



Time ran out before I could fully answer these questions.
So here are my replies to your great questions:



Q. I get that MPSMS and Work Fields help identify transferability on an “inclusive” basis, but are they also considered “exclusive”? They may rule alternate occupations *In*, but does this mean that all occupations not in the results are ruled *out*?

A. Any search with filters (for example Strength = Light) will rule out the Medium, Heavy, and Very Heavy occupations. Use of computers to search is a very efficient way to do this. The trick is to know the criteria you are using for filtering. In a TSA search, by SkillTRAN's definition of TSA [which is rooted in SkillTRAN's strict interpretation of 20 CFR 404.1568(d)], we are using Work Fields and MPSMS codes from work history. If an alternate occupation does not have at least one of the Work Fields and MPSMS codes in the filter, the TSA will not consider it among the alternative occupations. In both the online services and in OASYS, there is a way to compare why a specific occupation is excluded from the TSA list. If you search by other code system(s) such as OGA, GOE, SOC, CENSUS, or O*NET, then you may very well find a match ... but it is a match according to that filtering mechanism, which is different from the definition of the SkillTRAN TSA process. Your interpretation of what that matching represents should be based on the purpose of the code system(s) your used.

Q. When do you recommend using 2-digit vs. 3-digit codes?

A. SSA has relevant rules about older workers [20 CFR 404.1563 and 20 CFR 416.963]. As a person is approaching advanced age (50-54 years old), the process of examining work alternatives becomes really important. The return on investment (ROI) for training/retraining has limited payback, so finding occupations that are transferable is really important. We call occupations that match at a 2 digit level Generally Transferable (or “Good” matches in OASYS). As a person enters the SSA “Advanced Age” category (55 years or older), then examination of 3 digit categories is what we recommend. We call matches on 3 digits “Directly Transferable” or “Closest”. Look at the Work Field definitions. Study how clearly related the categories are at a 2-digit level. Some learning is way more likely necessary at a 2-digit level than at a 3-digit level. Study the MPSMS codes as well 2-digits vs. 3-digits. There is NO relationship among Work Field and MPSMS codes at the 1-digit level. Only the OGA code system shows a high-level relationship at this 1-digit level.

Q. Which code system do you feel works best for searching in the workers comp industry (from the TS strategy slide)?

A. The worker's compensation model of Return to Work (RTW) generally works in the following sequence to try to expedite the RTW process (fastest path to RTW at the lowest cost):

1. RTW – Same job, Same Employer
2. RTW – Same job – modified, Same Employer
3. RTW – Different job, Same Employer – Could be a graduated RTW, lighter duty tasks at first
4. RTW – Different job, Different Employer
5. Retool/Retrain the worker for a new occupation

For steps 1 and 2, job analysis, probably with an eye towards modification, is the primary means by which this is achieved, of course with appropriate comparison of maximum medical improvement (MMI) to the observed or documented requirements of the job position at injury. All SkillTRAN PC products include some nice formats to facilitate the JA process.

For step 3, searching for lighter duty occupations can be done using the DOT Industry Classification (DIC) code or the NAICS code of the employer. OASYS has a nice feature for searching for occupations by NAICS. TSA searching (directly or generally transferable) and possibly searching by OGA might also be helpful.

For step 4, TSA searching (directly and/or generally transferable) will be helpful. Placement/Job Search will likely be achieved more quickly for directly transferable occupations than for generally transferable occupations. Local economic conditions obviously play a huge part here. SkillTRAN has listings of employers (nearly 3 million nationally with 10 or more employees) in all industries, all parts of the USA. The employer listings can be used for job search possibilities and for labor market sampling.

For step 5, searching by GOE, RIASEC, O*NET, OGA, and CIP (and soon Career Path) can be helpful.

NOTE: *When you set the RFC for these kinds of searches, be sure to raise up SVP, GED, and aptitudes based on test results or for the factors that are likely to be raised by the training itself.* In this way, you will find more occupations for exploration and review. Temper the results of searches with available Labor Market Information (LMI) including long term outlook (Nationally and locally), wages, employment numbers, knowledge of the local labor market following training (local employers within the claimant's commute range) and local training options. These are all critical factors in establishing the feasibility of the retraining. SkillTRAN products are designed to be your one-stop shopping center for all this information.

Also – see Webinar slide (page 56). The chart on this page shows the terminology used in SkillTRAN products for different levels of TSA. Note the yellow bar on the far right that shows that training should be minimal for Directly/Closest transferable occupations, then increase to minor/moderate at the Closely, Generally and Good transferability levels. Searches for “Anything within basic capacities” are not tied to TSA and may involve substantial retraining.

Q. So the percentages of jobs which are unskilled, semi-skilled and skilled are probably different now than what you showed earlier?

A. There are two sides to this question: The number of occupations in the DOT which carry the level of SVP for these occupations vs. the number of jobs that exist for each of these occupations. There are 12,761 occupations defined in the DOT. That number has not changed. The number of people working in each of those occupations (actual jobs) fluctuates daily for a lot of reasons. SkillTRAN is working on some nice ways to examine this information less tediously than occupation by occupation using its special estimation methodology pioneered in Job Browser *Pro*.

Q. Do you have an example in the handouts of the manner in which the CPS addresses full time/part time and hours? I find it difficult to determine whether occupations exist part time. O*NET has some information but it can be difficult when there are a lot of occupations in the cluster.

A. Full-time/Part-time information is only available via the Current Population Survey (CPS), which captures information from households about what occupations people do and how many hours per week people work at it. For as long as I know, the dividing line has been 35 hours or more to be considered full-time work. See footnote 1 at <http://www.bls.gov/cps/cpsaat47.pdf>

The bigger problem is that this data is reported only at the CENSUS level of coding, which means that results are generalized across an econometric model consisting of the world of work in only 535 occupational groups. So take it with a grain of salt. Do a labor market sampling to find out better.

Q. Take us through the process you would use in finding a specific occupation you cannot find in the DOT. Underground utility locator is an occupation I recently had a difficult time finding.

A. Look high, look low ... you won't find this one in the DOT. I'll repeat what I know from an IARP list serve posting of the research I did trying to find out about this occupation from various internet "live job" sites. I reposted this on 10/30/2013 after originally posting it at IARP on 2/8/2012. Here goes:

I do not believe that there is a single good DOT description that covers this occupation. Having had my utilities located several times, these are not rocket science occupations, and the folks that perform this service do so for only one or two utilities (gas vs. water vs. electric, vs. sewer).

They may even be independent contractors to the utilities.

Others (such as those below) dance around it, but the SVP on these is too high for the locator job. The Utility Locator goes out on site, uses an electronic gadget to detect the specific utility that is being located, and spray paints a line on the ground (in a particular color ... one color for each type of utility) to show the path of the line from the transformer (or street) to the house location. This is desirable to avoid digging deep in this trench and cutting any of these basic utility lines.

239.367-034 UTILITY CLERK

219.362-030 EXTENSION CLERK

821.367-010 CONSTRUCTION CHECKER

Q. Can you give us some search tips for finding occupations faster?

A. Basic tips:

- Truncate the word to the root of the word. For example, instead of assembly worker, think “assembl”. That will pick up words like “assembler” and “assembly”. Shorten up the word.
- Find a unique part of the word/title and search on it.
- Use a few unique truncated key words – Use fewer words, not more.
- Search through job descriptions using the structure in which it is written ... present tense verb first. “Lays out” “Places” “Positions” “Writes” “Draws” ...
- When there is a long list of matching titles, order them by DOT code (Occupational Group Arrangement), by DOT Industry (often you will know the approximate industry ... don't forget to look in “Any Industry” ... which really means “many industries” ... not every industry), or maybe sorting by SVP / Strength, or O*NET group might help, too.
- Use a more generic synonym for a key word you seek ... generalize it out
- Search by other categories – Like Work Fields, MPSMS, OGA, GOE, O*NET, CENSUS, DOT Industry, or NAICS
- Think of a training program that might prepare someone for such work. Look it up under Education or CIP codes Or soon ... Career Pathways!
- Think of a category from a code system where it might be found. My favorites: Work Field, MPSMS, Industry, NAICS.

Here are some meaty “Mind Meld” exercises as outlined on page 37 of the presentation. All of these came from requests posted during the last 5-6 months on the IARP list server.

Stage Hand – No matches to this title. So try the unique word “Stage”. 9 matches. None good, but some in the amusement/recreation industry. Looked at Quick View codes associated with “Stage Technician” and found MPSMS 919 – Amusement and Recreation Services, Other. As I went to look this up, tumbled into 912 (same first 2 digits of MPSMS – Theater Services. Searched by this MPSMS, sorted the 13 matching titles by SVP and found: 962.684-022 - Prop Attendant.

Ceramic Pourer – Searched by key word “Ceramic” and saw 16 matches. Ordered by SVP. None were “right”, but I noticed that there was a Pottery & Porcelain manufacturing industry. Searched this industry, ordered the matching titles by SVP, and found 575.684-014 – Caster.

Martial Arts Instructor – Searched using key word “Martial” and alternate title “Martial Arts Instructor” appeared. The real DOT was 153.227-018 – Instructor, Sports

Cutter Supervisor (Fabric) – No match on this title. 473 matches to the word “Cutter”. Decided to think more in terms of materials and products ... found MPSMS Group 43 – Textile Products. Found 287 DOT occupations in this 2-digit Materials group. Ordered the list by SVP, but clicked the SVP twice to put into reverse order, knowing that supervisors had a higher SVP than the workers. Scanned down the list looking for titles with the word “Supervisor” in it and found - 89.132-010 SUPERVISOR IV

County Commissioner – DOT does not have a job description for elected officials

School Board Member – DOT does not have a job description for elected officials

Call Flow Supervisor – Call Flow – newer occupational title ... bring focus to supervisor and what is call flow? Routing/answering phone call inquiries – telephone/business service work. O*NET has newer titles, so looked there. Poked through Major Group 13 – Business and Financial Operations Occupations, but nothing seemed right. Dropped down the list to Major Group 41 – Sales and Related Occupations. Near the top of the list – 41-1012.00 – First-Line Supervisors of Non-Retail Sales Workers. Only 17 titles in here. Saw 169.167-038 – Order Department Supervisor. Also looked in O*NET Group 43 – Office and Administrative Support Occupations. Saw O*NET 43-1011.00 – First-Line Supervisor of Office and Administrative Support. 106 occupations. Ordered by SVP – found right away – 249.137-026 – Supervisor, Order Takers.

Manufactured Home Sales – Manufactured Home – newer term for old school (when the DOT was built) wording used back then for “*Mobile Home*”. Think Retro 273.357-034 – Salesperson, *Mobile Homes*

Lead Generation Supervisor – Another fancy new term for “Sales”. Search by “Sales Supervisor” turns up a number of good possibilities. Also looked in the Services section of MPSMS codes, and found some possibilities in MPSMS 896 – Advertising and Public Relations Services area.

Plugging holes in floor boards – Thought in terms of what the worker does. Searched the DOT description for the present tense verb “Plugs”. Found 104 matching titles. Ordered the list by Industry sort, scrolled to the bottom where wood related industries are found and saw the “woodworking” industry. Title: Plugging-Machine Operator. Spot on!

Q. Can you compare SkillTRAN Pro version 1.4 to 1.6.6?

A. Gosh ... it's been so long since 1.4! We have more ways to search now, by RIASEC code (and within a specific SVP range), CENSUS/SOC/O*NET codes (latest versions of each), and Canadian NOC codes. The most popular new feature is the way in which we “read between the lines” of the OES statistics to prepare a sophisticated “industry context” estimate of employment at the DOT level, including an estimate for full-time and part-time employment. In 2010, the major code systems underwent a revision at the federal level, so all of our occupational codes linking DOT to Labor Market Information have changed.

Give us a call at 800-827-2182 to discuss this further. You can also download a free 30-day trial copy of our latest version at: <http://www.skilltran.com/demoCD.htm> - Install this on a different machine from your version 1.4 – or rename the folder in which the trial version will be installed. Otherwise, your version 1.4 might be disrupted.

Q. Is the 1991 DOT still relevant in the current labor market? It seems O*NET is more realistic in the way jobs are performed in the real world - not just one or two tasks - but multi-tasking crossing many job categories. A receptionist now does much more than just answering the phone or filing documents!

A. O*NET is definitely more modern in its descriptions than the DOT. Remember, however, that there are only 974 O*NET occupations compared to the 12,761 DOT occupations. Now, I don't believe that all of those 12,761 DOT occupations still exist. Many have indeed been combined into other DOT occupations as companies have improved efficiencies, off-shored other occupations, or rendered certain occupations completely obsolete due to technology. There are SO MANY variations of DOT occupations that continue to exist. But without expanding the O*NET groups, the range of critical factors such as Strength, Physical Demands, and SVP is so wide that any data collected and reported at the O*NET level for many occupations will be **functionally useless**. What good will it do to know that the average SVP for O*NET Group 51-9199.00 Production Workers, All Other (consisting of 1,526 DOT occupations) is 3.04906 ± 1.27 when the range of occupations covered runs from SVP 1 to 8, the Strength ranges somewhere between Sedentary and Very Heavy, and the GED could be anywhere from 111 to 533 or 444? For SVP, you can be 67% confident that the SVP is in the range of 1.77 to 4.31 and 95% confident that the range is between 1 and 5.58. For the Strength factor (if S=1 and V=5), average Strength is 2.43, ranging from 1.70 – 3.16 at 67% confidence level, or 1 – 3.89 at 95% confidence. This is useful? How will SSA ever be able to make a decision using this new "better" data? Welcome back to 1965!

Within the DOT, 77.4% of the occupations are crammed into 133 SOC groups with at least 15 DOT codes per group. The top four "worst" SOC groups contain 3,628 DOT occupations which is 28.4% of the DOT. Here is some interesting information about these 4 worst SOC groups:

SOC	Title	# DOTS	Strength Range	SVP Range	GED Range
51-9199	Production Workers, All Other	1526	S - V	1 - 8	111 - 533
51-9061	Inspectors, Testers, Sorters, Samplers and Weighers	782	S - H	1 - 8	111 - 444
51-1011	First-Line Supervisors of Production and Operating Workers	706	S - H	4 - 8	311 - 555
51-9198	Helpers – Production Workers	533	S - V	1 - 6	111 - 333

Greater detail is what is essential for rehab and disability-related adjudication. Real people have performed these DOT occupations and are always amazed that a book such as the DOT has most likely captured a great deal about what they have done. Certainly, new tools and technologies have changed the way that a lot of work gets done. But the core nature of so many DOT occupations continues to exist today. So what if a pneumatic staple gun is used to hang shingles today instead of a hammer and roofing nails. The roofer still performs the same basic core functions of yesteryear. Ditto for most other occupations, ranging from health care to clerical. People crave more details about occupations rather than less.

Q. Why would a vocational specialist invest in a new job matching system with all this change occurring?

A. Change “appears” to FINALLY be happening. SSA put some serious money into OIDAP (spent about \$12 million from 2009-2012) to try to figure out what SSA needs. Now SSA has entered into an interagency agreement with the BLS – National Compensation Survey group (a really good group of folks with lots of employer contacts) to see if they could ask more questions of employers when they collect their NCS data. In FY 2013, SSA spent \$11 million to evaluate collection of Physical Demands, Environmental Conditions, and SVP data at the SOC/O*NET level. In FY 2014, SSA is spending \$15 million to fine tune this data collection and to see if NCS can also gather some (as yet undisclosed) data about mental-cognitive factors. In FY 2015, no doubt there will be continued refinement of the mental-cognitive factors. By the end of FY 2015, after spending an estimated \$41 million, BLS-NCS will be able to answer SSA's question about whether or not they can do what SSA is asking them to do. After that, useable data will still need to be collected.

No estimates have yet been prepared of how many instances of the occupations will have to be surveyed before “enough” data is collected. I guesstimate that the data collection effort will take at least another 2 fiscal years and probably yet one more to synthesize all the collected data. That puts us into at least the end of FY 2018, or early 2019 before any new data is likely to be released.

So my question back is: What will you do in the meantime?

Be confident that we are carefully monitoring the SSA and NCS effort and trying to help them become aware of the practical issues with which we are confronted in rehab and VE testimony on a daily basis. As soon as NCS/SSA defines what the new characteristics are going to be, SkillTRAN will be building/rebuilding its services to best use any such newly collected/reported data. SkillTRAN has a wide range of helpful tools to provide answers now. We will adjust our products as new data is defined and is made available for sure!

All of us in this industry have been held hostage to the 1991 DOT for more than 20 years. DOL fumbled the ball with O*NET for use in the disability sector. The National Academy of Sciences 10-year review of O*NET agrees. But there is still no firm timetable from NCS or SSA about when new data will be available to us. Detail it and we will build a useful system for it. We know and understand the critical need! Be assured that we are carefully following the plodding actions of DOL/SSA as a possible new way forward unfolds.

Thanks for reading through these questions and answers. If you have more questions, please contact me directly at SkillTRAN LLC – jtruthan@skilltran.com or by phone – 509-927-8195.