

Flight Tracker Consortium Meeting

January 6, 2021

Ten New Year's Resolutions for 2021

Scott J. Pearson



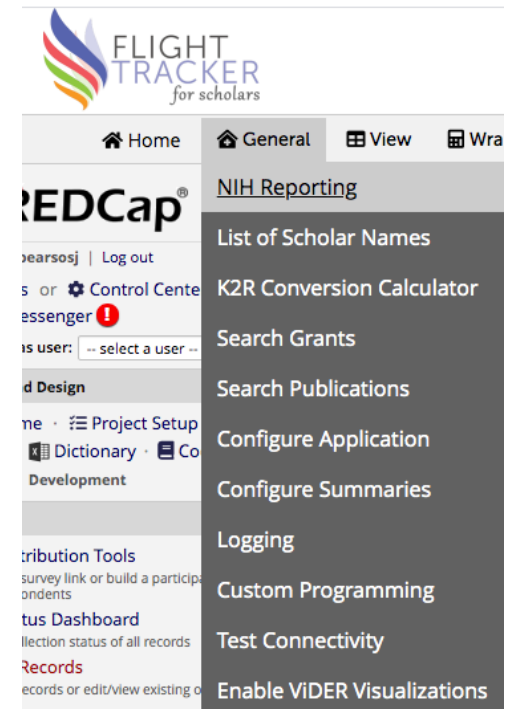
Meeting Agenda



What's New?
What's Possible in 2021?
Office Hours with Rebecca and Scott

What's New?

- NIH Tables and xTRACT integration
→ in latest release of Flight Tracker
- Leaves room for potential improvements, but we would need some assistance from the NIH for that to transpire. (More on that later...)



2021 Wish List



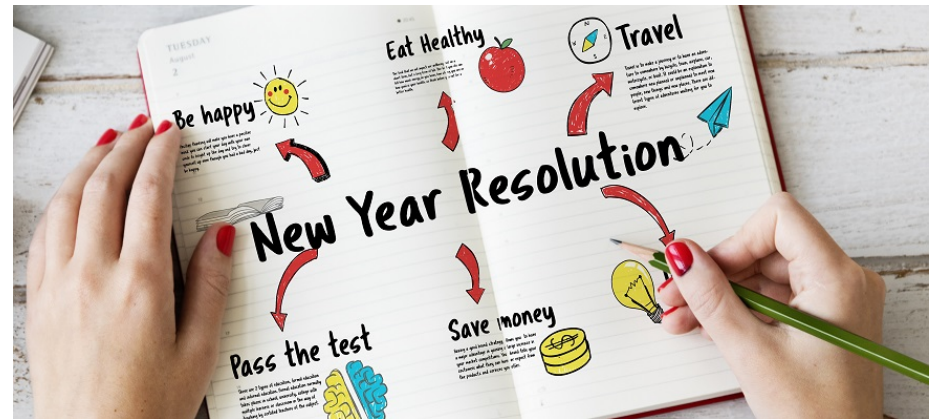
I asked myself, “What if Flight Tracker got everything done that we aspired to in 2021? What would that look like? What would advance how we all managed our scholars?”



Ten New Year's Resolutions for 2021



- Targets to shoot for, not promises. (Personally, I've been shooting to exercise more for several years now; that still hasn't gotten me far into the spring!)
- Will come back and assess at the end of this year. As detailed in December's presentation, we accomplished a lot of what we had hoped for in 2020.
- **We want your feedback!** Please take notes and share your thoughts at the end.



Central Target



Scientific (Evidence-Based) Career Development of Academics

→ Everyone is more efficient and effective with good data.



1. Mentee-Mentor Agreements



- We finally received approval to proceed with trials at Vanderbilt.
- Start with one or two pilot groups; go through a round of mentee-mentor meetings; receive feedback.
- Target for broad release: Late spring.
- Keeping a list of “version 1.1” and “version 2.0” suggestions. Want to implement these in 2021.



2. Scholar Portal



- Common Question: “Does Flight Tracker have a way that scholars can view and input their own information?”
- Will have link to mentee-mentor agreements.
- Chad Lightner is currently designing in similar style as mentee-mentor agreements.

3. T32 Customizations



- Has been on hold on the back burner for some time.
- Specific suggestions to customize for T32-and-similar training grants.
- E.g., instead of measuring $K \rightarrow R$ conversions, measure $T \rightarrow K \rightarrow R$ conversions.



4. xTRACT Optimization



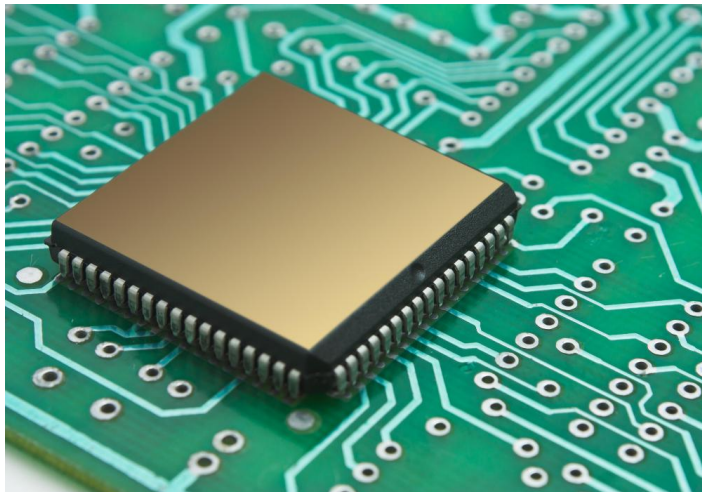
- Reporting to the NIH is a general area that could use some speed up.
- Already have shared some initial steps we took in Vanderbilt's CTSA renewal.
- **Active:** Publications, in particular, have been slow as xTRACT required entering them one at a time. Recently, they've publicized adding multiple at a time. Will try to adjust our code to work with this.
- This may be a reach, but we'd also love for some API to upload data directly from Flight Tracker into xTRACT.
- Post-COVID, draft a co-signed letter with requests.



National Institutes
of Health

5. Batch Processing

- Flight Tracker runs on crons via REDCap's External Module framework.
- Crons run in the background every minute.
- Currently, it "takes over" the midnight cron, which may potentially run for hours. This potentially delays other crons that run at midnight.

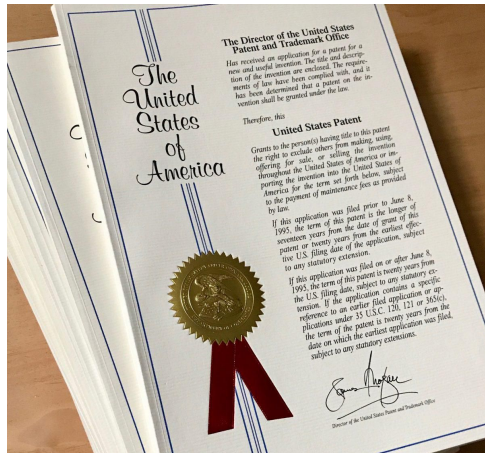


- Not a major problem currently, but has a chance to be in future.
- Fix: Would like to space this out on more than one cron via batch processing. Thus, share load between 12:00 am, 12:01, 12:02, etc.

7. Patent Data



- The CTSA in Cleveland mentioned that they would be interested in patent data as a part of Flight Tracker. As they pointed out, the US Patent office now has a website with an API to download patent info.
- We've already started to work on how to include this as a part of Flight Tracker.



- Similar limitations of name-matching. Probably will have its own data wrangler, like the Publication Wrangler.
- Chad Lightner exploring...

8. Faster Interface

- Flight Tracker can run processes slowly.
- Fix: Use something called AJAX calls to allow the REDCap server to process the interface faster.
- Most high-performing websites use this strategy to speed up their sites. I have deliberately not used this much in Flight Tracker in favor of prioritizing just developing the base webpage. We can change this this year to speed up how the data are displayed.



9. Build a Custom Project



- Flight Tracker is complex. It has a different way of approaching tracking a group of scholars. This can be overwhelming, especially at first. “Simplify, simplify...” – Thoreau in *Walden*
- Fix: Allow users to “turn on/off” certain modular parts of Flight Tracker (e.g., publications, grants, patents, resource use, etc.).
- Have a guided set up when Flight Tracker is first installed.
- Allow to add modules at a later date, too.



10. Research Publications

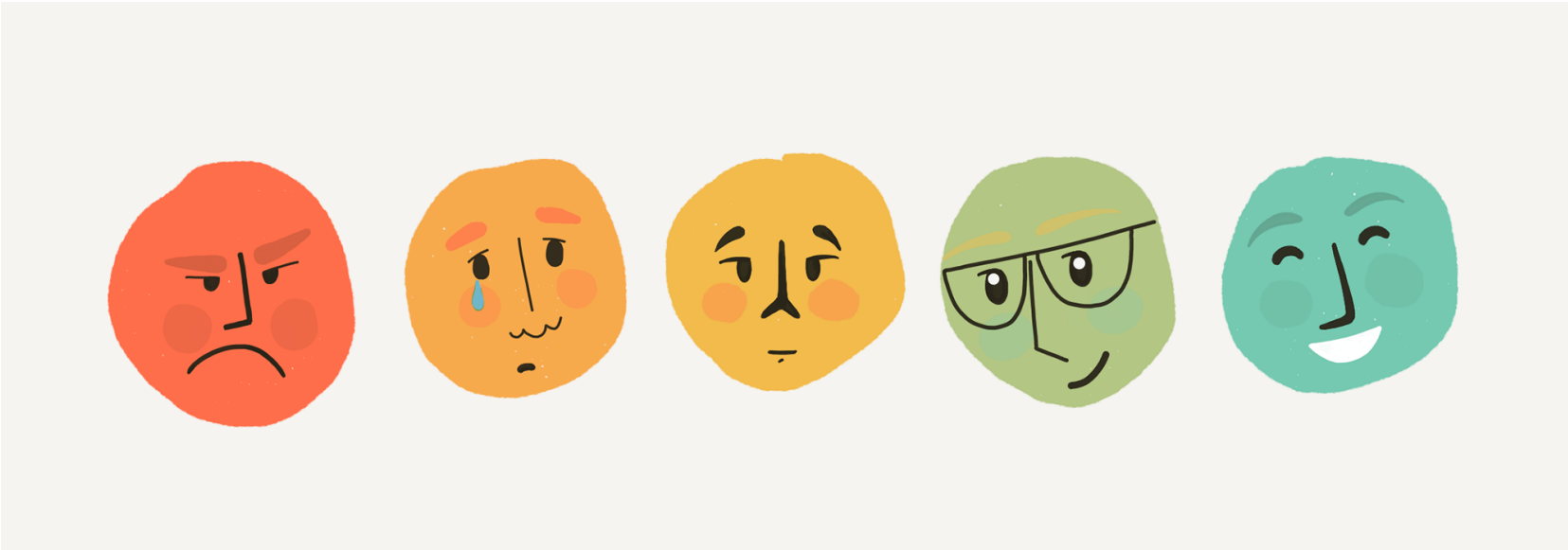
Signs of Progress:

- Continue to collect data across national Flight Tracker sites.
- Identify Principal Investigators at sites.
- Involve a statistician for analysis.



- Develop software for analysis and outcome evaluations.
- Identify pertinent research questions and aims.

Feedback



Office Hours with Rebecca & Scott

