Animal Welfare Information Center Internship at NAL

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History and Importance of AWIC

Founded in 1986, the Animal Welfare Information Center (AWIC) became a branch of the United States Department of Agriculture's (USDA) National Agricultural Library (NAL). Since it was founded, AWIC has remained in the Beltsville, Maryland area for the last 38 years. A year before AWIC's founding, it was decided that AWIC's mission would be to provide information that was pertinent to employees, with the intent to prevent any duplication of animal experimentation and encourage the reduction and replacement of animal use. Since AWIC's original mission was established in 1985, it has blossomed into a beacon of knowledge for the Animal Welfare Act (AWA) and other animal welfare needs.

AWIC is currently involved in many facets of animal welfare, such as:
- Animal Welfare Act Historical Digital Collection (AWAHDC)
- Outreach programs
  - Workshops on Meeting the Requirements of the AWA
  - Trainings
- The 3R's (Replacement, Reduction, and Refinement) literature support and alternative recommendations
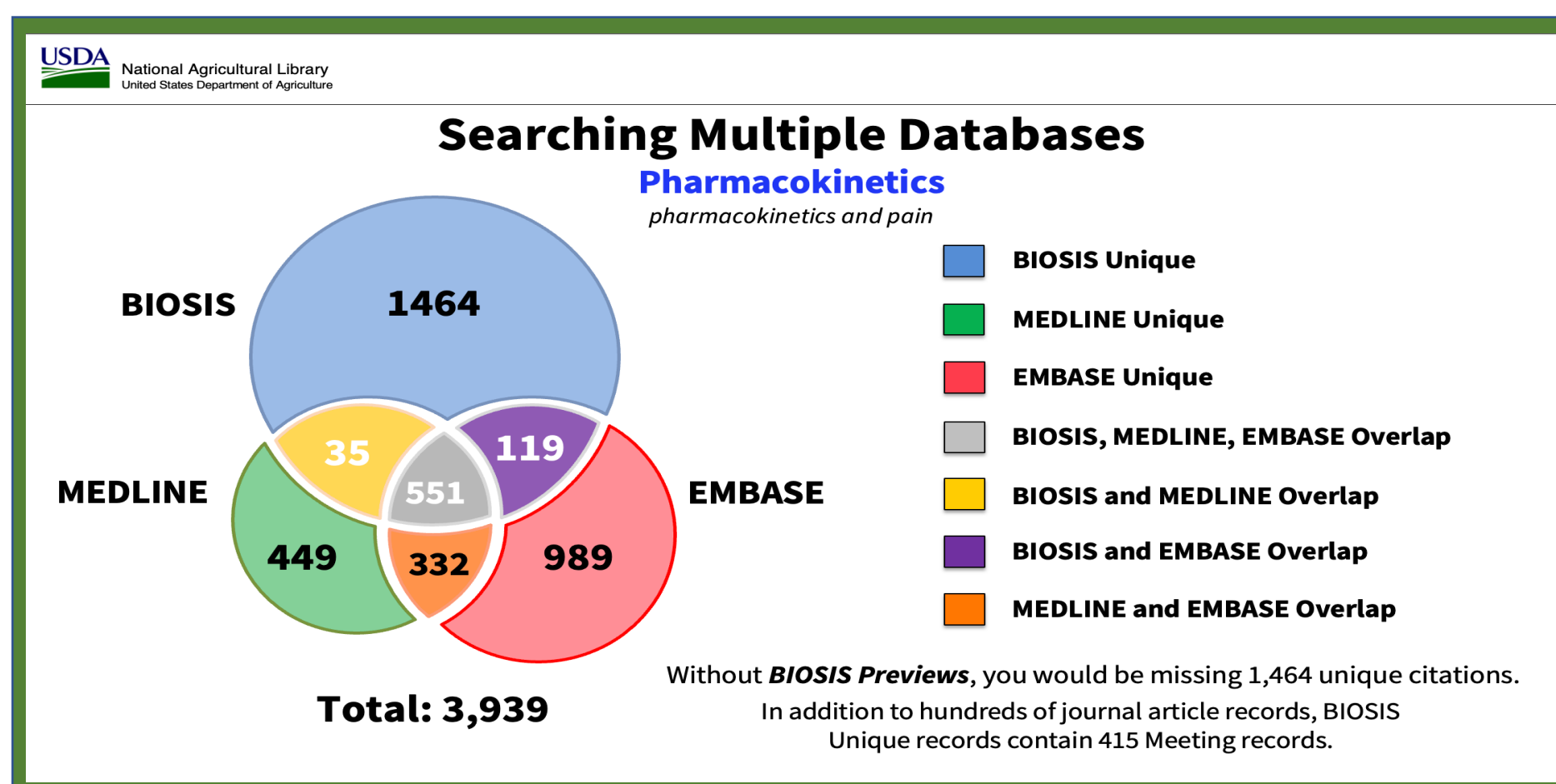
Requirements and Training

To successfully complete the internship, I had to meet the following criteria below:
- Complete a minimum of 10 hours of work per week
- Attend weekly meetings and share my completed work during the meetings
- Have adequate skills in all Microsoft applications
- Understand the basic knowledge of literature searching and know the basis of completing a search string
- Have adequate orientation with PubMed, Scopus, and Web of Science

Although the requirements seemed daunting at first, since the internship was completed virtually, it was feasible for me to exceed the expectations while working full-time at a local veterinary clinic and enrolling in a summer organic chemistry course.

In addition to the requirements above, I had to go through different trainings before I was handed my first assignments. I had to complete:
- Oregon State's course on Meeting the Requirements of the Animal Welfare Act
  - This course not only gave me a brief history of the Animal Welfare Act but instilled the mission and importance of AWIC.
- Two required readings that I would analyze with an NAL staff member:
  - *The Animal Welfare Act: Enactment to Enforcement* by Cardon, et. al
  - *The Regulation of Animal Research and the Emergence of Animal Ethics: A Conceptual History* by Bernard E. Rollin.
- Redesign an outdated PowerPoint slide to be more eye-catching and modern.
  - I completed many rough drafts of my final slide and once I was happy with every aspect, I submitted it in and received the approval to embark on my very first AWIC assignment.

The slide above is the very first design I completed for AWIC.

Internship Objectives

Once I completed all necessary training, I was given the list of objectives I needed to complete throughout the next 14 weeks.
- Remodel all search string-related PowerPoint slides
- Remodel half of the AWIC history PowerPoint slides
- Compare AWIC's notes to their online course workshops to assure the web designer completed all requests
- Edit captions for the USDA's AWA and 3 R's webinar series
- Search for pharmaceutical company affiliates in scholarly articles related to organ-on-a-chip research
- Search and document for any congressional records, public laws, and federal registers that had any relation to the AWA and update them to the AWA Historical Digital Collection and the Interactive AWA Timeline
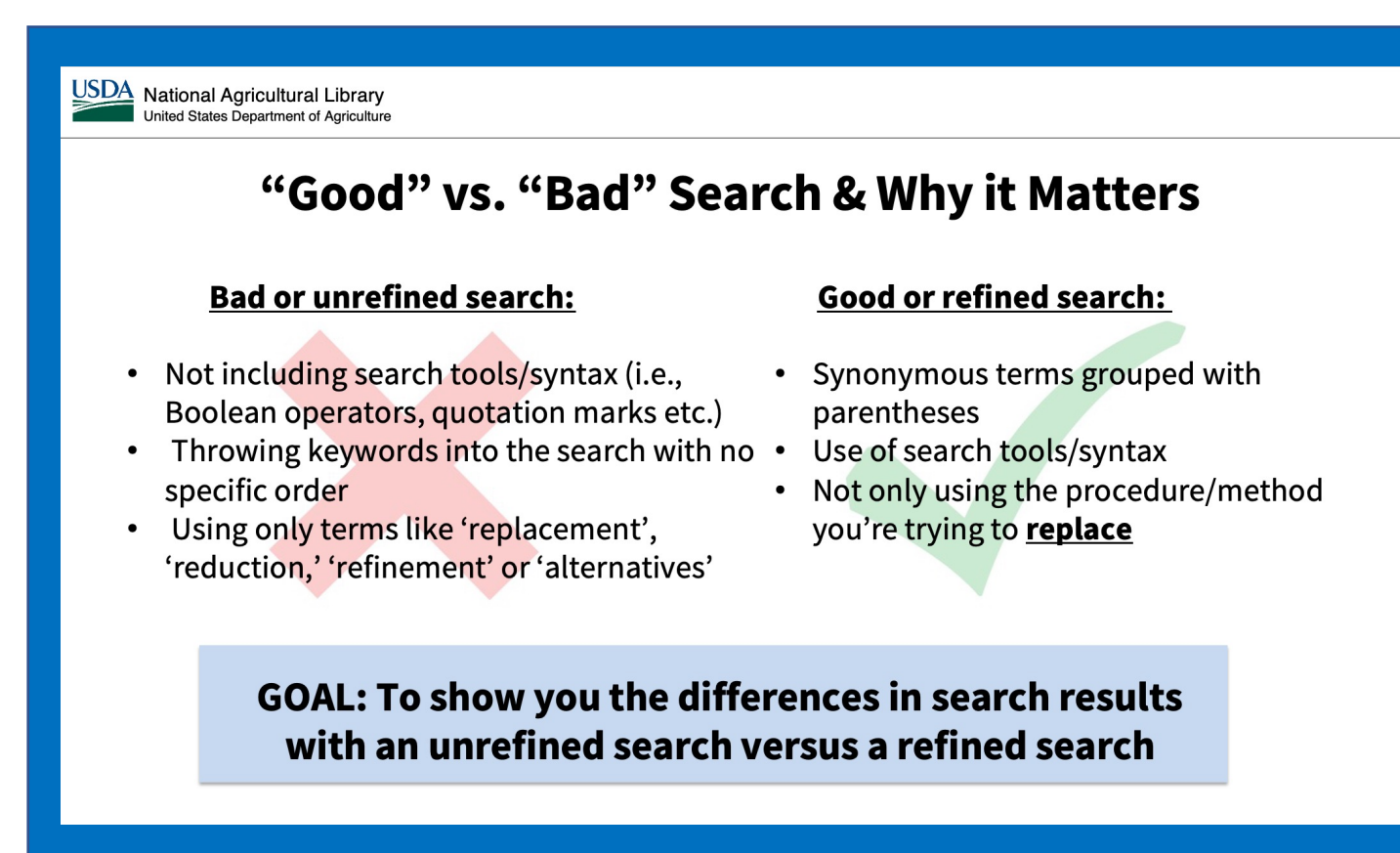
Many of the requirements were detailed oriented and required an abundance of time to assure they were correctly completed.

One of my favorite projects, besides the AWAHDC, was remodeling many pertinent slides that AWIC used on their website. I was able to give them a fresh look while also practicing my skills in producing professional work for a government agency. AWIC gave me complete creative control over the slides I received as long as they contained the same information as their predecessors. This was an exciting yet daunting task as I was able to mold and create works that would be used to inform viewers on numerous aspects.

The image to the left is the reference slide I received that required modernization.

The image to the right is the finished product after updating the previous slide.

AWAHDC

Out of all of the projects I completed, the AWAHDC was the most time-consuming task. The Animal Welfare Act Historical Digital Collection (AWAHDC) was created to contain all proceedings and mentionings of the AWA in an organized collection that is free and easily accessible to the public. With almost 600 entries, the AWAHDC pulls a majority of its source material from the government's digital collection, GovInfo. GovInfo, formerly known as the Federal Digital System (FDsys), has a detailed collection of almost all of the congressional and federal topics covered over the last 100 years. GovInfo is an important and reliable source for the AWAHDC since it is the most up-to-date collection on all proceedings. The premise of the AWAHDC is that it compiles all congressional records, federal registers, and public laws that entail the AWA and uploads them so viewers do not have to intricately search for the documents themselves. The main issue; however, is there are occasional gaps in time and documentation, which is where I search through GovInfo and locate and log any missing documents I come across.

Method of Searching

My first assignment in the AWAHDC was to locate any documents relating to the AWA from the years 2014-2010. In searching for these lost documents, I developed a method for how to quickly and correctly locate any new material:
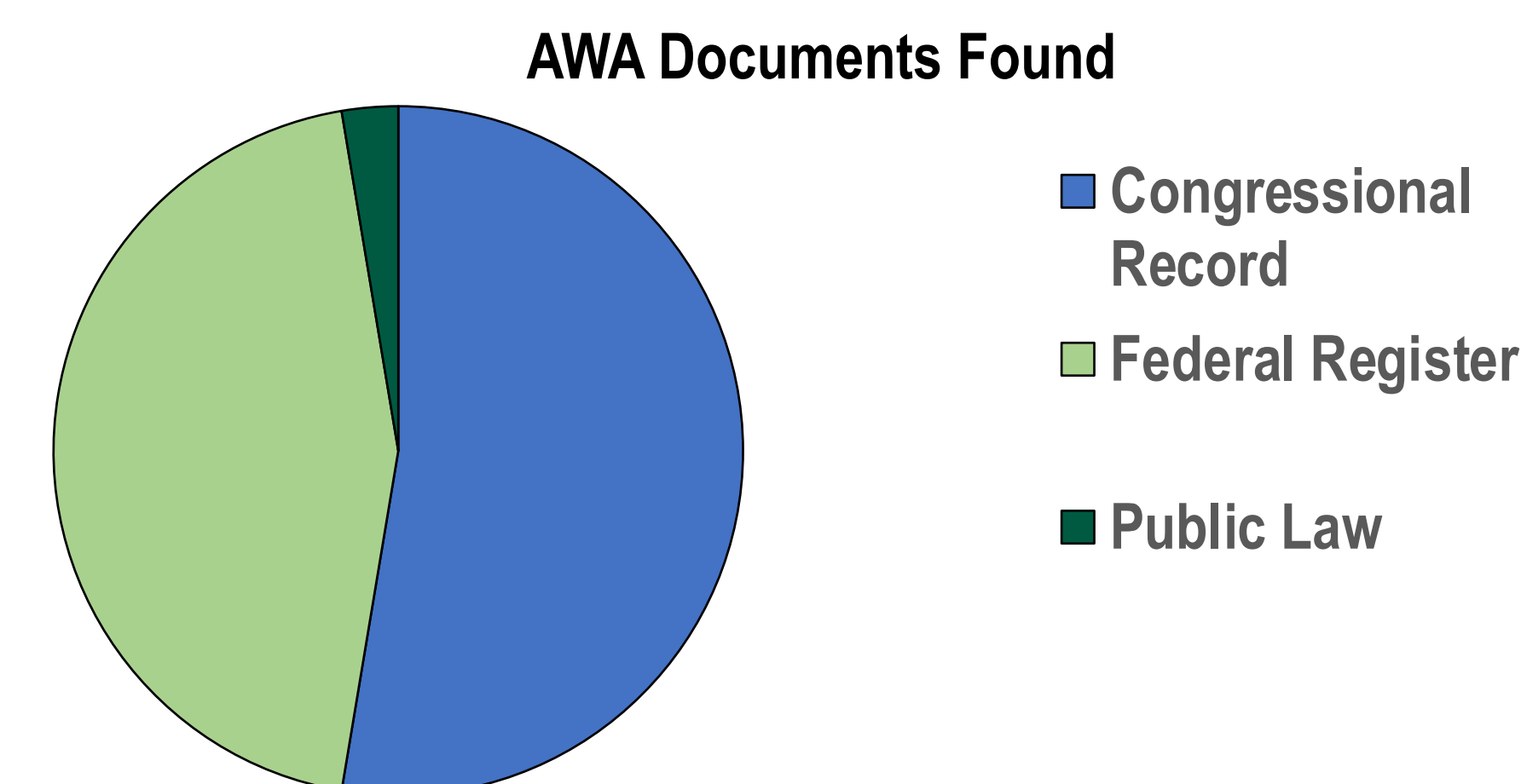- Using the website's advanced searching tools gave me the ability to refine my results by selecting specific gaps in time and locating specific documents
- Key words also aided in deciphering between documents that mention the AWA versus documents that are about the AWA
- Once documents were located, I had to locate the MODS
  - The MODS of a document give you the coded version of the screen's display. Downloading the MODS to a document makes it much easier to upload to the collection and retains all of the necessary information.
- Key details I also needed to record were:
  - Date
  - Congressmen involved
  - Which U.S Congress was the document under
  - Name of the bill
  - Name of the pdf document
  - Abstract
  - Remarks

In addition, each different form of documentation has specific information that was required to be recorded down, making this project time-consuming and detail-oriented.

Although this project was arduous, it was rewarding being able to locate documents so that the public could easily access them and learn from the information each document contained.

Results

I was given the timeframe between the years 1994-2014 to locate any missing AWA documents. In total, I found 21 congressional records, 16 federal registers, and 1 public law that could be uploaded to the AWAHDC. The difference in the amount of documents from the previous AWAHDC to the current AWAHDC has been such a rewarding feeling and I am so grateful to have had this opportunity.

AWA Documents Found

- Congressional Record
- Federal Register
- Public Law

The chart above depicts the amount of each document type that was located and uploaded to the AWAHDC.

Questions

If you have any questions, please feel free to reach out to me at kelseyk19@vt.edu.