Autumn 2021 Newsletter

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TRAIL Annual Meeting - follow-up

We are often asked to explain how TRAIL makes digitization decisions. It is impossible to give a definitive answer that will apply in all situations, but we can share some general principles. Decisions are based on selection criteria which include a review of material type, formats, physical condition, and copyright status. For gap fills we may forego material type in order to add content in an effort to complete a series. Sometimes the decision is based on the importance to our membership of digitizing a set of reports such as the current microcard scanning project. When material offered for digitization appears to meet basic TRAIL criteria, members of the Collections Working Group conduct a further evaluation which does not have a pre-determined sequence, but members try to cover all important factors. If unique material is in danger of being lost, extra attention is given to those items. In summary, TRAIL works to save technical reports and to make them widely available. It's a big job. Digitization decisions help to bring order to the work.

Microcard processing- Show and Tell session (10/4) - summary

On October 4th, Mark Phillips, Associate Dean for Digital Libraries at the University of North Texas (UNT), demonstrated how his unit is preparing digitized microcard images of technical reports for addition to the TRAIL collection. Many technical reports from the late-40s into the 60s were published on microcards, a format far more challenging than microfiche to digitize. After conducting two microcard scanning pilot projects with various commercial vendors, Mark negotiated with the successful vendor for his team to use the vendor's proprietary software to extract and correctly aggregate scans of each report page from the complete microcard scan provided by the vendor. These full card scans are tiff images that are 500-600 megabytes in size.

Mark demonstrated the vendor-created software, which was originally designed for dealing with scans of microfiche rather than microcard. Many images look "soft" because reports that were digitized for storage on microcards were not originally photographed at high resolution and they were scanned in grayscale. It was decided to not scan these microcards in bi-tonal because this would cause some loss of information, especially with graphics/illustrations. The individual report page files are organized into folders that represent the content of a single report. A quality control check is performed, then OCR files are created in PDF to make a searchable text file. One version of each report file is created for public viewing, while the original tiff files are kept for archival purposes.

Team members average processing about 15-17 cards per hour, before they go to quality control. At this rate the hope is to have imaging processing done by the end of August 2022. At this time 109,000 cards images for about 3000 reports have been scanned and parsed so far. Their next destination, cataloging!

Metrics Working Group update - data in Tableau

The Metrics Working Group consolidates data to help track TRAIL's impact. The working group has recently begun creating graphs to illustrate TRAIL's impact over time. Metrics Working Group Member Marina Zhang created the following graphs. For all graphs, the TRAIL fiscal year runs from July to June. For example, FY 2022 began in July 2021 and will end in June 2022.

Figure 1 shows the usage of content indicates the number of times TRAIL reports held at the University of North Texas (UNT) were accessed digitally during each fiscal year.

Figure 1

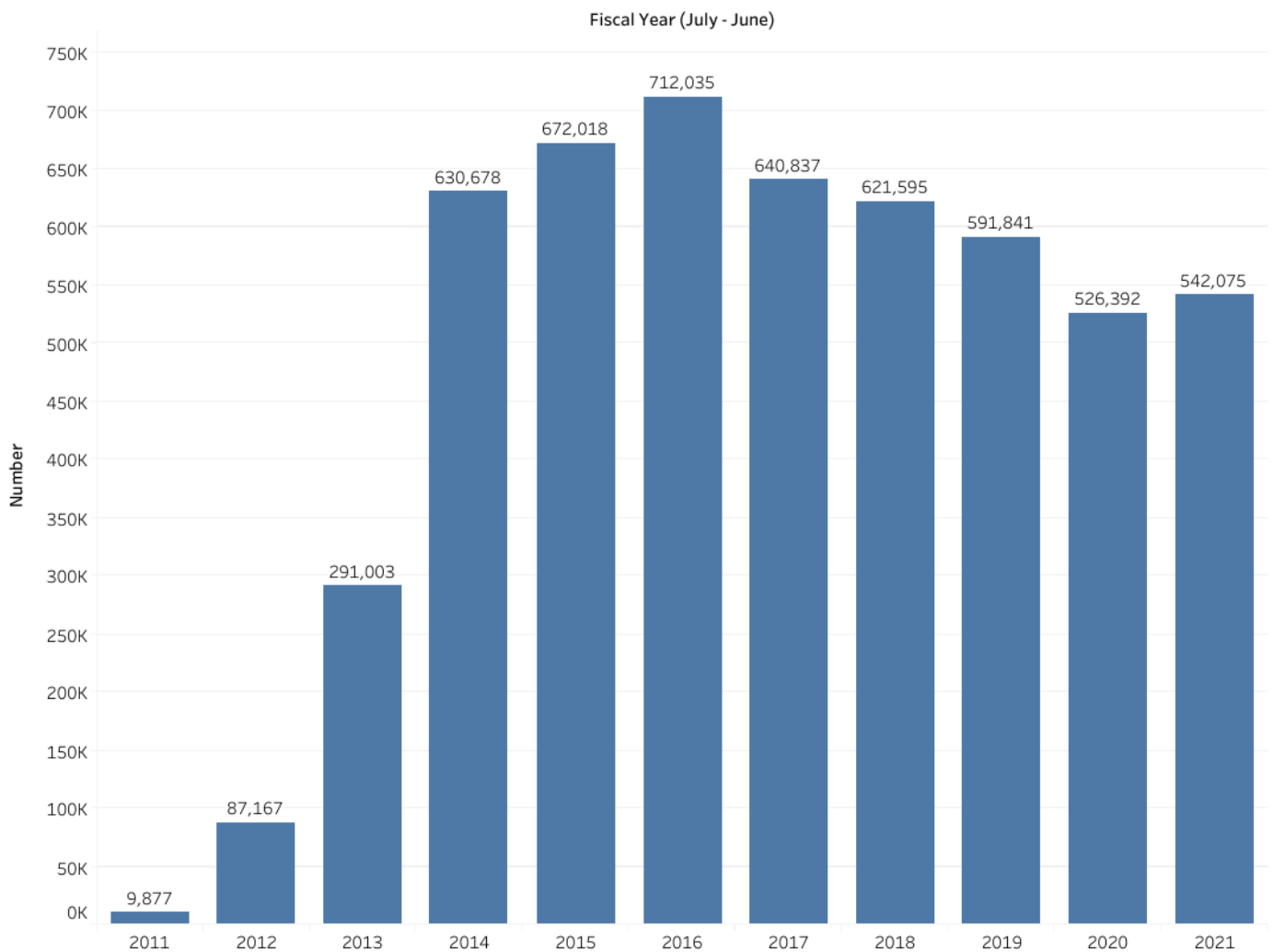## Usage of University of North Texas (UNT) Search Interface

Fiscal Year (July - June)

Figure 2 shows the usage of the University of Washington (UW) Search Interface (http://www.technicalreports.org). Data is captured by Google Analytics. A session is defined as a group of interactions one user takes within a given period on the website. The number of users is defined as the number of unique device and browser combinations the search interface.

Figure 2

Usage of University of Washington (UW) Search Interface: Sessions and Users
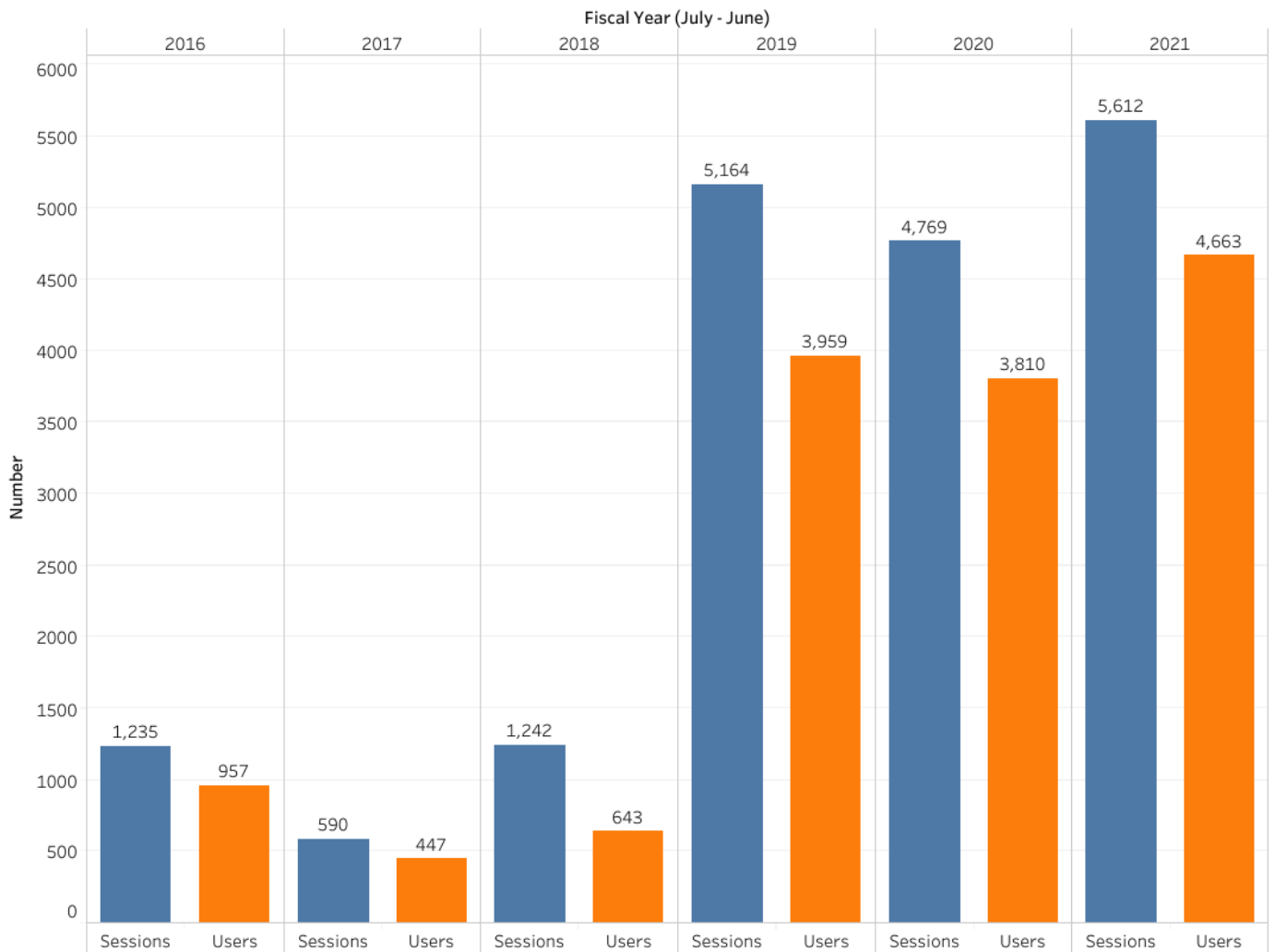

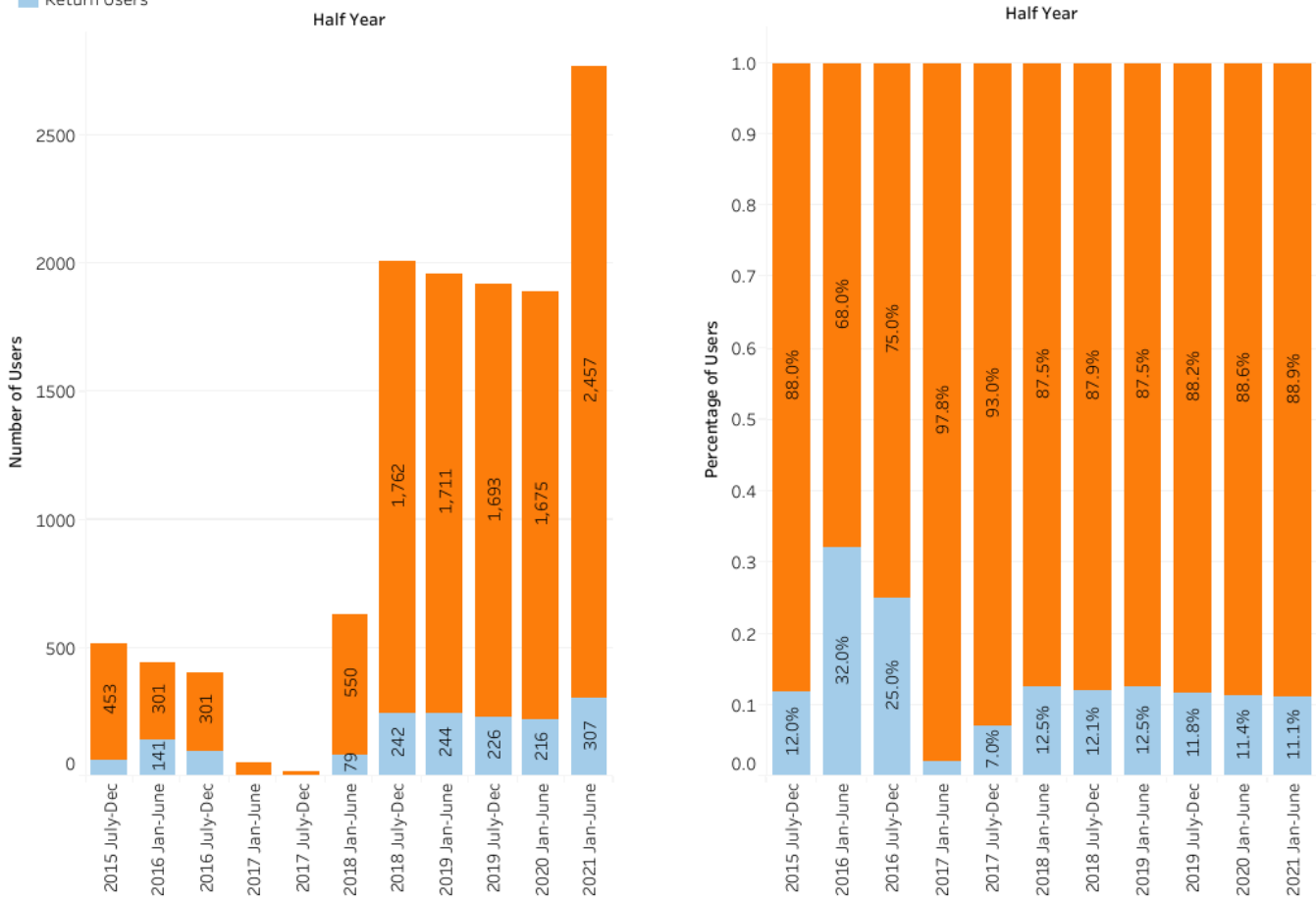Figure 3 shows new/return users. The number of new users means total accesses of the interface that come from a device/browser combination that has never accessed the interface previously. The number of return users means total accesses of the interface that come from a device/browser combination that has accessed the interface previously. The percentage reflects the percentage of total accesses.

Figure 3

Usage of University of Washington (UW) Search Interface: New Users and Return Users

Legend
- New Users (orange)
- Return Users (blue)

Half Year (Number of Users)

Half Year	New Users	Return Users
2015 July-Dec	453	
2016 Jan-June	301	141
2016 July-Dec	301	
2017 Jan-June		
2017 July-Dec		
2018 Jan-June	550	79
2018 July-Dec	1,762	242
2019 Jan-June	1,711	244
2019 July-Dec	1,693	226
2020 Jan-June	1,675	216
2021 Jan-June	2,457	307

Half Year (Percentage of Users)

Half Year	New Users	Return Users
2015 July-Dec	88.0%	12.0%
2016 Jan-June	68.0%	32.0%
2016 July-Dec	75.0%	25.0%
2017 Jan-June	97.8%	
2017 July-Dec	93.0%	7.0%
2018 Jan-June	87.5%	12.5%
2018 July-Dec	87.9%	12.1%
2019 Jan-June	87.5%	12.5%
2019 July-Dec	88.2%	11.8%
2020 Jan-June	88.6%	11.4%
2021 Jan-June	88.9%	11.1%

Fall Meeting - December 8th

Save the Date! Our now regular, semi-annual update meeting, which happens about 6 months after the annual meeting, will be held in early December. We look forward to having you join us for the updates on what's been happening recently.

December 8, 2021: 12-1 pm PST, 1-2 pm MST, 2-3 pm CST, 3-4 pm EST

Registration info/Zoom link to follow.

Processing Update

The University of Arizona Libraries (Central) has been active and busy, as usual, processing content for TRAIL. Some highlights:

- Dan and Sharon, TRAIL employees at Central, pulled several shelves of DOE, ERDA, and EPA content from the UA Science & Engineering Library for inclusion in TRAIL.
- We are currently working through a donation from the University of Washington while waiting to hear from HathiTrust if they will accept contractor reports donated this past summer from Stanford University. Recently the Government Publishing Office determined these contractor reports, with some exceptions, do meet the definition of a federal publication and could thus be made publicly available.
- As of this writing, none of the material from two pallets of content previously shipped to the Google scanning center at Michigan has yet showed up in HathiTrust's Digital Library. This is likely because of a significant backlog of material that accumulated at the center during the pandemic. We are 2 boxes short of being ready to ship out another 40-box pallet.
- The Colorado School of Mines is currently the test library for our microcard distributed cataloging workflow so we hope to have the kinks worked out soon and can bring on other volunteers to help.

Tech Report Highlight
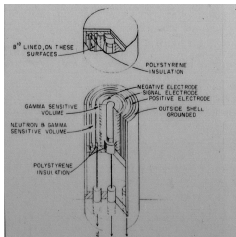
KIWI was a series of nuclear reactors, designed and built in the 1950s and 1960s as part of the Rover program, to develop the basic technology of nuclear thermal rockets for space vehicles. This report is from one of our microcard scans. See the complete report at https://digital.library.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metadc502359/m1/.

Get to Know TRAIL Member: Jen Kirk

Jen Kirk
Government Information Librarian

University - Utah State University

How are you involved in TRAIL? I currently serve as the Metrics Working Group Coordinator, which makes me part of the Steering Committee. I joined TRAIL in 2018 as a member of the Metrics Working Group (join us!).

Favorite TRAIL moment? Discovering the TRAIL inventories, which happened before I joined TRAIL. The inventories have helped me

describe several runs of uncataloged Atomic Energy Commission (AEC) materials in my federal depository collection.

Favorite Technical Report? "A basis for a performance specification for women's full-fashioned silk hosiery" http://technicalreports.org/trail/detail/12648/
This document challenges assumptions about both technical report subjects and the contents of government documents.

What is your favorite part of your job? Finding new government documents to share with students and faculty at Utah State. I love collection work.

What is your "typical" work week like?

I'm usually in the office from a little before 8 to a little after 5. I have several regular meetings both internal and external to the library, but aside from those I'm usually providing reference services or immersed in project work to improve access to government information. Depending on the time of year, I might be focused on collection work (inventorying materials, shifting collection items, collection development) or I might be focused on instruction and outreach. During the fall and spring, I teach library instruction to a variety of departments (e.g. History, Applied Sciences Technology & Education, Sociology, etc.) in partnership with liaison librarians at my institution. I also arrange small displays or events throughout the year.

I work with a tremendous staff who support collection work year round (1 full time staff member and 3-4 student staff). As a Regional Federal Depository Library Coordinator, I also manage collection and reference support to 15 selective depositories in Utah and Nevada. As a faculty member in the Special Collections & Archives unit, I also provide support to primary source instruction and the Tanner Reading Room at our library.

What are you reading now? I usually have an audio book in the queue for when I'm doing stacks work. Lately, I've been rereading all of Jane Austen's novels – the current one is *Persuasion*.

What are your favorite non-work activities? Woodworking and playing musical instruments (current instrument: ukulele). I once combined the two activities and built a mini hammered dulcimer (9/8 dulcimer).

Nov 12, 2021

Web address:
technicalreports.org