

GEOSCAN—THE NATIONAL DATABASE FOR GEOLOGICAL INFORMATION: THE NEWFOUNDLAND CONTRIBUTION

C. Patey and J. Gillespie
Publications and Information Section

GEOSCAN is a database describing geoscience documents that pertain to the Canadian landmass and/or offshore regions and/or that are Canadian-produced. The database is maintained by the Canadian Geoscience Information Centre at the Geological Survey of Canada in Ottawa. The Publications and Information Section of the Geological Survey Branch of the Department of Mines and Energy is one of fifteen agencies that indexes documents into this national database.

Representatives of the mineral exploration industry and the general public visit and/or call the Publications and Information Section daily, to request searches and to use indexes produced from the GEOSCAN database, to identify documents on the geoscience of this province and the rest of Canada.

The documents contained in the Geological Survey Branch files, including mineral assessment reports, mineral inventory cards, published reports and maps, university theses, etc., are the sources of the records, i.e., indexed descriptions of documents, that we add to the database. These records may be searched by bibliographic, geographic and geological terms.

Since 1991, efforts have been made to index non-assessment report documents and to modify earlier records for such document types up to a minimum standard with essential bibliographic and geographic information; this was done concurrent to new mineral assessment reports being indexed.

This past year indexing and modifying records for most of the Geological Survey Branch's publications, including Open Files, were completed. Over 80 percent of the documents in the department's collection of geoscientific documents, pertaining to this province i.e., Geofiles, are now represented in GEOSCAN. This collection also includes Geological Survey of Canada publications referring to this province; these are indexed by the Geological Survey of Canada. Figure 1 illustrates the status of indexing coverage.

The present plan is to keep the bibliographic and geographic indexing of new university theses, books, periodicals and Geological Survey Branch publications and open files added to the Geofiles collection as up-to-date as the full indexing of new assessment files. At the same time,

we will be indexing new documents and modifying the earlier records for the remaining document types in the Geofiles.

As of November, 1993, there were 193,300 records in GEOSCAN, including 10,700 added by the Department of Mines and Energy indexers since indexing began in 1969. The 192,500 non-confidential records in GEOSCAN are available through on-line computer searches at the Publications and Information Section of the Geological Survey Branch in St. John's and at the Canadian Geoscience Information Centre, formerly the Geological Survey of Canada Library, in Ottawa, and at other indexing agencies across Canada.

In order to improve in-house access to those records pertaining to this province, the subset from GEOSCAN for the province, which was initially downloaded in 1991, was updated. This subset, now with over 17,500 records, includes records for documents on the offshore areas as well as the land portions of Newfoundland and Labrador and includes records that have been indexed into GEOSCAN by other agencies.

This subset was installed in-house and is available for searching by staff and visitors at the Publications and Information Section. The many fast-access information fields and user-friendly software make searching easier for the novice. A demonstration of the subset is available upon request. The number of requested searches on both the national database online and on the provincial subset in-house has steadily increased from 108 in 1991 before the subset was available, to 269 in 1993.

Information on documents pertaining to the geoscience of this province is also available from various printed Newfoundland and Labrador GEOSCAN indexes:

1. NTS (National Topographic System), Keyword, and Author (both corporate and personal) indexes to documents (including those authored by the Geological Survey of Canada) pertaining to this province with records in the database up to February 1982.
2. Computer printout sorted by NTS, with references to mineral-assessment report records entered into the database during the period 1982 to 1984.

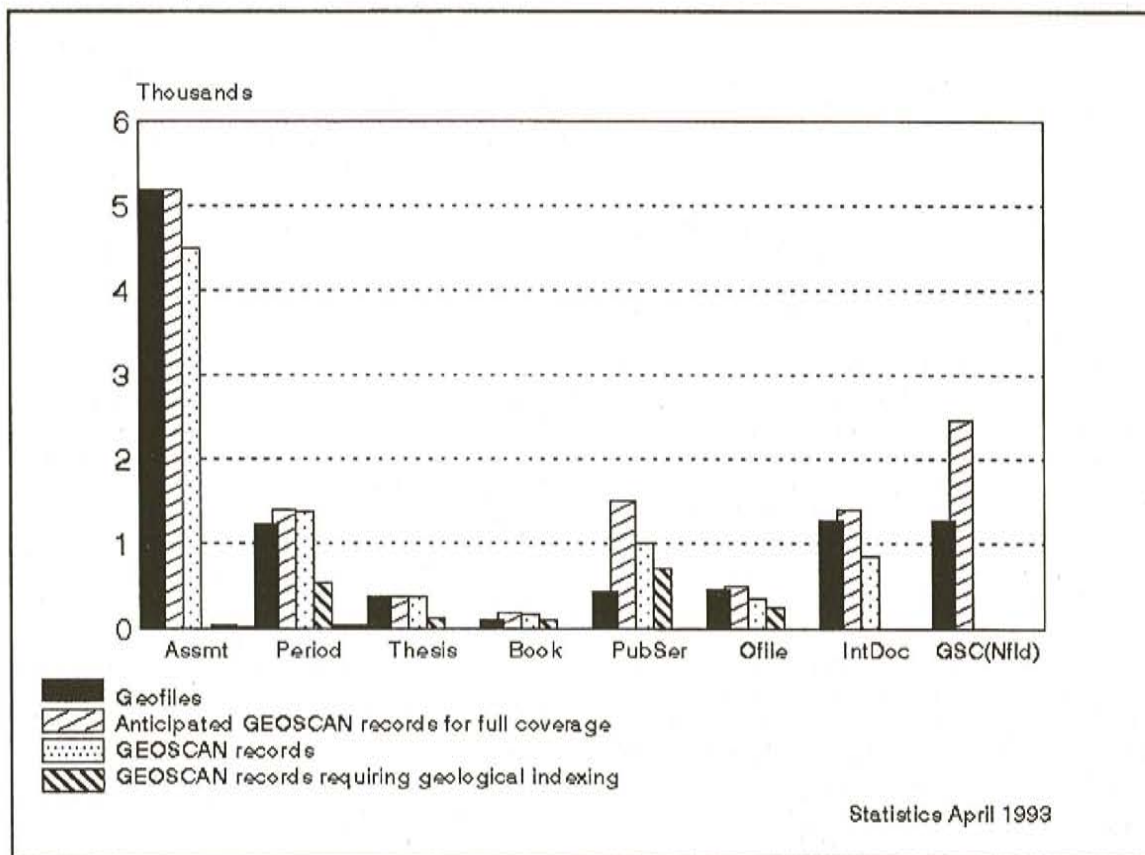


Figure 1. The GEOSCAN indexing coverage of the document types in the Geofiles.

3. NTS Index (with cross-reference lists) to mineral-assessment report records received by the Publications and Information Section during the periods:

- April 1985 to June 1988 (272 records)
- July 1988 to June 1989 (Open File Nfld/1927) (628 records)
- July 1989 to June 1990 (Open File Nfld/2068) (292 records)
- July 1990 to June 1991 (Open File Nfld/2193) (254 records)

A similar NTS index to mineral assessment reports, received during the period July 1991 to June 1993 will be available by the end of the year. As well as these larger printed indexes, smaller custom indexes, e.g., 'Peat', are available for sale. Other computer printout indexes, e.g., 'Author Index to Published Documents', are available for in-house use.

Besides indexing and keying new records and modifying existing records, improved keying and editing procedures are being developed with WordPerfect macros. The authority files and thesauri used in coding are being enlarged, and all the terms used are being more clearly defined. These terms are maintained on various card files and binders, e.g., company

name card file, mineral lands information card file, drillhole information binders.

The information on these card files and binders is being transferred to several mini databases for easier access and reference. These files and mini databases help to make indexing consistent and are also useful for in-house inquiries. These databases are on the same computer software, i.e., CDS/ISIS, as the in-house subset of the GEOSCAN database for the province.

For example, searching is possible on the DRILL database with over 21,200 records for drillholes described in the non-confidential geofiles.

In November 1993, the recent GEOSCAN subset for the province, the in-house DRILL database and a small MINLAND, Mineral Lands Information database, which had all been available at the Publications and Information Section, were also installed on the UNIX network. Now all Geological Survey Branch staff, connected to this network, have access to the three databases from their offices.

Suggestions for improvements are welcome and notification of any errors or discrepancies in the earlier indexes would be appreciated. For further information on GEOSCAN, please contact Catherine Patey (709) 729-6441.