New Ways of Measuring Collections

An Implementation Plan by the ARL Statistics and Assessment Committee
May 2007

1. Expenditures-focused index
Starting with the 2005-06 data ARL will make publicly available the expenditures-focused index (total library expenditures, salaries and wages for professional staff, expenditures for total library materials, and number of professional plus support staff). The last three years of the expenditures-focused index will be distributed by email on the arl-directors list once 2005-06 data are final (estimated delivery time is early June 2007). The ARL membership criteria index will be available in the ‘members only’ part of the ARL website.

2. ARL Statistics 2006-07: Current serials definition is changing from the number of serial subscriptions to the number of unique/deduped titles. Counting a title should happen once across all formats and reported as electronic if available. An implementation test will take place among committee member libraries in the summer of 2007. An early release of the ARL Statistics 2006-07 survey form to the survey coordinators will happen in June 2007. The official mailing of the survey forms will take place in September 2007.

Total number of current serials received, including periodicals

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<tr>
<th>4a. Number of current serials purchased</th>
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<tr>
<td>4a.i Electronic</td>
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<td>4a.ii Print and other formats</td>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>4b. Number of current serials received but not purchased</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4b.i Electronic</td>
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<tr>
<td>4b.ii Print and other formats</td>
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(Exchanges, gifts, deposits, etc. See instructions.)

(Total serials received: 4.a + 4.b)

Definition changes tracked:

Questions 4-5. Serials. Report the total number of unique titles, NOT SUBSCRIPTIONS, that you currently acquire. Do not include duplicate counts of serial titles. To the extent possible, report all government document serials even if housed in a separate documents collection. Verify the inclusion or exclusion of document serials in Question 5. Exclude unnumbered monographic and publishers’ series. Electronic serials acquired as part of a bundle or an aggregated package should be counted by title even if they are not cataloged as long as they are made accessible by the library. A serial is a publication in any medium issued in successive parts bearing numerical or chronological designations and intended to be continued indefinitely. This definition includes periodicals, newspapers, and annuals (reports, yearbooks, etc.): the journals, memoirs, proceedings, transactions, etc. of societies; and numbered monographic series.

In the case of consortial agreements, count under serials purchased only those titles for which the library pays directly from its budgeted expenditures. Count under ‘serials purchased’, only those titles for which your library pays even if partially paid from the library’s budget. Report other titles that your library receives and does not pay for directly under ‘serials received and not purchased’. If a purchased title includes electronic access to the title, count that title ONLY ONCE (DEDUPED) for electronic only. If serials have been purchased through a consortium whose budget is centrally funded and independent from the library’s budget, these serials should be reported under ‘serials received and not purchased’.

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3. ARL Supplementary Statistics 2006-07

Eliminate the following questions from the supplementary survey:
1. Number of electronic journals purchased. (1)
2. Number of electronic “full-text” journals purchased. (2)
3. Number of electronic journals not purchased. (3)
4. Number of electronic reference sources. (4)
7. Expenditures for current electronic journals purchased. (7)
8. Expenditures for electronic “full-text” journals. (8)
9. Expenditures for electronic reference sources. (9)

Modify “volumes held collectively ” to include not only volumes withdrawn from the local collection, but also those volumes for which the cost was shared at the time of purchase
20. Volumes Held Collectively (20)

The defining criterion is that the library has devoted financial resources for the purchase of these items and is taking responsibility for their availability through participation in a cooperative that supports shared ownership. The library demonstrates commitment to the shared storage facility by supporting the consortium financially through a legally binding arrangement. Include here volumes originally held and now withdrawn from the local collection because they are held in a "shared" remote storage facility starting with volumes that have been transferred during fiscal year 2005-06. Include volumes purchased collectively where the cost is shared at the time of purchase. Exclude volumes held collectively because they are held by other organizations such as the Center of Research Libraries (CRL) that are supported by membership dues and determination on whether to maintain membership may vary from year to year.

4. Collect qualitative data to develop a profile of ARL member libraries.

The members of the Statistics and Assessment Committee will undertake an implementation test collecting descriptive qualitative information for profiling key aspects/features of a library’s operations. The profile will be based upon input from the membership as reflected in the interviews conducted and analyzed in 2006 by Yvonna Lincoln including the qualitative criteria in the ARL’s Principles of Membership. Upon successful completion of the 2007 phase, we expect that every ARL member library will be asked to contribute a similar description of their operations in 2008.

In addition to the development of the profile, these qualitative descriptive data will be analyzed to identify additional variables to enhance a three-factor index measuring collections, services, and collaborations. Additional variables will be proposed, developed and tested in future data collection activities as they are determined to be useful based upon existing knowledge as well as newly gained insights from the analysis of the qualitative profile information.