



ENCOUNTER

COUNTER sets and maintains standards for measuring usage of online content

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 KID ON THE BLOCK!**

WELCOME FROM THE CHAIR



In the last issue of ENCOUNTER, we said a fond farewell to Peter Shepherd who is retiring. We now welcome his successor, Lorraine Estelle.

Lorraine takes over at an exciting time in the development of COUNTER. June saw the publication in the UK of the [Metric Tide](#) an influential report written for the Higher Education Funding Council in England. The report makes a recommendation to publishers to “make available a range of article-level metrics to encourage a shift toward assessment based on the academic quality of an article rather than JIFs”. COUNTER published the first release of the [Code of Practice for Articles](#) last year. Please do

contact us if you would like to work with us in further developing article level usage metrics.

The development of usage metrics requires industry knowledge and technical expertise. COUNTER is fortunate to have these in abundance, thanks to our Technical Advisory Group, chaired by Oliver Pesch, Chief Strategist at EBSCO. In this newsletter, Oliver tells us about the work of the group.

Paul Needham from Cranfield University, also a member of our Technical Advisory Group, brings us up-to-date with the development of SUSHI-Lite.

This month we have released two [surveys](#). A survey for libraries and library consortia and a survey for publishers and vendors. It is always difficult to find the time to complete surveys, but we would be grateful for your help. Your feedback will inform COUNTER’s priorities and the development of Release 5 of the Code of Practice. So please let us know what you think!

Kathy Perry, Chair of COUNTER

SURVEY TIME!

We would like your help in informing the development of the COUNTER Code of Practice and in prioritising our work over the next year. Two surveys are now available for you to complete.

[COUNTER Online Survey for Vendors and Publishers](#)
[COUNTER Online Survey for Libraries and Consortia](#)

The surveys take around half-an-hour to complete and we would like your responses by 15 October. Please contact us if you would like a PDF version of the surveys so that you can consult with colleagues before completing the surveys online.



Usus is an independent community-run website, building a community engaged in best practice. Since last year, the Usus team has resolved 21 issues and queries about COUNTER usage statistics!

You can send the team your comments and questions via the [Usus online form](#).

COUNTER ON THE ROAD

We are looking forward to meeting and talking to our friends and members at the following events:

Publisher and Vendor Consultation in London Wednesday 18 November 2015

We have a few places left for this consultation meeting where we will be asking publishers and vendors about their requirements and priorities. Feedback from the meeting will inform the development of Release 5 of the COUNTER Code of Practice. Please [contact us](#) if you are interested in attending.

ALPSP seminar: Setting the Standards in London on Wednesday 11 November 2015

David Sommer of Kudos and Chair of the COUNTER Executive Committee will be chairing this seminar. It will address the “what”, “why” and “how” concerning standards in journal publishing. It will cover the identifiers, metrics and processes that improve scholarly communications. Tackled from a publisher perspective each session will explain the problems that standards attempt to solve, their practical applications and potential pitfalls. Lorraine Estelle Director of Counter will be talking about usage data standards at this seminar discussion how standards are playing an increasingly important role in journal publishing. [Read more.](#)

Charleston Conference 4-7 November 2015

Lorraine Estelle Director of Counter and Jo Lambert the project manager of the [Journal Usage Statistics Portal](#) and [IRUS-UK](#) will be giving a can't be missed presentation on Friday 6 November on "**Data That Counts**"

SUSHI-Lite: the new kid on the block

The Standardized Usage Statistics Harvesting Initiative (SUSHI) protocol was first released as an ANSI standard in 2007. SUSHI is a SOAP service that enables the exchange of very large COUNTER reports in XML format and is primarily used for the automated harvesting of COUNTER reports, typically within ERM systems and usage consolidation products. SOAP has been widely used for implementing web services, such as a SUSHI. For the experienced software developer the SOAP/XML implementation of SUSHI offers a robust solution for implementing a commercial-strength web service, but for many it can be challenging and time consuming to implement, presenting a barrier to its uptake.

Since 2007, the online environments in which we work has seen many changes. These include alternative metrics, the COUNTER Journal Usage Factor, and the rise of institutional repositories and the need to measure their use. Consequently, there is a need for more lightweight technologies to make it easier to adopt the COUNTER standard and to allow the exchange of smaller sets usage in real-time. SUSHI-Lite, developed by the SUSHI-Lite Technical Report Working Group, can support these newer requirements.

SUSHI-Lite supports modern, commonly used approaches to web services, employing RESTful interfaces and JSON data formats. This optional implementation of SUSHI also includes mechanisms for including additional filters and report attributes which support limits of scope for data and further controls for format and completeness of data in returned sets. The SUSHI-Lite protocol is much easier to implement and will help ensure acceptance of SUSHI and COUNTER by the mainstream web development community.

The National Information Standards Organization (NISO) is seeking trial users and comments on the draft technical report, “SUSHI-Lite: Deploying SUSHI as a lightweight protocol for exchanging usage via web services”, NISO TR-06-201X (available from http://www.niso.org/workrooms/sushi/sushi_lite/). The technical report proposes and describes a method of exchanging COUNTER statistics ranging from usage for a single article to a complete COUNTER report. The SUSHI-Lite technical report does not replace the SUSHI standard but rather supplements it with an alternative approach for requesting and exchanging usage.

Paul Needham, Cranfield University

Our new silver sponsor



Sponsorship is important to us for innovation and development.

Therefore, we are delighted to welcome [Jisc](#) as our new Silver Sponsor.

Sponsorship Opportunities: If you would like to sponsor *COUNTER Training Webinars* or the publication of *The Friendly-Guide to COUNTER*, please [contact us](#).

New book reports

Many thanks to all of you that responded to our consultation on three new book reports:

- BR7 Number of successful unique title requests by month and title in a Session
 - BR8 Book activity by month and title
 - BR9 Overview of Book Collections.
- Your feedback has been very helpful and we will publish the new reports on the COUNTER website in October.

The COUNTER Technical Advisory Group



It has been my privilege to chair the COUNTER Technical Advisory Group (TAG) for the past several years. This group was formed by COUNTER to inform the Executive Committee on technical matters. Currently the committee includes 12 members representing publishers, libraries, usage consolidation vendors and auditors with combined expertise on technology, usage and scholarly information in general. The group meets by phone every two months to discuss topics assigned by the executive committee.

It is critical that the majority of publishers can implement the Code of Practice and that the metrics tracked are credible. Oftentimes questions arise about new metrics or the effects of new technologies on usage tracking. The role of the TAG is to weigh in on these questions and provide recommendations to the COUNTER Executive Committee. Past discussions have included:

The TAG examined the use of page tagging as an approach to logging usage and if this would be compatible with COUNTER reporting – the conclusion was that it was compatible and text to that effect was added to the Code of Practice.

The TAG was asked to consider the effects of text mining on COUNTER reports and makes some recommendations. The outcome of that consideration was that usage activity related to text mining be

excluded from the traditional COUNTER reports and that a separate report be produced to reflect the text mining usage. It is important to know how much usage was related to text mining but also important that those numbers don't inflate statistics related to normal usage so the two-report approach solved the problem.

The TAG's review of the new Book Reports resulted changes to the proposed reports with a simplification of the metric types being tracked. For example, the proposed metric type to track number of pages raised the question of "what is a page?" With much scholarly content being born digital, the notion of a page is variable. The closest parallel is the screen page. But by using screen views, the number of "pages" in an article will vary greatly depending on the device being used to view the articles. The TAG concluded that it was not practical to make "Page Views" a comparable metric.

More recently, the TAG has been involved in a combined CrossRef/COUNTER initiative related to "distributed usage logging". One goal of this initiative is to provide a way for publishers to track the usage of their materials no matter where that usage is hosted by having the institutional repositories, social networks, content providers, collaboration sites, etc. that provide access to or reference their content to directly log usage transactions with the publisher through a direct API. The TAG is considering what it would take for transactions recorded using such an approach to meet the rigor of COUNTER processing to ensure the resulting usage statistics are credible.

Next year will be a busy one for the TAG as COUNTER plans for Release 5 of the Code of Practice. The TAG's role is to help the COUNTER Executive Committee ensure that changes and additions to the COUNTER Code of Practice don't compromise COUNTER's mission of providing consistent, credible and comparable usage reports.

Oliver Pesch, Chair of COUNTER Technical Advisory Group

Welcome to our new members

We are delighted to welcome so many new members who have joined us this summer.

[Abertay University](#)
[Aberystwyth University](#)
[Birkbeck, University of London](#)
[Birmingham City University](#)
[University of Cambridge](#)
[Canterbury Christ Church University](#)
[Cardiff University](#)
[University of Coventry](#)
[Mount Holyoke College](#)
[Royal Holloway](#)
[Kentucky Virtual Library](#)
[University of Sheffield](#)
[Smith College](#)
[University of Bradford](#)
[University of Lincoln](#)
[University of Nottingham](#)
[University of Westminster](#)
[Wellcome Library](#)

KEEPING IN TOUCH

You can keep up-to-date with COUNTER developments and projects by visiting our website <http://www.projectcounter.org/>



...and please do follow us on Twitter @ProjectCounter

We welcome your views on your experience of implementing and using COUNTER usage statistics, or your suggestions about the next release of the forthcoming releases of the COUNTER Code of Practice. Please contact lorraine@projectcounter.org