

NCHRP 20-75 – Implementing Transportation Knowledge Networks

Project Update

Transportation Library Connectivity Annual Meeting

Madison, Wisconsin

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NCHRP 20-75: Implementing Transportation Knowledge Networks Objectives

- Make a persuasive **business case** for action – describe the problem to be solved and what will be gained
- Identify and describe specific **products and services** for information sharing and access that will appeal to a broad range of stakeholders within and outside of the transportation library and research community
- Clearly describe a phased approach to full **implementation** of the recommendations in SR 284
- Identify **funding** mechanisms, organizational and staffing requirements
- Raise the level of **awareness** of and support for TKN's

NCHRP 20-75: Implementing Transportation Knowledge Networks Status

- Initial outreach completed
- Business plan with recommended products & services being drafted
- Interim report to NCHRP Panel due end of September
- Next steps (following panel review & comment on interim report):
 - Develop outreach materials
 - Conduct outreach
 - Document outreach effort and recommend next steps
 - Produce final report
- Project completion: October 2008

Initial Outreach for Input to the Business Plan

- Interviews with 20 diverse stakeholders from practitioner, research and library communities
- Online survey to provide opportunity for broader input
 - Publicized via TRB e-newsletter, Email lists: AASHTO RAC, TranLib, LTAP, CUTC
- 149 Responses
 - 103 (69%) from State DOTs
 - Remainder from USDOT, Universities, local agencies, consultants
 - 40% managers/executives; 18% librarians, remainder were engineers, planners, researchers, other professionals
- Provided useful information about:
 - Current sources of information
 - Perceived gaps in available information
 - Types of information services that would be of value
- Diversity of opinions about overall importance and specific needs

Range of Opinions

“There are more important issues that need to be addressed than libraries. When the legislature won't provide sufficient positions to do needed design, etc. enhancing library services is the least of my worries.”

-- a state DOT Manager/Executive

“As it stands these <transportation> libraries, relative to their peers ...are in an appalling state of arrested development...Other sectors figured this out long ago... The time for platitudes and excuses has come to an end. This is about smart business. What is stopping transportation?”

-- a state DOT Librarian

How would you invest \$10 million to improve ability of practitioners and researchers to find information when needed?

- Actions – from highest to lowest priority

1. National Transportation Information Archive
 2. National Coordinating Function
 3. Improved Transportation-Specific Search Tools
 4. Improved National Transportation Information Web Site
 5. Digitizing Paper Documents
 6. End Use Training on Finding Information
 7. Standards for Information Sharing
 8. Social Networking
 9. Marketing Campaign to Build Awareness of Need to Commit Resources
 10. Subscription Services to Keep Practitioners Informed
 11. Seed Grants for Improved in House Library Services
 12. Grants for Expanded Document Loan and Delivery Services
- > 40% rated High Priority**

Key Findings from Initial Outreach

- Support for **national efforts** but lack of clarity on purpose for regional TKNs
- Desire for **one-stop shopping** portal providing access to broad set of information resources - documents, data, photos, contacts
- Emphasize investments in **capture, digitization and access** to information rather than coordination, meetings and marketing
- Include **value-added services** to enhance and share information so that it is used – filtering, integrating, presenting, packaging
- Take broad view of information providers - **more than libraries**
- Incorporate products & services that are **practice focused** and topically oriented – especially targeted to new technologies, innovations and emerging issues
- Provide products and services that can be **leveraged** by individual organizations to address internal information sharing challenges
- Emphasize incremental investment to make existing efforts more effective, **not an expensive new initiative**

Business Case

What is the problem we are trying to solve?

Problem: Transportation professionals can't easily find the information they need to help them address today's critical and complex challenges

Causes:

- People are busy – very limited time windows for finding information
- Overwhelming number of places to look – multiple overlapping, uncoordinated sources
- Information of interest isn't being captured, preserved, or organized for easy use
- Current search tools don't yield satisfactory results – too many hits, too many misses
- Many practitioners can't or won't spend the time or money to obtain information that is not available for free in electronic form from their desktops
- Many practitioners don't have access to a good transportation library, or are reluctant to ask for assistance from an information professional

Impacts:

- **Lack of progress** - actions are taken without building on prior experience
- **Risk exposure** - organizations losing their “brain trust” due to retirements don't have good information resources to draw upon to help the next generation
- **Inefficient use of limited research dollars** – paying for the same information multiple times, information not getting to people that can benefit from it
- **Wasted time** – to search through multiple sources, seeking items of value

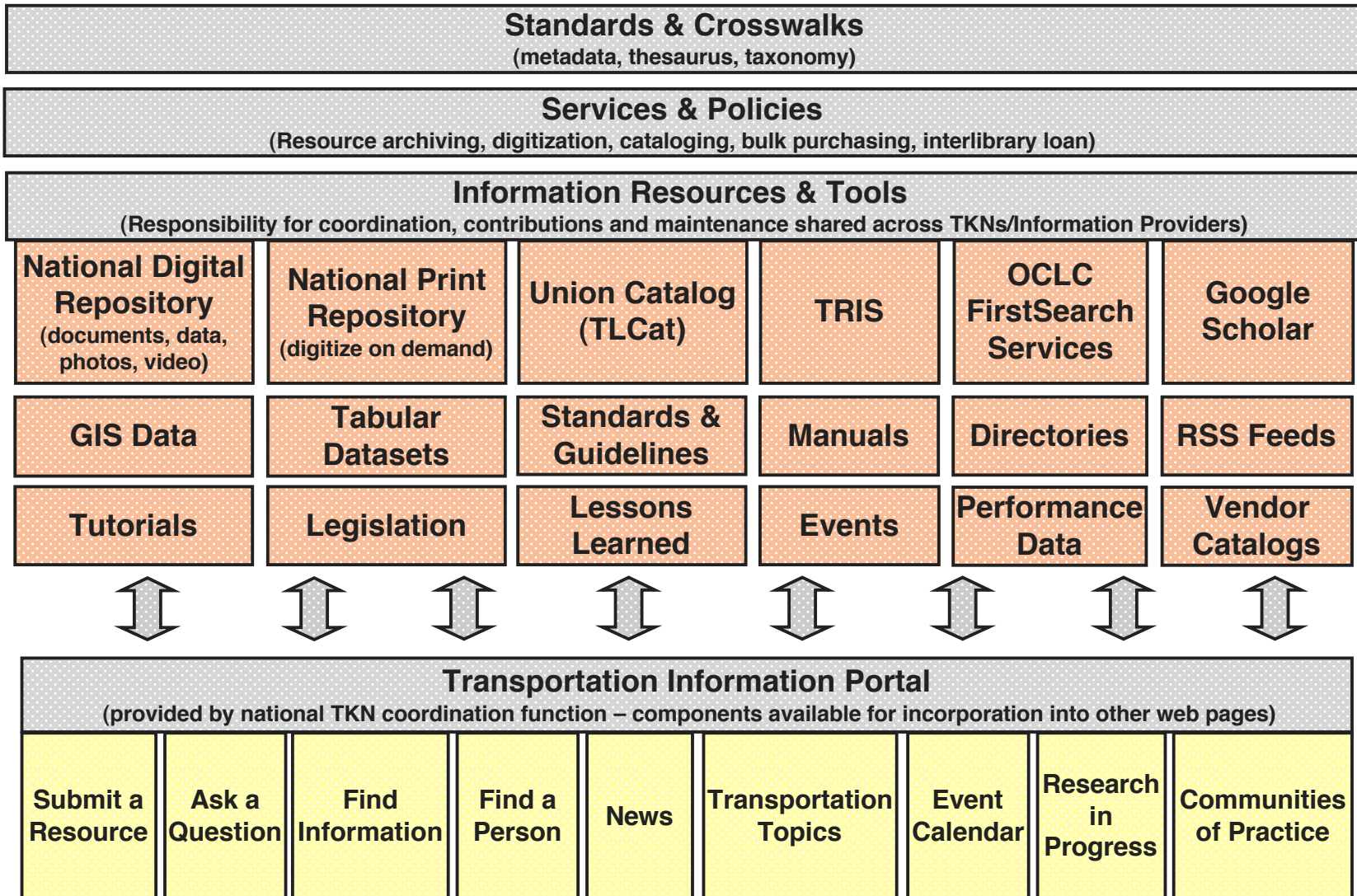
Products & Services

Desired End Results

- Strong network of transportation information providers pooling resources to provide exemplary service in tune with user needs
- National transportation information portal - modular and expandable
- Existing transportation information collections easily findable through desktop search engines – with growing number of direct links to documents and datasets
- Ongoing collection and preservation of valuable transportation information resources – coordinated and strategically targeted
- Central digital and print archives –with quick and easy way for transportation organizations to contribute material
- Greater access to fee-based information resources – journals, databases

Transportation Information Infrastructure

(one possible vision)



Comments or Questions?

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