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FREE TEXT VERSUS UNCONTROLLED VOCABULARY

A PERFORMANCE COMPARISON

Thomas F. Lahr

Defense Technical Information Center

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Information Science Intern Program

24 December 1980

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BACKGROUND

The objective of this study is to evaluate the retrieval effectiveness of the Technical Reports (TR) database of the Defense RDT&E On-Line System (DROLS) when a free text generated index file is used instead of indexer assigned uncontrolled vocabulary.

The documents in the Technical Reports database are assigned various posting terms from the thesaurus or controlled vocabulary (<u>DTIC Retrieval</u> and <u>Indexing Terminology-DRIT</u>). In addition, indexers have the option of assigning terms not found in the controlled vocabulary which are known as identifiers or open-ended terms.

These terms have historically been assigned along with the controlled vocabulary, to pick up topics where a main idea or concept of a report is not covered in the thesaurus. An identifier was assigned to describe a very specific item, usually an alpha-numeric, which would represent a project, code name, equipment model number, etc. Examples of identifiers are: F 104 Fighter, AN/SPS-39, and Plumbob Project. Open-ended terms have been assigned to describe new technology or concepts, acronyms, author suggested terms, etc. Previously a distinction was made in the database as to whether a term was an identifier or an open-ended term, but currently they are both labelled as identifiers in the Techical Reports file.

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Accession For NTIS GRA&I DTIC TAB Unannounced Justification By_ Distribution/ Availability Codes Avail and/or Special Dist

The free text file in the TR database contains single words taken from the titles and abstracts and are directly searchable. The free text inverted file consists of:

(1) Alphabetic, alphanumeric or numeric strings of characters up to 60 characters in length.

(2) All special characters (commas, periods, slash marks, colons,

etc.) are converted to blanks which serve as term delimiters.

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(3) A term which is present on the stop word list is discarded (see Attachment A).

As an example, the following Technical Report abstract will provide the listed free text terms.

A SELECTIVE DETECTION SCHEME FOR ATOMS IN THE METASTABLE 2S STATE OF HYDROGEN THAT PROVIDES THE HIGH SPATIAL RESOLUTION (0.1 CM) NECESSARY FOR TIME-OF-FLIGHT ATOMIC BEAM STUDIES IS DESCRIBED. THE SCHEME UTILIZES THE LYMAN PHOTON EMITTED WHEN THE METASTABLE IS DE-EXCITED IN AN ELECTRIC FIELD VIA THE STARK EFFECT. DETAILS OF CONSTRUCTION AND OPERATION ARE DISCUSSED.

	UTIMU V
ATOMIC	DETAILS
BEAM	CONSTRUCTION
STUDIES	OPERATION
DESCRIBED	DISCUSSED
SCHEME	
UTILIZES	
LYMAN	
PHOTON	
EMITTED	
METASTABLE	
DE	
EXCITED	
ELECTRIC	
FIELD	
VIA	
	ATOMIC BEAM STUDIES DESCRIBED SCHEME UTILIZES LYMAN PHOTON EMITTED METASTABLE DE EXCITED ELECTRIC FIELD VIA

This report will assess the retrieval effectiveness of specific terms searched in both the free text system and as identifiers/open-ended terms using the records for 150,000 entries in the Technical Reports data base.

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METHODOLOGY

A collection of terms was put together which are felt to be representative of typical terms that a DROLS user might come up with during a search, not found in the <u>DTIC Retrieval and Indexing Terminology</u>. A total of 212 terms were chosen to be searched. Of these, 100 to 125 were chosen from the "Combined Frequency Count" which is a multivolume, alphabetical listing of DRIT terms and identifiers, along with their frequency of occurence in the DROLS databases. These specific words were used in order to assure a number of search terms with known hits as identifiers in the Technical Reports file. In contrast to this, approximately 75 to 100 words or word phrases were chosen without reference to the "Combined Frequency Count". Most of them relate in some way to the subject content of the TR database. Also included is a sampling of subject areas not normally connected to the Department of Defense, but which may be representative of certain needs of DROLS users, and of which research may have been performed by DOD.

The test was done on each individual term (a term may be one or more words, or alphanumerics, not found in the DRIT) not on specific searches, strategies, or combination of terms.

After the approximately 200 search terms were chosen, they were individually searched in the Technical Reports database using the terms as indexer assigned keywords. Since the free text file was only loaded for a certain set of AD (Accessioned Document) number ranges (AD900000-AD924000, ADA000001-ADA075000, ADB000001-ADB045000), the searches were limited to those ranges only. It was decided that terms having up to 15
hits would be included in the relevancy check. Occurences greater than 15
were included in the overall totals, but not in the relevancy count.
Bibliographies were ordered for the search terms with up to 15 hits. All
bibliographies were then checked for relevancy to the term searched. If
there were any questions as to the relevancy of a specific item, a copy of
the document itself was reviewed and rated. All items in each bibliography
were designated as relevant, marginally relevant, or not relevant.

Searches of the same terms were done on the free text file. Terms containing more than one word were searched using the Boolean operator "AND" (in the keyword system they had been searched on one level as a single multiword index term). A term such as AGENT ORANGE would be searched in the following manner:

As an identifier-

@STR@ AGENT ORANGE END

In the free text file-@STR@ AGENT AND ORANGE END

In the free text test, if a search term resulted in more than 15 hits, a qualifying search was done, performing a text scan on the hits.

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This utilized the ability to string search (search based on the physical relationship of the words in the term). Text scan was done only if the term had more than one word or alphanumeric grouping in it. Single words were not qualified by string searching. Bibliographies were then ordered for those terms having 15 hits or less.

Again, all the bibliographic references for each term were checked for relevancy to the term searched, and each item was designated as relevant, marginally relevant, or not relevant. In any instances where the relevancy was in doubt, a copy of the document itself was looked at and checked. Relevancy statistics are presented only for terms having 15 or less hits in both the identifier and free text systems. RESULTS

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The 212 terms searched produced a total of 334 hits as identifiers, and 5998 hits in the free text system (this was reduced to 3930 hits after string searching of multiple word terms). Of these, 52 terms (24.53%) had no hits in either system and 38 terms (17.92%) had greater than 15 hits in both systems and therefore not checked for relevancy.

Of the 212 terms, slightly greater than 50% (122 terms) provided a number of hits (0-15) which were then checked for relevancy Twelve terms produced hits as identifiers, with no hits in the free text system. Forty eight terms had hits in the free text, with none as identifiers. Sixty two terms resulted in hits in both systems. In totaling these up for the relevancy count, the 122 terms searched as identifiers resulted in 187 hits, and in the free text system 596 hits. The 187 hits from the identifier searches consist of 103 that were determined to be relevant (55.08%), 73 that were marginally relevant (39.04%), and 11 hits not relevant (5.88%). In the 596 free text hits, 313 were found to be relevant (52.53%), 217 marginally relevant (36.41%), and 66 hits not relevant (11.07%).

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DISCUSSION

The conclusion that one can draw from the results of the test is that the use of the free text searching produces approximately three times as many hits as using identifiers/open-ended terminology, with only a slight (2.5%) decrease in the relevancy of the items retrieved. There are instances of items not found in the controlled vocabulary where the use of free text is beneficial, such as variant spellings and word forms, alphanumerics, chemical terminology, foreign names, proper names, etc. The free text searching technique becomes an additional means for the search analyst to augment the search performance of the system. It allows the searcher to get at specifics that the controlled vocabulary does not directly address. Naturally, there are terms that one would not normally use in a free text system, where use of the controlled vocabulary and a defined search strategy would be necessary to narrow down the results. In this study, some of the searches that were not checked for relevancy, because the results numbered in the hundreds, would have to be further defined using search alternatives and perhaps some of them would not necessarily be searched using free text. Free text searching provides a viable alternative to the use of uncontrolled vocabulary and in any retrieval system can prove to be a valuable tool.

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ATTACHMENT A

HOW HOWEVER IF

IN INTO IS IT ITS ITSELF JUST KEEP KEPT KG KM

IMMEDIATELY IMPORTANCE IMPORTANT

KNOWLEDGE LARGELY LIKE MADE MAINLY MAKE MANY MAY MG MIGHT ML MORE MOST MOSTLY MUCH MUG MUST NEARLY NEARLY

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NOR

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TEST STOP WORDS IN THE TECHNICAL REPORT DATA BASE

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ACCORDINGLY	CERTAIN
AFFECT	CERTAINLY
AFFECTED	CFRD
AFFECTION	COPYRIGHT
AFFECTS	COULD
AFTER	CRD
AGAIN	DID
AGAINST	DIFFERENT
ALL	DO
ALMOST	DOES
ALREADY	DONE
ALSO	DUE
ALTHOUGH	DURING
ALWAYS	EACH
AMONG	EFFECT
AN	EFFECTS
AND	EITHER
ANOTHER	ELSE
ANY	ENOUGH
ANYONE	ESPECIALLY
APPARENTLY	ETC
ARE	EVER
ARISE	EVERY
AS	FOLLOW
ASIDE	FOLLOWING
AT	FOR
AUTHOR	FOUND
AWAY	FROM
BE	FURTHER
BECAME	FY
BECAUSE	GAVE
BECOME	GETS
BECOMES	GIVE
BEEN	GIVEN
BEFORE	GIVING
BEING	GONE
BETWEEN	COT
BOTH	ILAD
BRIEFLY	HARDLY
BUT	HAS
BY	HAVE
C	HAVING
CAME	HERE

A-1

TEST STOP WORDS (cont.)

NOTED NOW OBTAIN **OBTAINED** OF OFTEN ON ONLY OR OTHER OUGHT OUR OUT **OVERALL** OWING PARTICULARLY PAST PERHAPS PLEASE POORLY POSSIBLE POSSIBLY POTENTIALLY PREDOMINANTLY PRESENT PREVIOUSLY PRIMARILY PROBABLY PROMPT PROMPTLY QUICKLY QUITE RATHER READILY REALLY RECENTLY REGARDING REGARDLESS RELATIVELY RESPECTIVELY RESULTED RESULTING RESULTS S SAID

SAME SEEM SEEN SEVERAL SFRD SHALL SHOULD SHOW SHOWED SHOWN SHOWS SIGNIFICANTLY SIMIALR SIMILARLY SINCE SLIGHTLY S0 SOME SOMETIME SOMEWHAT SOON SPECIFICALLY SRD STATE STATES STRONGLY SUBSTANTIALLY SUCCESSFULLY SUCH SUFFICIENTLY THAN THAT THE THEIR THEIRS THEM THEN THERE THEREFORE THESE THEY THIS THOSE THOUGH THROUGH

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THROUGHOUT

ATTACHMENT B-TOTALS, STATISTICS AND RELEVANCY

		HITS	PERCENTAGE
212	Terms Searched	6332	
	Identifiers/Open-ended Free Text	334 5998	5.27% 94.73%
	After string search of 30 of the 212 terms (in free text only)	4264	
	Identifiers/Open-ended Free Text	334 3930	7.83% 92.17%

TOTALS

STATISTICS

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		HITS/TERM	PERCENTAGE
52 Terms			24.53%
Iden	tifiers/Open-ended	0	
Free	Text	0	
38 Terms			17.92%
Iden	tifiers/Open-ended	GT 15	
Free	Text	GT 15	
122 Term:	s Checked for Relevancy		57.55%
Iden	tifiers/Open-ended	0-15	
Free	Text	0-15	
(a)	12 Terms		5.66%
	Identifiers/Open-ended	1-15	
	Free Text	0	
(b)	48 Terms		22.64%
	Identifiers/Open-ended	0	
	Free Text	1-15	
(c)	62 Terms		29.25%
	Identifiers/Open-ended	1-15	
	Free Text	1-15	

RELEVANCEY

		HITS/TERM	HITS TOTAL	PERCENTAGE
122	TERMS		783	
	Identifiers/Open-ended	0-15	187	23.88%
	103 Hits relative			55.08%
	73 Hits marginally r	elative		39.04%
	11 Hits not relative			5.88%
	Free Text	0-15	596	76.12%
	313 Hits relative			52.53%
	217 Hits marginally r	elative		39.04%
	66 Hits not relative			11.07%

C

D

TERM	HITS	REL	MARG	NOT	HITS	STRING	REL	MARG	NOT
55 MM HOWITZERS	0				14		5	6	3
ACETAMETAP HYN	Ō				0		-	Ŭ	
AGENT ORANGE	0			1	3	ĺ		1	2
AIRCRAFT PICKETING	0				0				Į
N/GSQ-120	3	2			3	4	3	2	
N/525-39 N/TSU		1	2		12		12	2	
APERTURE CARDS	lō	•			3		ĩ		2
ARAMID	3	1	2		15] .	11	4	[_
ARCADENE PROPELLANT	0				0]			ļ
ARMY CHAPLAINS		1			4]	3]	1
ARSENALS		1					E	1	
AKIIFICAL FUG APTIFICAL INSEMIMATION		T					2	1	1 ²
ATMOSPHERIC ABSORPTION	4				179	43			1
TOMIC ENERGY COMMISSION	0				18	17	1	[í
ASIAN INFLUENZA	0		1		1		1		ļ
BAGGAGE	3	1	1	1	10	1	2	8	l
BAKED HAM								1	Į
AARENI PRODUCIS							12	1	1
SATTLEFIELD ILLUMINATION	2	2			12		7	2	3
SENZENE HEXACHLORIDE	0			l	1	ļ	1	ĺ	1
BETA MODELS	0]	1	21	0		1	
BEVERLY	0	_	1		0	!	_		ļ
BICYCLES	3	1		2	2	l		1	1
STONTE SUNAR					22		c		ł
BLACK HOLES	3	3	1	1	3		2	1	1
BOMB TESTS	0	-		1	188	9	4	5	1
BURG MAXIMUM ENTROPY METHOD	0				4		3	1	
CARRIER PIGEONS	0		!	1	Ō	l		ł	Ì
CHAIN GUN	0				6	ł	2	ł	4
CHEMICAL DEMULSIFICATION	1	1		1	1	ł	1	ļ	ļ
CHIRT (0		.						ļ
	3	2					2	9	l
CODE READING	3	1	2	I				2	ł
CRUDE EMULSIONS	ŏ	-	1	ł	Ō	Ì		1 -	ĺ
D2 PLASMA	0			ł	1	1		1	ł
DRAGON	0		1	1	32	ł		ļ	1
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	IDENT	IFIER	s/open-	ENDED		FREE	TEXT	MARCE	NOT
TERM	HITS	REL	MARG	NOT	HITS	SIRING	KEL	<u>riako</u>	NUT .
KNAPSACKS	1	1			1			1	•
KRAKATOA	1		1	Ì	0				1
LABORATORY RODENTS	0			Į				0.	•
LAND BASED OPERATIONS		(L	[10		5	1	4
LASER GUNS		[{	253	19		-	•
LASER SCATTERING				{	3		2	1	
	1	1				}	1		
LAUNCHING CHUIES	Ô				10 *	•	3	7	
LAUNUKI WASIL WAILA	Ō	}	1		19	11	6	5	
LEAD SOLFIDE	6				28	19	{		
LIGHTNING BUGS	0	1	}	1	0	} .	1	_	
LNG TERMINALS	0	1		1	2)	1	1	
MARK 48 TORPEDO	0	1		1	2	1	2		
MARLINESPIKE SEAMANSHIP	0		1	1					
MAXIMUM LIKELIHOOD METHOD	1	Į		1	86	23			
MAYDAY	0					Į			
METAL CARBONITRIDES		1 4	2				4	6	4
MIDSHIPMEN		0	2			ł			·
MINE CLIMATOLOGY		}							
MINIATURE BALLBEARING		1 1	1		10	1	9	1	
MIXED GAS BREATHING APPARATUS		l i	1	}	2	}	1	1	ł
MOLASSES	i ô				Ō	1		{	1
MUNCUT AN CERBILS	2	1	1		4	1		4	
MONOCAMY	0		1	1	0	1	1	}	j
MOONWATCH	0	ł	1	}	0	}	}	}	
MOONOUAKES	0	ł	1	1	0			1	}
MOPED	1	1	}	}	1		1	1	1.
MOVING MINES	0	1						l	
MUSK OX	0				0				
MX	0	1			155		6	· ,	
NATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY ACT	4		4	1.		0			
NATIONAL GOALS		3			1 1 0 0	9			
NATIONAL GOVERNMENT	8				109		5		{
NATIONAL HEALTH INSURANCE		2			1 72	23			1
NATIONAL INTEREST		1 2		{	0		{		{
NERVE GASES	6				1			1	
NEWI NUCLEAD CIVIL DDEDADEDNESS	1 i	i i	1	1	15	1	13	2	1
NUCLEAR CIVIL FREFAREDINESS	ī	ſ			275	79			
NUDE MICE	1	1 1	1	1	8	1	2	6	
NUDET	0		1	1	0))	
OIL EMBARGO	1	1			21	14	8	2	4
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	IDENT	IFIER	S/OPEN-	ENDED		FREE	TEXT		
TERM	HITS	REL	MARG	NOT	HITS	STRING	REL	MARG	N
PTICAL BONDS	0				5				
FAMIT BUTTER	0				,	0	5	2	ł
HASE TRANSITION MATERIALS	Ő				25	0			1
HASE TRANSTITON PATERIALS	0	· ·			25	0			1
ILING	0				19				
	0				10				
	0								
PECAST CONCRETE	1		1		12				ł
PESSIDE DOINTS	•		1		03	4	4	0	
INK WATED	6	5	1		17	4			
INK WAIER	2	2	L		1/	13		4	}
	2	-			0 E/	15	· -		
ADIATIONS FEFECTS (UNANS)	2				54	15		Ö	Į
ADTAILONS EFFECTS (HUMANS)	2	2	2	•			1.0		
AT LO DECEC	5	,	2	L	14		10	3	
AINFORESIS	3	I	2		1		L	_	
ARE GAS COMPOUNDS	1		L		Z,				[
ED LATED	U				4			3	Į
LU WATER	6	4	2		59	12	3	9]
LFLEMANS ASSUALT WEAPON	0				0				
	0				2			2	
LPCORD HANDLES	0				0				
LPRAP	17				54				
DSS ICE SHELF	2	2		}	3		2	1	
ACCHAR IN	2	2			2		2		
AILBOATS	0				1			1	
ALIMANDERS	0				0				
ALT DOMES	3	1	1	1	0				
ALT MARSHES	22				9				
AND DUNES	7				16				
ATELLITE DETECTION	4	3	1		51	3	1	2	
ATURN	7		7		13		5	8	
JIENCE	3				716				
CHOOL DROPOUTS	0				0				
CUBA DIVING EQUIPMENT	0				6		5	1	
CUBA EQUIPMENT	0			Ì	8		6	1	
LA COWS	1 (1	Í	Í	1			1	
IIP ACCIDENTS	3	2	1	1	6		6		
YCRANE	0				4		2	2	
IL LIQUIFICATION	0				0				
'S-39 RADAR	0			Í	1			1	
¿UIB	0				27				
\$N688	0	í	Í	1	2		1	1	
INGER	0				23			-	
JPERTANKERS	3	2	1		0				
JPERRESOLUTION	Ó	1			2		2		
'S-39 RADAR QUIB SN688 INGER JPERTANKERS JPERRESOLUTION	0 0 0 0 3 0	2	1		2	1 27 2 3 0 2	1 27 2 3 0 2	1 27 2 1 3 0 2 2 2 2	1 1 2 1 3 1 0 2 2 2

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Conservation of the local data

······	IDENTIFIERS/OPEN-ENDED			FREE TEXT					
TERM	HITS	REL	MARG	NOT	HITS	STRING	REL	HARG	NOT
TAMBOURINE NUCLEAR DEVICES	0		_	1	0				
TANK PERISCOPES	4	3	1		2			1	1
TAX WRITEOFFS	1		1		0				
TECHNOLOGICAL GROWTH	2	2			33	3	1	2	
TELEPHONE OPERATORS	2	1	1		5		1	2	2
TELEVISIONS PROGRAMS	7	6	1		7		3	4	
THERMAL NOISE	11				98	22	ļ		ļ
TIME OF FLIGHT	9				936	76	9		1
TOMATOES	2	2			4		3	1	1
TRUMAN DOCTRINE	2	1	1		2		2		
UDMH	0				27		ļ		ļ
UNDERGROUND STORAGE	5	3	1	1	32	9	4	5	ļ
UNITED KINGDOM	2				125	119	}		ļ
UNSYMETRICAL DIMETHYL HYDRAZINE	0				0		ł		
USERS GUIDE	4				138	74			
VENUS ATMOSPHERE	1	1			4		3		1
VIETNAM WAR	15				100	38			1
VIOLET	5				64		1		
VOICE PRINTS	1		1		0		[
VOLATILE LIQUIDS	0				8		4	3	1
VOLUNTEER ENLISTMENT	0				21	1	1		ł
VOTERS	3	2		1	3		3		1
WAR PRISONERS	0				29	0	{		(
WARTS	0			1	1		{		1
WATER STORAGE	3		2	1	175	8	3	3	2
WEALTH	1				39				1
WHEEL CHAIRS	2		2		0		í –		
WHIPPED CREAM	$\overline{1}$		1		0		í		ł
WINDMILLS	6	6			3		2	1	
WINE	4	÷	4		2		_	2	
WITCH DOCTORS	l o				ō		·	_	
WOLF PACKS	l ĭ	1		ľ	l i		1		
WORK ENVIRONMENT	3				370	38	[_		
WORLD EVENTS	Ő			1	46	5	1	4	
7 AP MISSILFS	ı i		1	0		-	- 1		
7FRRAS	l ô		-	Ŭ	0				
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LINCON			-				Ĭ	5	
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