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Profile of a Library: Institute of Transportation Studies Library, University of California, Berkeley

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by John Gallwey
ITS Library

The official title is the Harmer E. Davis Transportation Library, but it is more commonly known as the Institute of Transportation Studies Library (ITSL), the Berkeley Transportation Library, or (locally) simply the Transportation Library or "the library."

Situated on the fourth floor of McLaughlin Hall, the original UC Berkeley Engineering Building, the library serves the faculty, students, researchers, and staff of the multicampus Institute of Transportation Studies. Named for the institute's founder, it is the oldest transportation library in the United States, having been established in 1948 just after the founding of the Institute itself. Indeed, the very first staff member Harmer E. Davis hired was librarian Beverley Hickok, who served as the library's director until her retirement in 1980.

While the oldest transportation library in the United States, ITSL can no longer claim to be the largest. It is now surpassed in size by the U.S. Department of Transportation library in Washington, D.C., and the Transportation Library of Northwestern University in Evanston, Illinois, but it is easily the largest west of the Mississippi.

ITSL has been in its present location since 1964. In earlier years, both the library and the institute were situated at the UC Berkeley Field Station in Richmond, about eight miles north of Berkeley. At the Berkeley campus, ITSL is an "affiliated library"— one of several subject-specialist libraries that operate independently of the UC-Berkeley main library system.

Collections

The library's holdings date back to 1948 and before. The collection is multimodal, interdisciplinary, and international in scope, containing about 177,000 monographs (books, technical reports, conferences, etc.); 4,800 serials, of which about 1,000 are current titles; 146,000 microfiche (primarily federally sponsored technical reports received from the National Technical Information Service); and a small but growing collection of CD-ROMs, videos, and DVDs.

As a U.S. federal and State of California depository, the library receives material from the federal transportation agencies. It holds copies of nearly all federally sponsored reports on transportation published since 1974. Items are also regularly received from state DOTs and academic transportation research institutes across the United States. Much foreign material also comes in, primarily from Canada (including French-language publications from Quebec), Australia, and several western European countries (mainly the United Kingdom, France, Germany, Netherlands, Sweden, and Finland).

The collections are particularly strong in urban transportation, highway and traffic engineering, aviation (airports, airlines, aeronautics in general), rail transportation, and intelligent transportation systems.

Staffing

The Library has four full-time professional staff members, four library assistants, and five temporary student employees. At present the professional staff includes Daniel Krummes, library director; Rita Evans, reader services and reference; Seyem Petrites, electronic resources librarian for contract services; and John Gallwey, technical services and outreach. The other permanent staff members are Paul Hernandez, library operations manager; Sean Mooney, circulation; Victoria Chan, interlibrary loans manager; and Rahul Kamath, serials manager and Webmaster.

Services

The library primarily serves the faculty, students, researchers, and staff of the Institute of Transportation Studies in UC Berkeley, UC Davis, UC Irvine, and UCLA. Service is also available to the UC Berkeley community, non-UC corporate bodies, and the general public.

We make a special effort to maintain awareness of our services to the three non-Berkeley branches of the Institute. As outreach librarian, I visit the Davis, Irvine, and Los Angeles campuses at least once a year, taking part in orientation sessions for new students and speaking at the annual ITS students' conference. Students and faculty at these campuses are encouraged to regard the library as their own and are supplied directly with free loans or photocopies from its collections. I am also available to open the library on weekends for visitors from the other ITS branches, though this offer has been availed of only a few times (after all, the Bay Area has other attractions on any weekend, for sure!).

All services to non-Berkeley ITS members are supplied for free.

To encourage use by companies and research bodies from outside UC Berkeley, the library has a Corporate Circle membership plan, which for a low annual fee offers expanded access hours, borrowing privileges, and expedited interlibrary loan service.

Interlibrary Loan

The library provides a very efficient and busy interlibrary loan service. An average of 150 items (monographs, audiovisuals, and photocopies) are supplied each month. Free service is provided to transportation research bodies in the state of California.

Cataloging Activities

The library is a major source of cataloging for publications in transportation research. In addition to creating bibliographic records for monographs, we produce a large number of analytics for journal and magazine articles and individual conference papers, for which we have provided full cataloging. Analytics have been created for about 103,000 articles and papers.

We have been cataloging online since 1979 and are among the most prolific contributors of transportation cataloging to the OCLC WorldCat database. Our average production per month is 600 records for monographs and 450 records for analytics.

Our catalog records appear in the University of California's Melvyl online catalog (www.cdlib.org); the OCLC international bibliographic utility and OCLC's WorldCat; and the Transportation Research Information Service (TRIS) database, the world's largest transportation database, distributed via the World Wide Web as a Dialog subscription database and on the Transport CD.

Regarding TRIS, ITSL is a contributor of bibliographic records to the Transportation Research Board's TLIB project. Since 1985, we have contributed bibliographic records for journal articles (and until very recently monographs) free of charge to TLIB for inclusion in TRIS.

Special Projects

PATH Database

The library has developed the PATH database, the world's largest online database on intelligent transportation systems. Launched in 1987 and funded by the California PATH Program, it contains more than 28,000 fully abstracted records and grows by 250–300 added records per month. PATH

Database is available online at http://www4.nationalacademies.org/trb/tris.nsf/web/path.

PATH Database's records were added to the TRIS database in May 2000 and have also become part of the online National Transportation Library.

California Local Technical Assistance Program (LTAP)

As part of its LTAP commitment, the library provides specialized reference service and circulates materials free of charge to California and other transportation agencies at the local level. Many items available for distribution are also referenced in a *Resources Guide* maintained by project staff. Additionally, library professional staff write bibliographies that appear in *Tech Transfer.*

Caltrans/TRIS (C/TRIS) Abstracting Project

This LTAP project provides specialized cataloging and abstracting for research reports sponsored by the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans). Records generated are submitted directly to the Transportation Research Board for inclusion in its national TRIS Database. This ensures that Caltrans research reports are listed in the TRIS database in a timely manner.

B/TRIS Indexing Project

The library's B/TRIS project, undertaken in cooperation with the Transportation Research Board (TRB), began operation in February 2001. In accordance with our agreement, library staff index and abstract periodical articles from specific journal titles for direct input into TRB's TRIS Database. Five library and ITS Berkeley staff are currently working on this project under the supervision of Seyem Petrites.

Calendar Projects

With its neighbor library, the Water Resources Center Archives, ITSL has for several years been jointly producing calendars with water and transportation themes, featuring historic photographs of the Bay Area. The calendars are used to market and promote ITSL services, with copies distributed gratis to University of California engineering faculty and local, state, and national transportation administrators and researchers. The calendars are also available for purchase as part of the library's ongoing fund-raising efforts.

The 2004 calendar, titled *Building Our Bridges,* features twelve high-quality snapshots of the San Francisco-Oakland Bay Bridge and the Carquinez Bridge, taken throughout various phases of their construction.

ITSL as a meeting place

The library also serves as a center for meetings and social gatherings. It is the venue for the institute's social gathering of students and faculty each Friday afternoon during the semester, and the monthly Traffic Safety Center seminar series.
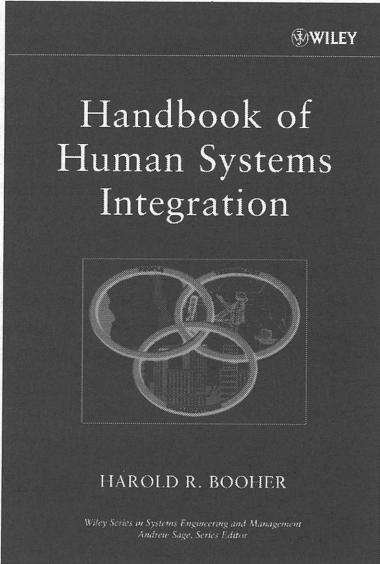
Recent meetings at ITSL included the Women In Transportation's annual fall seminar, an Institute of Transportation Engineers presentation to institute students, a lunch meeting between ITS faculty and Association of America Railroads personnel, and a reception for a delegation from the U.S. DOT's Research and Special Programs Administration.

Access

ITSL is open Monday through Friday, 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. during semesters.

The library's Web site (http://www.lib.berkeley.edu/ITSL) provides information on our location, hours, staff, and latest news. The site underwent a major redesign during the past summer, transforming our home page into a gateway to online sources of transportation information, featuring links to federal agency sites and approximately 114 online journals of interest to transportation researchers.

You can also follow the link to the Institute of Transportation Studies' four branches for information on their research, faculty, staff, and students.