

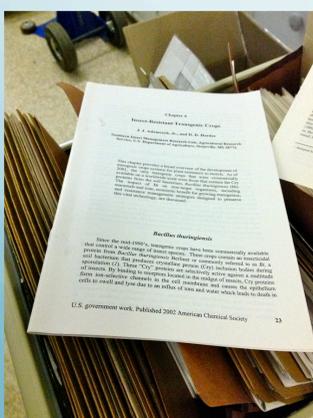


Digitizing Files

By Emily Mosow



During my past two years and five summers, I have performed a wide variety of experiments while working for the Southern Insect Management Unit at the Jamie Whitten Delta States Research Center. This past winter, however, I began working on digitizing all of the old SIMRU files, something completely different from any other project I had helped with before. In order to do this, I have been working with Dr. Parys to locate paper copies of old papers and notes from old filing cabinets and boxes in various areas around the fourth floor. After obtaining the paper copies, I then take them to the front office, where I scan each file onto a USB drive using the Kyocera printer/copier/scanner. Then, back in the lab, I edit each file by cropping the edges to remove any remaining black lines and extra border as well as making each page of the paper its own individual pdf page. The next step is then running OCR recognition software, which is a part of Adobe Acrobat Pro on the documents. This allows them to become perfectly aligned on the page, as in no crooked pages, which can sometimes happen when something is scanned. Most importantly, it results in the documents being text searchable, meaning that when someone is looking for old papers on a particular subject, they can easily type in a word and find a wide variety of papers on that subject. I also would use various databases to download papers that have already been digitized that are written by scientists that have worked for SIMRU or pertaining to the subjects the scientists study. All of this is important because it gives scientists easier access to the papers they need for their research as well as provides a way of creating open access option to papers written by current and past scientists of the unit.



References:
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For me, it gave me insight into just how much research has changed over the years at SIMRU. I was able to see how long scientists have been trying to control insects in crops by scanning in papers from the 1910's and 1920's when little to no insecticides existed and very little research had been done on insect control (These papers also made for some great reads!). I also saw how even the most significant pests in crops has changed. In scanning papers from the 40's through the 80's, the boll weevil was the most significant pest, for the 90's and early 2000's, there were significantly more papers on the various worm species found in crops, and today, plant bugs seem to be the hot topic. I also learned how quickly genetically modified crops have emerged. In a paper I read by John Adamczyk on transgenic crops, he discusses how there were only a handful of cry proteins that were used as pesticide genes (Adamczyk and Hardee 2002). Today, less than 15 years later, there are many more. To me, digitizing files, not only gives easy access to many papers and information in one easy to find place, but also is a way of showing just how much SIMRU has changed over the course of its long history.