

Electronic Access and Use Related Measures: Summary of Findings

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For the last few years various national library survey steering committees have grappled with ways to measure access, use, and services supporting electronic resources offered by libraries to their community. The playing field remains un-level, therefore the ability of libraries to report use of such resources remains unclear. What is clear, however, is the need for libraries to begin collecting what they are able to and to work with the suppliers of the electronic resources to measure use.

There are three initiatives underway investigating methods for collecting and reporting electronic resource use:

- The first, an IMLS 2000 National Leadership Grant project, **Developing National Data Collection Models for Public Library Statistics and Performance Measures**. This is the third in a series of studies to identify network performance measures for public libraries. Dr.s John Bertot and Charles McClure are the lead researchers on this project and NCLIS is a partner in this study. The study recently received. Work on this effort begins in October 2000. Earlier studies in this multi-phase research effort are located at <http://www.albany.edu/~imlsstat/> and <http://www.ii.fsu.edu/projects.html>. The definitions and use measures are grounded largely in the International Coalition of Library Consortia (ICOLC) guidelines developed in 1998, through numerous focus groups and individual conversations with librarians. Bertot and McClure have adapted them to meet the needs of public libraries.
- The second is **Guidelines For Statistical Measures Of Usage Of Web-Based Indexed, Abstracted, And Full Text Resources (November 1998)** work of the International Coalition of Library Consortia (ICOLC). Additional information about the ICOLC guidelines is available at <http://www.library.yale.edu/consortia/webstats.html>. Much of the work done by Bertot and McClure for public library network performance measures have developed from testing of the ICOLC measures.
- The third is a multi-year research agreement with the Association of Research Libraries (ARL) and 24 of its member libraries. Under this project Bertot and McClure are conducting an E-Metrics study. Information about this work is available at <http://www.arl.org/stats/newmeas/e-metrics.html>.

The missing link in the process is field testing collection and reporting of these measures. One group of the library survey community, the Federal State Cooperative System (FSCS) Definitions Steering Committee, is considering working with as many as 10 self-selected states to begin local collection on the attached measures. The feasibility study may include all vendor-supplied measures and additional in-library use related measures not represented in the attached table. An anticipated outcome of the feasibility study is that the FSCS Steering Committee will be in a better position to offer guidance to states on the ease of data collection and interpreting their usefulness – how consistently data is reported by vendors, how to interpret the data, and how best to use the data in planning for technology, acquisitions, and services.

The attached measures are taken from those developed through the research of Dr.s Bertot and McClure under their project supported by IMLS and participant state library agencies. The most recent version of definitions and evaluation is forthcoming in a manual titled **Performance Measures for Public Library Networked Services**, with an expected release date of October 2000.

NCLIS will convene a focus group meeting in conjunction with the ALA Midwinter Conference in Washington, DC in January 2001. The goals of the focus group are to confirm the value of field-testing the measures with public libraries and the ability of vendors to supply the performance measures outlined in the attached matrix to libraries. Copies of **Public Libraries and the Internet 2000: Summary Findings and Data Tables** or other derivative reports will also be made available, as well as an update on additional work done on electronic database measures as part of the ARL or IMLS-funded phase III studies. Database vendors mentioned in the attached matrix, along with select representatives from the library community will receive an invitation to this meeting. Attendees will be provided copies of the report and any materials prepared as a result of comments throughout the project. NCLIS Commissioners are encouraged to attend.

Electronic Access and Use Related Measures

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<i>Measures Related to Databases</i>									
<i>Vendor Compliance</i>									
Measure	Definition	Discussion	BELL & HOWELL (formerly UMI)	BRITANNICA ONLINE	EBSO	GALE	NEWSBANK	OCLC	WILSON
# Database sessions (definition adapted from proposed ICOLC guideline)	Total count of the number of sessions (logins) initiated to the online databases. Definition adapted from proposed ICOLC standard http://www.library.yale.edu/consortia/webstats.html	Provided by database vendors. Data comparability varies due to time-outs and other network management protocols. Libraries may also collect this information at their end, depending upon network design and management.	X	N/A	X	X		X	TBD
# Database queries/searches (definition adapted from proposed ICOLC guideline)	Total count of the number of searches conducted in the library's online databases. Subsequent activities by users (e.g., browsing, printing) are not considered part of the search process. http://www.library.yale.edu/consortia/webstats.html .	Provided by database vendors. Reliant upon contract; network access, and other telecommunication factors impact level of detail. (A library may be able to determine total searches, but not determine outlet or computer-specific use.)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X

<i>Measures Related to Databases</i>									
<i>Vendor Compliance</i>									
Measure	Definition	Discussion	BELL & HOWELL (FORMERLY UMI)	BRITANNICA ONLINE	EBSCO	GALE	NEWSBANK	OCLC	WILSON
# Items examined using subscription services (definition adapted from proposed ICOLC guideline)	Total count of the number of online database content views (e.g., abstracts, full-text articles).	Data reported by vendors remains aggregated (e.g., difficult to determine views or citations versus abstracts, but can report full text views with considerable accuracy).	X	X	X	X	X	X	TBD
# Full text titles available by subscription (Report: Serial titles, Other titles, Total titles)	Count of the number of full text titles that the library subscribes and offers to the public computed one time annually.	Data reported by vendors varies by database subscription, may vary within a subscription year, and may not be complete titles. To the extent possible vendors and publishers keep subscription run information up to date. It may be useful to guide libraries to use the subscription start date, or the fiscal year start date as the “snap shot” date for reporting purposes. Libraries will need guidance on this measure, as will vendors.	X	N/A	X	X	X	X	TBD