

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS COLLECTIONS POLICY STATEMENTS

Technical Reports, Working Papers, and Preprints

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I. Scope

This statement describes the Library's collection policies for technical reports, working papers, and preprints, in all subjects. These formats for publication are used by researchers or contractors to inform sponsoring agencies, peers, or others of the progress of research. This policy statement covers these formats when issued either by government or non-government publishers, or from both domestic and non-U.S. sources. This statement is further limited to technical reports, working papers, and preprints that are issued in numbered or otherwise clearly identifiable series. Some technical reports, working papers, and preprints may be collected on a case-by-case basis rather than as a series, in which case they will fall under the Library's other Collections Policy Statements by subject rather than this Collections Policy Statement.

Although the Library of Congress has a separate custodial Technical Reports collection, all Recommending Officers in appropriate fields are responsible for identifying series of technical reports, working papers, and preprints that are of interest to the Library's legislative, federal, and research clientele. The custodial location of reports acquired by the Library may include the Science, Technology & Business Division's Automation, Collections Support and Technical Reports Section, the Serial and Government Publications Division, the Collections Management Division or any other appropriate custodial divisions, including Law and custodial area studies divisions.

Format characteristics of technical reports, working papers, and preprints:

The names given to these publication series vary. Common series titles are "technical reports," "preprints," "technical memoranda," "research notes," "occasional papers," "grey literature," and "discussion papers." Technical reports, working papers, and preprints are published using techniques that permit rapid, inexpensive, low-run, and targeted distribution methods. Hard-copy editions of these materials range from a few pages to a few hundred pages, with most falling into the 20-80 page range. Long-range archiving of these materials tends to favor micro formats, and, increasingly, electronic storage. Microfiche was the favored micro format, particularly for technical reports in the sciences written on contract for the government. Until recently, large technical report clearinghouses commonly archived and redistributed technical reports in microfiche. Now that large technical report clearinghouses favor digital archiving, most reports are available in government maintained databases such as National Technical Reports Library (NTRL) or Defense Technical Information Center (DTIC).

Electronic formats for technical reports and preprints are becoming increasingly common, particularly for technical reports in computer science and preprints in mathematics and physics. Open access technical reports and preprints distributed on the web are increasingly available for downloading and possibly web archiving.

Research characteristics and use of technical reports, working papers, and preprints:

The technical report genre is most significant and most prolific in the physical and natural sciences. In mathematics and physics, the preprint is often used for the same research purposes as the technical report. In some social sciences and in the humanities, the working paper (occasional paper, white paper) is more common. Technical reports, working papers, and preprints have the following distinctive research characteristics:

1. Permit rapid dissemination of new research results
2. Are disseminated to a small targeted audience
3. Reproduce detailed methodology and data information in order to facilitate review of research by others
4. Are not peer-reviewed, but generally are the result of another selection process (grant, contract, or institutional affiliation)

Significance and relationship of technical reports, working papers, and preprints to the Library's mission and priorities:

Unlike more conventional journal and monographic publications, technical reports, working papers, and preprints frequently serve as drafts that may appear in edited or otherwise changed versions after peer review. Technical reports, working papers, and preprints are not usually subject to the space limitations of journal publications and therefore may carry far more detail regarding data and methodology than parallel accounts in journal literature. Because they generally can be published quickly, timeliness is an important research characteristic of these genres. These publications are meant to address a relatively specialized and expert audience. They are important not only as a principal vehicle of communication among experts; they also provide non-experts with a rapid, timely immersion into the issues and methods of the expert, as well as providing clues as to who the experts are in a given field. Technical reports, working papers, and preprints form an important advance indication of research trends and new findings in many fields. Such resources are critical to the mission of the Library of Congress in its service to Congress, the Federal Government, and the nation.

II. Diverse and Inclusive Collecting Statement

As the nation's de facto national library, the Library of Congress strives to build an expansive, yet selective, collection that records the creativity of the United States and is reflective of the nation's diversity and complexity. The Library's mandate is to have collections that are inclusive and representative of a diversity of creators and ideas. A priority includes acquiring material of underrepresented perspectives and voices in the Library's collections to ensure diverse authorship, points of view, cultural identities, and other historical or cultural factors. The Library also seeks to build a research collection that comprises a globally representative sample of international materials that are diverse in voice and perspective, relative to their places of origin, further supporting the Library's mission to sustain and preserve a universal collection of knowledge and creativity for Congress and future generations.

Diverse collecting is mentioned within many of the Library's Collections Policy Statements. In addition,

the Library has adopted several specific collection policies in an effort to ensure it is building an inclusive and representative collection. For more information, see the Library's Collections Policy Statements on [Ethnic Materials](#), [LGBTQIA+ Studies](#), [Women's and Gender Studies](#), [Independently Published and Self-Published Textual Materials](#), and [Countries and Regions with Acquisitions Challenges](#).

III. Research Strengths

A. General

The more than 6 million items in the Technical Reports Collection have significant current and retrospective strengths, with active current materials received in paper, microfiche, and electronic formats. The Library's collecting strength for technical reports is generally at the Research Level (4) based on the Library's collecting levels. In addition to government issued reports, the Automation, Collections Support and Technical Reports Section holds many of the reports of the RAND Corporation, an independent, nonprofit organization that pursues scientific research and analysis. The Library has about 5,000 older Rand Memorandum documents, Notes, Papers, and Reports. RAND materials also can be found in the Library's General Collections.

In addition, the collection contains reports from many non-U.S. nations, representing their science and technology as reported by non-U.S. academic and research institutions. The reports are in print and in CD-ROM format. Countries represented include: Argentina, Australia; Belgium; Brazil; Canada; Chile; Czech Republic; Denmark, Finland; France; Germany; Greece; Hong Kong; Hungary; India; Israel; Italy; Japan; Norway; Netherlands; New Zealand; Poland; Portugal; Romania; South Africa; Spain; Sweden; and Switzerland.

B. Areas of Distinction

The following major report sets are illustrative of the depth of the collection.

Department of Defense AD reports. Issued by ASTIA, the Armed Services Technical Information Agency, and its successor, the Defense Technical Information Center (DTIC), from 1943 to the present. These microfiche documents cover all subject fields of interest to the military and the Department of Defense. The Library's Automation, Collections Support and Technical Reports Section has most of the titles in the AD and AD-A series, and unclassified reports in other series. Documents not held on microfiche by TRS may be acquired from DTIC. The Library has only unclassified and unrestricted reports. AD reports account for more than 2 million items in the Library's collection.

U.S. Government atomic energy reports. The Library has many reports by agencies that no longer exist but disseminated reports in the immediate post-World War II era. For example, the collection includes reports from the Atomic Energy Commission (which served as the U.S. Government's principle nuclear energy regulatory agency until 1974), as well as reports issued through them as prepared by contractors, including universities. Also included is the Nuclear Regulatory Commission, or NUREG reports. The Library's Automation, Collections Support and Technical Reports Section has over 6,500 documents in various NUREG series, starting in 1976. The NUREG collection is represented by over 15,000 items. Reports from the Department of Energy number 1.8 million items. Many of the publications of the International Atomic Energy Agency are also available.

Reports from the U.S. Department of Education, and its Education Research and Information Center (ERIC), with reports starting in 1959. These reports account for slightly over 1 million items.

The Library has reports from the National Aeronautics and Space Administration, in microfiche and in CD

ROM format, from 1962 to the present. The over 700,000 reports in the collection are not limited to research performed at NASA installations, but include contractor reports, translations, and articles.

The U.S. Government established the Office of Scientific Research and Development (OSRD) in 1941 to conduct research in war related technology. The research conducted by 19 subject specific divisions was summarized in a series of histories after the war. There are more than thirty thousand documents in the collection.

PB reports. Immediately following World War II, the Publications Board (PB), of the Department of Commerce, began to issue reports of unclassified research, performed under contract for OSRD, and on research performed by German industries, universities, and government laboratories in support of the German war effort (part of the captured German document series; similar materials are held by the National Archives). The first 160,000 reports generally are in hardcopy and in the custody of TRS.

Synthetic Rubber Project. In 1942, U.S. rubber and chemical companies, university research institutes, and government laboratories joined to produce synthetic rubber, and to make and test tires for aircraft and vehicles from this material. This unique venture lasted until 1953, and is documented in 8,000 technical reports. The Automation, Collections Support and Technical Reports Section has a complete set of the documentation.

TT, Technical Translations. The Technical Translations series consists of English language translations of non-English language scientific and technical material pertinent to Government agencies' missions.

AGARD (Advisory Group for Aerospace Research & Development) is a NATO agency formed in 1954. AGARD publishes approximately 40 to 50 unclassified scientific or technical publications annually, many of which are available through the Automation, Collections Support and Technical Reports Section.

AIAA papers. Conference papers of the American Institute of Aeronautics and Astronautics are available, from 1963.

Specialized collections in the Technical Reports Unit include documents from the Japanese Medical Experiments conducted during World War II, which were obtained by American investigators from members of the infamous Kwantung Army Water Supply and Purification Department (boeki Kyusui Bu), stationed in Manchuria and commanded by Lt. Gen. Shiro Ishii. The L'Aerophile Collection reflects the development of aviation over a 50-year span, and contains correspondence on aeronautics, manuscripts, design details for aircraft engines, wings, etc. and information and brochures about early aircraft companies. The collection also includes hundreds of photographs of famous aviators and aircraft designers and Sam's Photofact (print & CD), which are repair manuals containing printed schematics and technical service data for different models and brand names covering a wide variety of consumer electronic equipment.

C. Special Considerations

Materials housed in the Technical Reports unit are uncatalogued, and for the print collections (preprints, occasional papers, non-U.S. technical reports, etc.) typically are retained by the Library for only a limited period of time. Indexing services, such as the National Technical Reports Library (NTRL) database, instead of the Library's online catalog, are relied upon to locate titles in the microform and digital collections (CDs) that are permanently retained by the Library.

IV. Collecting Policy

The Library of Congress places primary emphasis on the collection of technical reports, working papers, and preprints disseminated in the United States, in accordance with its responsibilities to build a definitive national collection.

The Library tries to reflect in its collections of technical reports, working papers, and preprints Library-wide collection policies and priorities in all subjects (except clinical medicine and technical agriculture), recognizing the increasing interdisciplinary aspect of many sciences, which cut across conventional distinctions between the physical, natural, social and political sciences. In general, Collections Policy Statements relative to the various subject areas and disciplines shall apply in recommending technical reports, working papers, and preprints.

In addition, the Library may place special emphasis on subjects of particular interest to the Library's constituents and missions. These selected areas should be reviewed regularly to ensure adaptation to the changing needs of the legislative and Federal information communities, including the development of technical information programs in which the Library is a partner or for which the Library may become a client. In these cases the general Collections Policy Statements may be applied with somewhat greater latitude, as the special commitments of the Library may dictate.

A. Federal Government Publications

1. Federal technical report clearinghouse series

The Library acquired for its permanent collection all unclassified Federal technical reports made available through the major Federal technical information clearinghouses from the mid-1940s to the discontinuation of the NTIS distribution in 2017, including, but not limited to:

- NTIS (National Technical Information Service)
- DTIC (Defense Technical Information Center)
- NASA
- Department of Energy
- Department of Education (ERIC)
- AID (Agency for International Development)
- Nuclear Regulatory Commission

2. Federal reports outside the scope of clearinghouses

The Library will acquire Federal technical report series not distributed by the depository library system, except in the fields of technical agriculture and clinical medicine.

As with Federal clearinghouse reports, the Library will actively seek collaborative collection agreements with appropriate governmental, academic, and professional organizations wherever this improves access to this literature and results in processing efficiencies.

B. University, Independent, and Corporate Research Centers

The Library recognizes that while many universities and other research institutions maintain archival collections of technical reports, working papers, and preprints compiled by their staffs, these practices are often not centralized, may not be consistent, and often do not involve creating bibliographic records in their institutions' library catalogs. For these reasons, the Library does not rely exclusively on the

collections of the publishing institutions, but both collects and catalogs technical reports, working papers, and preprints from nationally significant independent, university-based and corporate-based research centers. Examples of such centers include RAND, the Stanford Research Institute, and the National Bureau of Economic Research (NBER). As for Federal technical reports, the Library may place particular emphasis on publications in areas of subject interest to the Library and its constituents.

C. Non-U.S. Materials

The Library of Congress places a secondary emphasis on technical reports, working papers, and preprints produced outside the United States and has a more selective policy with respect to their acquisition than with similar materials produced in the United States.

1. International research centers and intragovernmental bodies:

The Library of Congress attempts to collect complete series of technical reports, working papers, and preprints from internationally recognized non-U.S. research centers and important non-U.S. national government research bodies. The selection of series published by major international research centers and government bodies should reflect an emphasis on those subject areas of particular importance to the Library's mission and the information needs of its clientele (see also Section IV below). Series available through the Library's depository collection of United Nations documents and other depository collections of Intergovernmental Organizations (IGOs) are generally not duplicated elsewhere in the Library's collections.

The selection of series for the Library's collections should reflect an emphasis on those subject areas of particular importance to the Library's mission and the information needs of its clientele. Whenever series are available in more than one language, the English version is preferred.

With the exception of these major series, the library defers to the central national technical information services and national libraries in the countries of origin for the collection, description, and retention of these publications. In particular, the Library attempts to minimize the duplication of its collections with other non-U.S. technical document supply services.

In lieu of acquiring non-U.S. technical literature that is available through such non-U.S. national services, the Library will usually provide for its users access (including electronic access, where feasible) to the publications catalogs of these technical literature services through the assistance of its reference and research staff and its reference databases.

2. Countries and regions with acquisitions challenges:

The Library of Congress acquires series of technical reports, working papers, and preprints from countries and regions with acquisitions challenges whenever the series contributes significantly to the world scientific community or presents unique research findings directly relevant to an understanding of that country. See also the [Countries and Regions with Acquisitions Challenges Collections Policy Statement](#).

V. Best Editions and Preferred Formats

For guidance regarding best editions for material acquired via the Copyright Office, see: <http://copyright.gov/circs/circ07b.pdf>

For guidance regarding recommended formats for material acquired via all other means; e.g., purchase,

exchange, gift and transfer, see: <https://www.loc.gov/preservation/resources/rfs>

For information regarding electronic resources and web archiving, see the following Supplementary Guidelines: <http://www.loc.gov/acq/devpol/electronicresources.pdf> , <http://www.loc.gov/acq/devpol/webarchive.pdf>, <https://www.loc.gov/acq/devpol/opencontent.pdf>, and <https://www.loc.gov/acq/devpol/datasets.pdf>

VI. Acquisition Sources

Whenever possible the Library attempts to acquire materials through non-purchase means, such as copyright (via [17 USC section 407](#) & [17 USC section 408](#)), exchange or gift. Technical reports are received from:

- A. Copyright deposit (print, microform, and electronic)
- B. Exchange programs/voluntary contributions with international institutions (primarily European universities and research centers)
- C. Open access sources available online
- D. Subscription databases
- E. Gifts

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