(Animal), Crane(Mechanics).” (Andy Everett)

Kim’s Comments:

This section addresses that already; the explanation provided reads “Ambiguity occurs when a word or a phrase describes more than one concept. In such cases, qualifiers are added to assign context to the terms”

“Additionally, we need a rule on what the term should be in the parenthetical. My suggestion is the term is the name of the facet that it is in.” (Andy Everett)

Kim's Comments:

This is something that will ultimately be a committee decision, but I think it would create unnecessary complications in regards to term selection. I agree that rules as to parenthetical choice would be helpful to the selectors, but I think that requiring that the name comes from the facet name would severely limit the parenthetical's usefulness as a clarification tool.

Subcommittee Comments:

Agree on both comments about this section. It may be beneficial to include the section about ambiguity from the ANSI/NISO standard here to reinforce the idea. We suggest that a subsection on qualifiers be written to give guidance on how to use them. Additionally, we suggest separating the last paragraph in the section to another sub-section and clearly describe polyhierarchies. Not all within the TRT Subcommittee are familiar with its meaning and impact to the TRT.

Additional Comments from the TRT Subcommittee January 2009

Entire document:

Subcommittee comments:

Document needs a title page, with originating organization, date, logos etc

Suggest that a glossary go before the Bibliography when one is developed.

Suggest adding a Section between Section 2: Foundation and Section 3 Scope that describes the management, maintenance and ownership of the TRT. Describe the roles and responsibilities of the NTL, the NTL's TRT Team, the TRB and the TRB LIST TRT Subcommittee. We understand some of this is still to be discussed.

Suggest adding a Section, between Section 3: Scope and Section 4: Structure, to clarify who the user group that this thesaurus is intended. This will further assist the TRT Subcommittee in term selection. In Section 6.1.3 Organizational warrant, the term transportation community is mentioned. This term should be clarified early in the document. Suggest calling section Intended Audience of TRT. When defining the transportation community make sure mention is made about academic researchers and government and non-government organizations (NGOs). (i.e State DOTs, AASHTO, and companies like Battelle, UPS, FedEx, UAL etc)

Section 6.1.1 (Literary warrant):

In section 6.1.1: Literary warrant. “In the case of the TRT, this need is met in part through: the **regular** Transportation Research Information Service (TRIS) and National Transportation Library (NTL) Digital Repository and library catalog reports of uncontrolled terms and keywords used in records of those databases; state departments of transportation websites; transportation industry websites; and transportation industry publications.”

Subcommittee comments:

What is meant by “regular”? Sentence needs to be reworded. Was the attempt here to list all of the literary warrant for the TRT? Missing is transportation academic journals, transportation related research organizations, and academic institutions, and non-transportation journals that have relevance to the

transportation domain like IEEE and Association of Computer Machinery (ACM) journals. May we suggest another approach where it is clear that the list is not exhaustive and is only a sample?

Last Sentence in 6.1.1 needs to be struck. It is an obvious statement.

Section 6.1.2 (User warrant)

Subcommittee comments:

Does NTL have search logs available from their site? Amanda, Keith? Does TRIS also capture Search logs? Barbara? User warrant should not be limited to NTL and TRIS as the next section indicates that the organizational warrant is the transportation community. User warrant should cover the same community not just NTL and TRIS. How we assess user warrant for the greater community may be a topic of discussion for a subcommittee meeting.

Section 6.1.3 (Organizational warrant):

Subcommittee comments:

See comments under Entire document in second paragraph of this section.

Section 6.2 (Pre-coordinated and post coordinated terms):

Subcommittee comments:

It seems that the intent of this section is to discuss compound terms (see Section 7 of the ANSI/NISO standard). Suggest adding a distilled version of section 7.

Section 6.4 (Form of term):

Subcommittee comments:

Suggest a section on how to handle hyphens. Nothing seems to exist in the ANSI/NISO standard. It may be that a statement to refer to the Chicago Manual of Style or Associated Press Stylebook is included

Section 6.4.3 (Acronyms and abbreviations):

Subcommittee comments:

Show examples of TRT preferred terms that are acronyms for clarity.

Section 6.4.5 (American form):

Subcommittee comments:

Would like to see a policy on how we handle non-American forms in the catalog. For example terms from the International Transportation Research Documentation (ITRD)

Is there a process for international terms from ITRD being included in the TRT?

Suggest including the process here for including those terms

Section 7.2 (Definitions):

Subcommittee comments:

Once the NCHRP 20-79 project is complete, we need to document the process of including definitions with new preferred terms. This process should be documented here including information on preferred authoritative should include a process for including new definition for new preferred terms.