Statistics FAQ

December 4, 2009

Monographs

Q1. How are electronic books to be counted?

A1. Count those e-books owned by or leased and for which there is a catalog record in the library catalog. Do not include as part of Volumes Added Gross (1b) any government documents or other e-book collections (such as large gift collections, or e-book packages, EBBO, etc.) that were added to the collection as the result of a one-time download or addition to the OPAC. Instead, include these items in Volumes Held (1a) of the previous year and provide a footnote explaining the revision of Line 1a.

Q2. How do we count government documents that are held in federal depositories?

A2. If there are records in your catalog, you may count them as volumes held.

Q3. Can we count those titles in our catalog that are for collections we do not own, but to which we provide access (CRL, international or local partners)?

A3. No.

Serials

Q4. What prompted the decision to change to counting serial unique titles?

A4. The former instructions for reporting serials were that libraries report the "total number of subscriptions, not titles, but electronic serials acquired as part of an aggregated package (such as MUSE or Academic's IDEAL) were to be counted by title". Directors and other staff have expressed concern that the serials count was problematic since many libraries engage in multiple consortia arrangements and the serials count was inflated by duplicate titles held in multiple packages. The Statistics and Assessment Committee determined that a new way of counting serials focusing on titles would provide better descriptive data reflecting the true scope of the content provided by research libraries. In the electronic environment once you own or lease a title, it is often accessible by all users so a more authentic descriptive statistic for the scope of the content is titles rather than subscriptions. A unique title count favors broader coverage. Any duplication of those titles through packages, aggregations, bundles, etc. becomes more a management issue.

Q5. What is meant by deduplication?

A5. Deduplication means to count each title only once. If a title appears in both print and electronic form and a library has acquired it through several different providers, it would still be counted as one title.

Use the largest base of serial titles as the beginning file on which to start the deduplication process.

Deduplication also applies to reporting titles across libraries. If, for example, a member has law, health science, and main libraries, the titles should be deduplicated across those libraries. Report unique titles to law, report unique titles to medical, and report the remaining unique titles to main. We are asking libraries to provide a footnote of their deduplication process.

If it is not possible to deduplicate across libraries due to system limitations, a random sample of 1,000 serial titles can be generated from the branch library and an analysis of the overlap conducted. The resulting percentage overlap can be extrapolated to all the number of titles available for that branch to get an estimated figure of the title overlap for all serials held by a specific branch. Subtract the estimated title overlap from the main serial file.

Q6. Why is electronic version of a serial considered the primary version?

A6. It is expected that as serials move to electronic form and become the version of record, a count for electronic titles is more representative of library collections.

Q7. Is there a difference in counting a serial title for which we have an extensive run or those for which we have current issues only?

A7. No, all titles are counted equally.

Q8. How should we report electronic serial titles included in purchased bundles/packages/aggregations?

A8. There are a variety of ways electronic serials can be provided:
- Serial title is single paid subscription (i.e., has no print counterpart)
- Serial title comes free with a paid print subscription
- Serial title costs extra with a paid print subscription
- Serial title is part of an aggregated package purchased by the library
    - Publisher or third-party package in which all titles are available in full
    - Publisher or third-party package in which not all titles are available in full
- Serial title is part of a package purchased by the library in collaboration with other parties (other campus libraries, local consortium, regional network, etc.)
    - Publisher or third-party package in which all titles are available in full
    - Publisher or third-party package in which not all titles are available in full

In all cases the serial titles are currently being purchased in some way and are being currently received. Each unique full-text title is counted only once and if available in both print and electronic, it should be reported as an electronic serial title.

Q9. Within an aggregation/bundle/package, can we count a ceased title?

A9. Yes, as long as the title is being purchased with current funds.

Q10. Within a currently purchased (perhaps through consortia) aggregation/bundle/package, can we count a title we previously held but subsequently unsubscribed?

A10. Yes, as long as the title is being purchased with current funds.

Q11. How do we count titles that are received free along with paid titles?
A11. If you cannot separate the purchased and not purchased component, all titles may be reported as purchased titles.

Q12. How should we count embargoed titles?

A12. If the title is currently purchased, it would be counted as a unique electronic title. If the title is available in print and embargoed electronic, it would still be one electronic title.

Q13. How do we count successive entry titles that are included in aggregations or packages?

A13. Each title is counted as a unique title. If the aggregation is currently being purchased, the title would be counted as currently purchased.

Q14. How do we count ceased electronic titles since they will never be bound?

A14. If access to the titles is still being provided through fees, they can be counted as purchased titles. If you do not pay for a ceased electronic title and you provide access to it, you can count it as currently received. We do not know how many ceased electronic titles exist. Any information about them is welcome.

Q15. Can JSTOR titles be counted?

A15. Yes, the serial title count should include unique serial titles currently purchased. If there is an ongoing expenditure for JSTOR, the titles can be counted (it is expected that many of these titles will duplicate held print versions).

Q16. Can titles included in full-text indexing and abstracting services be counted?

A16. Yes, if payments are currently made to acquire an indexing and abstracting service the full-text titles included in these services can be counted as unique titles.

Q17. Can open access titles be counted?

A17. Yes, if records for the titles are included in the library's catalog or through some other title level finding aid. The titles would be counted as received, not purchased.

Q18. How should we count open access titles for which we might pay membership fees (e.g., PLoS or BioMed Central)?

A18. If records for these titles are included in the library catalog or through some other title level finding aid, they would be counted as received not purchased. The membership fees would be recorded in Miscellaneous expenditures (15d) or Other operating expenditures (19), according to local practice.

Q19. How should databases acquired through standing orders be counted (e.g., Gale, ABC Clio)?
A19. Each database that does not include full-text titles would be counted as one (1) serial title. Include the number of full-text titles for those databases that include a mixture of full-text serial titles and other types of materials if the full-text titles can be easily identified and title level access to them is provided.

Some 2007 workshop participants recommended compilation of a list of commonly held reference database products and how to count them (i.e., either as one (1) serial or the included titles can be counted separately).   A list of such products will only indicate the number of titles held in these products and not the amount of overlap across products. We are open to suggestions of making such lists useful to the community and we held discussions with vendors that manage such products.

Q20. Have you spoken to electronic resource services about providing support for deduplication activities in ARL libraries?

A20. We have begun those conversations and will keep you informed of the outcome.

Q21. What will be the relationship between unique titles and serials expenditures?

A21. That is not known at this time. The current unit cost time series is not being maintained. Data from 2006/2007 and following will be analyzed to determine if there is value in beginning a new time series.

Integrating Resources

Q22. How should we count integrating resources?

A22. In general, one-time purchases should be counted as monographs and continuing purchases should be considered serials.

Expenditures

Q23. How do we count one-time payments for backfiles?

A23. There is no change in the instructions from previous years. Backfile payments should be recorded as other library materials (15c) and one-time electronic purchases (21).

Q24. Is there any place to record fringe benefit payments?

Q24. No, the ARL practice has been to exclude fringe benefit payments from both the personnel variables as well as operating costs.

Q25. What capital expenditures can be included in operating expenditures (19)?

A25. Temporarily reallocated funds from other budget lines during a specific fiscal year may be included as operating expenditures. Capital expenditures are usually made to acquire or upgrade physical assets such as property, buildings, or equipment. One-time capital expenditures like a major renovation or a new building should not be included as an operating expenditure.

Expenditures-Focused Index

Q26. Will the definition for professional staff used to construct the expenditures-focused index be made more specific?

A26. No, as the current definition works well across many ARL institutions in a satisfactory fashion. The expenditures correlate highly with all the variables included in the Expenditures-Focused Index. The Expenditures-Focused Index was determined through factor analysis of all the ARL Statistics variables and it led to the inclusion of four variables: total expenditures, expenditures for library materials, expenditures for professional staff, and professional plus support staff. The Expenditures-Focused Index correlates highly with the ARL Membership Criteria Index.

Supplementary Statistics

Q27. Shall we count our Google or Open Content Alliance book digitization projects in the Library Digitization Activities?

A27. If your library is actively involved in Google or Open Content Alliance digitization, you may report the library activities as part of the digitization activities in the supplementary statistics. The Statistics and Assessment Committee will be discussing the implications of large scale digitization projects at the May 2009 committee meeting.

Q28. Why do the instructions for question 13 ask us to supply the figure for volumes held collectively from 2003-04?

A28. The intent of this question to report a cumulative total of volumes that have been withdrawn for shared storage purposes. Previous survey instructions implied that an annual figure should be reported.

Miscellaneous

Q29. What happened to the Interim Guidelines for counting Materials Housed in Library Storage Centers?

A29. Part of the question has been answered in 'Volumes held' with the addition of the statement that volumes purchased collectively may be counted in 'Volumes held. Volumes withdrawn for purposes of placement in a shared storage facility should be reported in question 13 of the supplementary statistics. If volumes are held in remote and/or shared storage facilities without being withdrawn, they should be counted as part of 'Volumes held' in the ARL Statistics.