

Dear Martha:

Below are new ARL suppl. stats questions 1 and 2 that our table came up with:

1. Number of electronic journals purchased

Number of electronic journal subscriptions that the library provides to users and for which a fee is paid (including payments through library-funded consortia, centrally-funded consortia or through state or national purchasing plans).

2. Number of complete full content electronic journals purchased

Subtract from #1 the number of electronic journals that do not provide complete full content; i.e., journals in services that aggregate or provide only partial coverage (e.g. Expanded Academic ASAP or LexisNexis).

Please let me know if you have any questions.

Gayle Baker

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**Summary of discussion from Table 2 at ARL Survey Coordinators meeting at ALA Midwinter,
Friday January 20, 2006**

Table 2 members looked at questions 3 and 4 of the ARL Supplementary Statistics worksheet but in the course of our discussion, we also came up with a recommendation concerning question 5. The discussion delved first into problems of *interpretation*, followed by problems of *implementation* i.e. even if we arrived at a more comprehensible wording of the question, some of us wondered how we would be able to locate the data to answer the question accurately.

Question 3. Number of electronic journals not purchased.

Right away, our group got hung up on what was meant by “Number of *unique* electronic journals...” – did this mean unique in electronic form only and therefore exclude those that are free with print subs?

Next, we tackled the use of the word “journal” – does this include annuals and series? In the main ARL survey, the word “serials” was used; we agreed that, wherever possible, the wording and intent should match across main and supplementary surveys for consistency.

“...free through centrally-funded consortia” caused some confusion for those of us (Canadian mostly I guess) for whom nothing really comes free via consortia.

The new wording that our group finally arrived at was (highlighted text new)

Number of unique electronic journals (*i.e. those which are not duplicated*) for which the library pays no fee and for which the library has taken responsibility for providing access either through cataloguing in its OPAC or other forms of local organization (web site, databases, etc). Include journals that are free through centrally-funded consortia. Include *free* government documents *series*.

Question 4: Number of electronic reference sources.

Here was a case where there is no equivalent in the main survey strictly for reference sources and so our group recommends that question 4 be dropped and allow the reference sources to be accounted for in either question 3 or 5 depending on the nature of the source (free or not).

Finally, some personal observations, not those from the Table 2 participants. It occurred to me in our last ARL survey exercise as I was madly trying to pull numbers to plug in for questions 2 and 4 that it would be valuable to if the ARL website had its own definitive list of what ARL considers to be aggregators and fulltext journal providers, as well as the journal title counts for each one so that at least in that regard, all of us who were responding to the survey would be using consistent data compared to each other. Probably impossible but might help introduce a higher rate of accuracy.

Submitted by
Catherine Davidson
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At the Statistics Coordinators Meeting last Friday (January 20), you had those attending discuss some of the supplemental statistics questions. I was at Table Three which was asked to discuss Question #5.

Final conclusions: The question needs to be rephrased so that it is clear that it is asking for the aggregate number of e-books and not the number of e-books purchased during the fiscal year. We spent a good deal of time discussing the question before we realized that we had two different interpretations of the question. Some of us sitting at the table thought that the question was intended to parallel Question 10 of the supplemental statistics.

The group also felt that the question might define the “electronic full-text monographs that the library offers” as the number of electronic books individually represented in the library’s catalog. Indeed, it was clear that many of the libraries represented at the table were deriving this statistic by doing searches against their catalogs. There was even a suggestion that the question could be rewritten to make specific reference to MARC records and an equivalency between MARC tagging and your definition of “electronic full-text monographs that the library offers.”

Your statement at the end of the meeting that, in the FY 2006 Supplemental Statistics, ARL was going to drop the distinction between “electronic full-text monographs that the library offers” for which the library pays a fee of some sort and those for which no fee is paid. Much of our time was spent discussing the reasons for this distinction and the difficulty of distinguishing between the two types of e-books when gathering the data. Indeed, it seems that some libraries have not been distinguishing between the two types of e-books when reporting data in past years.

We never got to the point where we were rewriting Question #5. If we had, I believe the beginning of that question would have read something like this:

“Number of electronic full-text monographs for which the library provides access through item specific records in its OPAC. This number will include both monographs for which the library pays some fee and those for which the library pays no fee but which are represented in its catalog.”

We really didn’t have time to discuss the exclusions. I suspect there were questions about some of them. Generally, those exclusions seemed well understood and supported.

Hi Martha,

We were asked to discuss questions 7-10 on the Supple Stats survey.

- We felt that we could not clearly discuss these questions, because other groups were attempting to or at least discussing clearer definitions of the materials and until there is better consensus on what

were counting, then expenditures can't really be defined.

- We did question why we need a breakdown of electronic expenditures - why not just a total figure?

- We also suggest that might consider asking for what is being spent as a continuing commitment vs a one time commitment for backfiles. A twofold example of this is with JSTOR have a continuing committment for purchasing backfiles and a one time comitmet to gain access to data.

- There was general consensus that the definition of full-text is not clear.

Irmad

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Summary by Flo Wilson, Vanderbilt University

ARL Supplementary Statistics

Questions 11 – 15

Discussion summary

#11 Number of virtual reference transactions

Although sampling is not mentioned explicitly, the ability to use sampling seemed desirable.

Does the response have to go back to the requestor in order for the transaction to be counted.

One institution manages its virtual reference through a listserv comprising a number of library staff, which complicates the tracking necessary for counting accurately. In addition, questions may often be handled by non-reference staff who are not used to compiling statistics.

The biggest ambiguity identified was whether or not questions that come from library staff should be counted. There was a lack of agreement and guidance seemed needed.

#12 Federated searching offered

A couple of people thought it might be helpful to define federated searching, but basically everyone thought this was pretty straight forward.

#13 Sessions (logins)

The question was perceived to be ok. Actual figures received from vendors did not always seem to correctly label what was being counted, e.g., logins being higher than other measures such as searches, and getting numbers for sessions AND logins and the numbers are different.

The other major issue with this question AND for #14 and #15 is the comparability, or lack thereof. Since there's no way to indicate which databases logins are being reported for, the results of this question seem only marginally interesting. Several participants suggested including some kind of core list of titles for which responses would be sought.

The request for a footnote asking for 'types of resources' might be illustrated/defined by giving examples of the types.

#14 Searches

See comments in #13.

Participants noted that they would probably included non-COUNTER data if it seemed to be correct, but weren't sure that was ok.

#15 Full-text article requests

See comments in #13 and #14.

Lack of clarity and the problem of interpretation were noted with the use of the word 'successful'.

Martha,

I am the representative from table 6 at the survey coordinators meeting in San Antonio. We discussed question 16.

16a. Number of virtual visits to library's website: This seems pretty basic, though if it is just counting page hits it should say hits instead of visits. Also what happens with multiple libraries that each have their own main page. Do we take the hits from each and add together? or do we take the hits from the biggest branch only?

16b. Number of virtual visits to the libraries catalog: The catalog is a database, we recommend including this part in question 14 and/or 15.

16c. Excludes virtual visits from inside the library? yes/no: We wonder how many institutions are able to answer this as yes. No one at our table was able to answer it yes. We recommend removing this question.

-Dawn

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