UN Comtrade
Database System

Overview

- What is UN Comtrade ?
  - Data Processing System
  - Management System
  - Data Retrieval System (on Internet)
- Highlights
  - Key-elements
  - Personalization

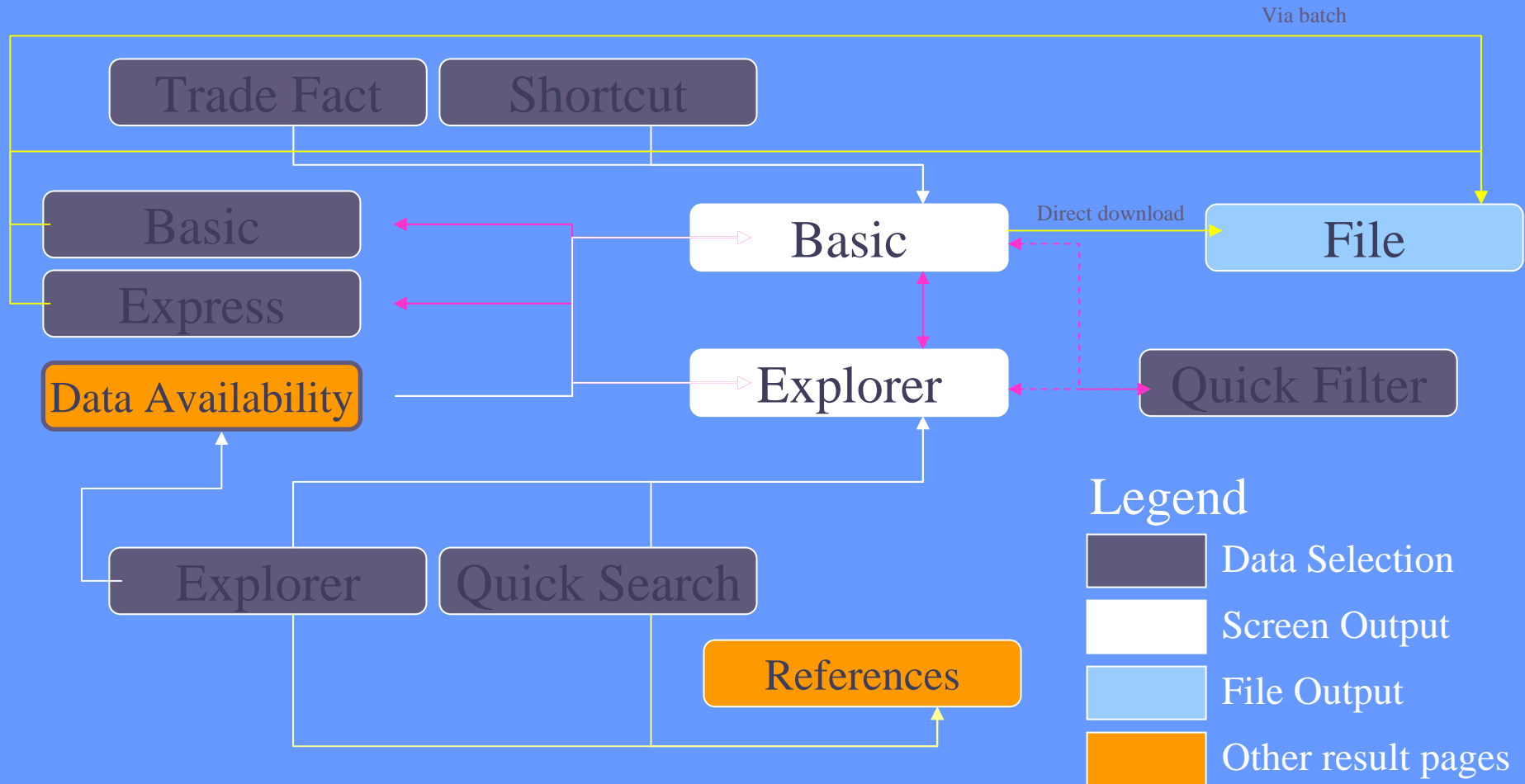# What is UN Comtrade?

- United Nations Commodity Trade Statistics Database
  - Imports, Exports, Re-exports
  - Commodity by Trading Partner
  - Annual data
  - Value in US dollars
  - Net weight and secondary quantities
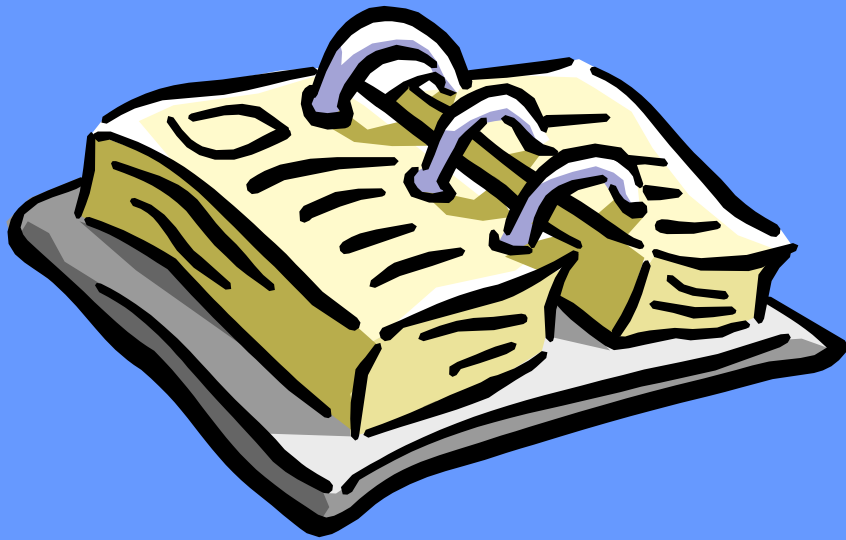 - About 150 reporters per year (>93% of the World Trade)

Key elements

- Classifications and Commodity Codes
  - Harmonized System
  - SITC
- Reporter
- Partner
- Trade Flow
- Year

Data Selection & Extraction Overview

Trade Fact

Shortcut

Via batch

Basic

Express

Data Availability

Basic

Explorer

Explorer

Quick Search

File

Direct download

Quick Filter

References

Legend

▉	Data Selection
▢	Screen Output
▢	File Output
▉	Other result pages

Data Selection

- Shortcut Query
- Basic Selection
- Express Selection
- Comtrade Explorer
- Quick Search
- Quick Filter
- Via Data Availability

Data Selection (cont)

- Shortcut Query
  - For casual user with specific query
  - Redirect to Data Availability when hitting empty result

- Basic Selection
  - Traditional Selection of Reporters, Commodities and Partners
  - Load/Save query
  - More options (such as filtering by value, or batch submission)

Data Selection (cont)

- **Express Selection**
  - Code based
  - Has more features than Basic Selection
  - For an experienced Comtrade User

- **Comtrade Explorer**
  - "Google like" search
  - Gives summary of data not detail (in table and graph)
  - Selection could be modified in Basic or Express Selection
  - For data mining and overviews

Data Selection (cont)

- **Quick Search**
  - Enhanced text search
    - Return result as user types
  - Context based selection
    - Go to Comtrade Explorer
    - Or Go to Help page, Glossary page, etc.

- **Quick Filter**
  - Enhanced text search
    - Return result as user types
  - Modify selection without leaving page
  - Available only in results pages (Basic or Explorer)

Data Extraction

- To Screen (1000 records limit)
  - Standard – with paging
  - Printable – without paging
- To File (csv format)
  - Direct Download (150,000 records limit)
    - Instant extraction. Uncompressed file.
  - Batch (20,000,000 records limit)
    - Unattended extraction. Notified via e-mail. Compressed file.

File Data Output

- Text file in Comma Separated Value
  - With options "Excel Compatible Format"
- Column layout is customizable
  - User could customized his/her download format based on available columns
- Direct Download or via Batch
- Each user could have different download limit
- All data extractions are recoded

Personalization

- Favorites
- Saved Queries
- FrontPage Customization
- Download Format Customization
- Alert Notification
- Auto-Batch

Favorites

- User favorites:
  - Commodities
  - Reporters
  - Partners
  - Years
  - Country Groups
    - As reporter or partner
  - Commodity Groups

- Pre-defined favorites
  - Compiled by ITSB
  - Could be copied to user favorites

- Favorites appear in:
  - Basic and Express Selection, Comtrade Explorer

- Not appear in:
  - Shortcut Query, Quick Search, and Quick Filter

Grouping

- Is a powerful tool for researchers
- Combine / aggregate several records into one
- Difference between Country Group and Group of countries
- Example:
  - ASEAN group will include all countries in Southeast Asia
  - Total Export from US to ASEAN will be shown as one record instead of several records

Grouping (cont)

- Cons
  - Could not be used in Comtrade Explorer
  - Might take a long time to execute
  - Take a lot of CPU Time
  - Must be careful in interpreting the result since the underlying data might be zero or not available

- Pros
  - Could be customized
  - Pre-aggregate group is available:
    - TOTAL, 1 digit code, 2 digit code, etc as commodity
    - WORLD as partner
  - Batch processing is available
    - However batch processing time is limited to 5 hours / query

Saved Queries

- Any queries could be saved for further use
- Advanced options will not be saved:
    - Value Filtering
    - Sorting Order
    - Aggregate Option
- Conjunction to Alert Notification, Auto-Batch could be activated
- Alert Notification could be set for monitoring particular changes in underlying data

Auto-Batch

- Same with batch but triggered by alert notification
- Two types of update:
  - Incremental
  - Full
- Incremental Update
  - Just get the changes only
  - Need to get all data before
- Full Update
  - The defined saved query will be run

- Note:
  - Incremental only works for non-group items
  - If there are any groups in saved queries, full update will be run instead
  - Use auto-batch carefully
  - Could easily reaches max download
  - In most cases, alert notification is good enough
  - Auto-Batch is designed for partner organizations

Data Availability

- Interactive
- In Graph
- Reporters
- Commodities
- Years
- By Date of Loading

Data Availability (cont)

- Interactive
  - Using Enhanced Text Search
  - User will get a specific information
  - Link to Comtrade Explorer

- In Graph
  - Show data availability in graph
    - User get a global view
  - Show # of records or # of reporters
  - Could use custom filter
  - Pre-defined country groups are accessible
  - Link to other data availability menus

Data Availability (cont)

- Reporters
  - Show list of reporters with their reported years
  - Classifications are given as column
- Years
  - Show list of years and reporters are given in a column

- Commodities
  - Show selected commodities with reporters and their years
- By Date of Loading
  - Could filter latest loaded data

Metadata & Reference

- Commodity List
  - List of commodities defined in HS and SITC
  - Link to Data Availability and Comtrade Explorer
- Country List
  - List of available countries (as reporter or partner)
  - Link to Data Availability, Comtrade Explorer, Trade Practices Report and ITC Country Profile
- Glossary
  - List of Terms used. Could be accessed via Quick Search

Summary

- Many ways to get the trade data
- Personalization makes Comtrade a client oriented product
- Flexibility in User Access Rights
- Comtrade Explorer and Comtrade Batch makes Comtrade a powerful research tool