

Usage Analysis with COUNTER

Pros and Cons of the Code of Practice for
Electronic Non-Periodicals

ICIC 2008, Nice, France



Reliable and relevant reference information – *f a s t*

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10.22.08

COUNTER Code of Practice: Books and Reference Works

COUNTER covers a wide range of different publication and service types, not all are uniform in nature.

COUNTER definition of reference works: “An authoritative source of information about a subject used to find quick answers to questions.”

COUNTER Usage Reports

- Turnaways by month and service
- Turnaways by month and title
- Total searches and sessions by month and title
- Total searches and sessions by month and service
- Successful title requests by month and title
- Successful section requests by month and title

Turnaways

- Vendor A
 - Unlimited site-wide license for certain subject areas or titles
 - Turnaways by title is relevant
- Vendor B
 - Concurrent user license for the entire service (all titles)
 - Turnaways by service is relevant
- Both reports must be provided, yet the two cannot be compared.

Sessions

NISO defines a session as:

“a successful request of an online service. It is one cycle of user activities that typically starts when a user connects to the service or database and ends by terminating activity that is either explicit (by leaving the service through exit or logout) or implicit (timeout due to user inactivity).”

Searches

Two conflicting interpretations possible:

- The content is valuable and users find the data they are looking for with ease and return to the service to search again and again.
- The search is less useful and users have to refine searches to find what they are looking for – performing multiple searches to find one piece of information.

Successful Requests: Definition

- COUNTER defines “successful requests are those with specific return codes as defined by NCSA”
- Plain English: it is when a user views, downloads or prints retrieved content

Successful Requests by Section

- **Sections** are defined as “a chapter or entry, a subdivision of a book or reference work”.
- **Entries** are defined as “a record of information in some categories of reference work”

Successful Requests by Title

- **Knovel**

- Keyword = Solvent AND Boiling Point = 60-70 degrees Celsius
- 2 results, one has 2 records which contain the matching data

- **Google**

- Keyword = solvent boiling point 60 70 C
- 2,100,000 results, viewing the 10 results on the first page gives no relevant answer

Journal Users

1. Find all the latest material written on the subject of their particular scientific interest or niche
2. Conduct a survey of all that has been written on a topic
3. Locate an article that has been recommended or referenced in another publication or that they want to revisit
4. Find specific answers, e.g., a doctor looking for articles about the treatment of a specific condition, such as new drugs and therapies

Journal Usage Value Drivers

Use Case or Intent	Value Driver
1. All the latest material	Currency Comprehensiveness
2. Survey of all that has been written	Comprehensiveness
3. Locate an article	Relevancy
4. Find specific answers	Comprehensiveness Reliability Relevancy

Technical Reference Collection Users

1. Find a solution to specific problem, often related to production
2. Locate a piece of data, e.g., material property value, equation, procedure, or composition
3. Learn in general about a process, physical phenomenon, chemical reaction, or material
4. Find out the state of the art in a particular technical field.

Technical Reference Usage Value Drivers

Use Case or Intent	Value Driver
1. Find a solution to specific problem	Reliability Relevancy
2. Locate a piece of data	Relevancy Reliability
3. Learn in general	Relevancy
4. Find out the state of the art	Comprehensiveness Currency Relevancy

Conclusions

- Turnaway reports are dependent on business models
- Usage reporting of sessions only makes sense for successful sessions
- Type of searches dramatically affects usage data
- Successful requests by section can be skewed by vendor indexing methods
- Successful requests by title is valid but has a few problems

Conclusions continued...

- COUNTER is trying to compare apples with apples but e-books and reference works are too diverse.
- The intent of the user is not taken into account
- COUNTER usage statistics are useful for monitoring the usage of an individual service over time
- Successful requests reports are truly a valid measure of value when monitoring a single service over time

Some thoughts...

- Split the reports into three sections:
 - Books
 - Data
 - Hybrid of the two
- Allow the vendor to select which reports are applicable
- Only record usage data for sessions with successful requests
- Combine searches and successful requests reports
- Record the amount of time spent in a service and/or taken in viewing actual content

Thank You

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