COUNTER Overview

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ACS Publications Division

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Background

- Library electronic resources are growing
- Content is often housed on publisher sites
- Libraries need usage information from publishers and standardized reports have become the goal
Standardization Efforts

- Many attempts to achieve consistency
  - ICOLC Guidelines
  - ARL E-Metrics
  - ISO 2789 and 11620
  - NISO Z39.7
  - NCLIS Task Force on Network Performance Measures
  - PALS Usage Statistics Working Group
Issues

◆ No common report formats, terminology, or definitions
◆ Unaddressed technical issues
◆ No coordination between different initiatives
◆ National vs. international focus
One Perspective

“… it seems to us vital that the global publishing community … get together … and pool our collective wisdom and expertise towards the development of just one code of practice.”

– PALS Usage Statistics Working Group (July, 2001)
COUNTER is Formed

◆ December 2001 – PALS Working Group invites representatives from eight organizations to “explore the feasibility of a multi-agency effort to develop a unified code of practice”

◆ March 2002 – COUNTER begins
COUNTER’s Mission

Build on existing initiatives to create internationally-accepted standards for vendor-supplied usage statistics reports
COUNTER’s Founding Sponsors

- AAP/PSP
- ALPSP
- ARL
- ASA
- Blackwell Publishing
- EBSCO
- Elsevier Science
- Ingenta
- IOPP
- JISC
- LWW
- Nature Publishing
- Oxford University Press
- The Publishers Association
- ProQuest
- STM
- Taylor & Francis Group
- UKSG
COUNTER’s Strategy

◆ Build consensus among the major stakeholders
  ■ Librarians
  ■ Publishers
  ■ Intermediaries

◆ An open, inclusive and interactive process
Some Early Decisions

- Focus first release on journals and databases
- Start simple
- Refine and expand the Code based on feedback
- Only one valid version of the Code at any time
COUNTER’s Code

◆ Release 1 Key Sections
  ■ Definitions of terms used
  ■ Specifications for usage reports
  ■ Data processing guidelines
  ■ Compliance/Auditing
# Definitions of Terms

## I. Page views

i. Bibliographic data

ii. Page type

iii. Source of page

iv. Authentication of user

v. Access rights

## II. Session data

## III. Market elements

Every effort was made to incorporate or reconcile the definitions with existing ones from other groups, such as NISO and ICOLC.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Examples / formats</th>
<th>Definition</th>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<td>A list of all articles published in a journal issue</td>
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Specifications for Usage Reports

Level 1: Journals
- Report 1: Number of Successful Full-Text Article Requests by Month and Journal
- Report 2: Turnaways by Month and Journal

Level 1: Databases
- Report 1: Total Searches & Sessions by Month & Database
- Report 2: Turnaways by Month & Database
- Report 3: Total Searches & Sessions by Month & Service
Journal Report 1: Successful Full-Text Article Requests by Month and Journal

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<th>Online ISSN</th>
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<th>Feb - 01</th>
<th>Mar - 01</th>
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<td>251</td>
<td>275</td>
<td>2978</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**EXAMPLE**
# Database Report 1: Total Searches and Sessions by Month & Database

<table>
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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Jan - 01</th>
<th>Feb - 01</th>
<th>Mar - 01</th>
<th>Calendar YTD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>Sessions</td>
<td>1987</td>
<td>2200</td>
<td>2544</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**EXAMPLE**
Specifications for Usage Reports

- Format – as shown in Release 1
- Delivery
  - CSV file, Excel, or file easily exported to Excel
  - Reports posted on a password-controlled Website
  - Information to be provided monthly
  - Data to be updated within 2 weeks of end of reporting period
  - Current year data plus all of prior year
Data Processing Guidelines

- Only intended usage should be recorded
- To do this, the Code specifies criteria to be met by data supplied
  - Only successful requests to be counted
  - HTML downloads to be counted as one
  - Double clicks within X seconds not counted

- Note “Guidelines for Implementation” and “Errata”
Compliance/Auditing

◆ 2003
  ■ Sign Declaration of Compliance
  ■ Provide Level 1 Reports

◆ 2004
  ■ Use COUNTER-approved auditors

◆ Every Year
  ■ Approved vendors posted on COUNTER Website
We <name of vendor/aggregator/gateway> (‘The Company’) hereby confirm the following:

1. That the online usage reports that are supplied by The Company to its customers, and which The Company claims to be ‘COUNTER compliant’, conform to Release 1 of the COUNTER Code of Practice:

   < list COUNTER-compliant reports, ‘Journal Report 1, etc..> 

2. Where The Company supplies to customers online usage statistics not included in the usage reports covered in 1 above, but which use terms defined in the COUNTER Code of Practice, that the definitions used by The Company are consistent with those provided in the COUNTER Code of Practice.

3. That upon receipt of this signed declaration by the COUNTER office, The Company will be listed on the 2003 Register of Vendors Providing COUNTER-compliant Usage Reports.

4. That to maintain COUNTER-compliant status beyond 2003, the usage reports provided by The Company to its customers will have to be audited according to standards specified by COUNTER and by an external auditor approved by COUNTER.

Signed:
# 2003 Early Adopters

**In Compliance**
- Annual Reviews
- Atypon
- Blackwell Publishing
- Ingenta
- ISI
- OUP
- Portland Press

**Plan to Comply**
- AIP
- EBSCO
- Elsevier
- Extenza
- Highwire Press
- IOPP
- Lippincott
- Nature Publishing
- and others
Code is freely available on the COUNTER website

- Go to www.projectcounter.org
- Click on “Code of Practice”
- Available in PDF and HTML formats
Next Steps

- Revise the Code based on user feedback
- Develop a process to certify that vendors have followed standards
- Expand standards to cover other content types
- Deepen the level of detail covered for journals and databases
Next Steps

- Promote and gain acceptance for the Code
- Encourage membership in COUNTER
Membership Eligibility

- Publishers
- Libraries
- Intermediaries
- Trade associations
- “Such other persons or corporations as may be approved”
Members Rights

- Receive “the accounts of the Company for the previous financial year”
- Receive a Directors’ report on activities
- Elect Directors
- Appoint auditors
- Discuss/determine policy put before them
- Call special meetings
Governance of COUNTER

- 4 person Board of Directors
  - Sets policy and overall strategic direction

- 12 member Executive Committee
  - Tactical management and direction

- Project Director
  - Day to day operations

- 35 member International Advisory Board
  - Support and advise COUNTER
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