

COUNTER Compliance

A step by step Guide for Vendors

Introduction

Launched in March 2002, COUNTER (Counting Online Usage of Networked Electronic Resources) is an international initiative serving librarians, publishers and intermediaries by setting standards that facilitate the recording and reporting of online usage statistics by vendors in a consistent, credible and compatible way. These standards are contained in a Code of Practice covering all the major categories of e-content. This Guide is designed to take vendors, step-by-step, through the COUNTER compliance process.

After 31 December 2013, Release 4 of the COUNTER Code of Practice for e-Resources will be the only valid Release and vendors must be compliant with it by that date. The full text of Release 4 of the COUNTER Code of Practice may be found on the COUNTER website at: http://www.projectcounter.org/code_practice.html

The COUNTER compliance process

Step 1: Review Release 4 of the COUNTER Code of Practice for e-Resources , and select the usage reports that are relevant to your products. A full list of the usage reports provided in Release 4 is provided in Table 1 below. Some of the usage reports are obligatory for COUNTER compliance; these are categorised as the Standard usage reports. Others are optional; these are categorised as the Optional usage reports. Not every Standard usage report is required for COUNTER compliance, only those which are relevant to the categories of content that you publish. If, for example, you publish full-text journals online, then Journal Report 1 is required for COUNTER compliance. If, on the other hand, you publish multimedia databases, Multimedia Report 1 is required for COUNTER compliance. The Optional usage reports are genuinely optional and none is required for COUNTER compliance. Rather, they provide COUNTER-compliant formats for those vendors who wish to provide more detailed usage information, such as usage on mobile devices.

Table 1: List of COUNTER Usage Reports

Report	Description	Status
Journal Report 1	Number of Successful Full-Text Article Requests by Month and Journal	Standard
Journal Report 1 GOA	Number of Successful Gold Open Access Full-Text Article Requests by Month and Journal	Standard
Journal Report 1a	Number of Successful Full-Text Article Requests from an Archive by Month and Journal	Optional
Journal Report 2	Access Denied to Full-Text Articles by Month, Journal and Category	Standard
Journal Report 3	Number of Successful Item Requests by Month, Journal and Page-type	Optional
Journal Report 3 Mobile	Number of Successful Item Requests by Month, Journal and Page-type for usage on a mobile device	Optional
Journal Report 4	Total Searches Run By Month and Collection	Optional
Journal Report 5	Number of Successful Full-Text Article Requests by Year-of-Publication (YOP) and Journal	Standard
Database Report 1	Total Searches, Result Clicks and Record Views by Month and Database	Standard
Database Report 2	Access Denied by Month, Database and Category	Standard
Platform Report 1 (formerly Database Report 3)	Total Searches, Result Clicks and Record Views by Month and Platform	Standard
Book Report 1	Number of Successful Title Requests by Month and Title	Standard
Book Report 2	Number of Successful Section Requests by Month and Title	Standard
Book Report 3	Access Denied to Content Items by Month, Title and Category	Standard
Book Report 4	Access Denied to Content items by Month, Platform and Category	Standard
Book Report 5	Total Searches by Month and Title	Standard
Multimedia Report 1	Number of Successful Full Multimedia Content Unit Requests by Month and Collection	Standard
Multimedia Report 2	Number of Successful Full Multimedia Content Unit Requests by Month, Collection and Item Type	Optional
Title Report 1 (formerly Journal/Book Report 1)	Number of Successful Requests for Journal Full-Text Articles and Book Sections by Month and Title	Optional
Title Report 1 Mobile	Number of Successful Requests for Journal Full-Text Articles and Book Sections by Month and Title (formatted for normal browsers/delivered to mobile devices AND formatted for mobile devices/delivered to mobile devices)	Optional
Title Report 2	Access Denied to Full-Text Items by Month, Title and Category	Optional

Title Report 3	Number of Successful Item Requests by Month, Title and Page Type	Optional
Title Report 3 Mobile	Number of Successful Item Requests by Month, Title and Page Type (formatted for normal browsers/delivered to mobile devices AND formatted for mobile devices/delivered to mobile devices)	Optional

Step 2: preparing the COUNTER compliant reports: once you have decided which usage reports apply to your products, the process for converting your raw logfiles into the COUNTER usage reports needs to be addressed. The specifications for this are provided in Sections 4 and 5 of the Code of Practice. Section 4 specifies the COUNTER report content and formats, the customer categories to be used, and the rules for delivery and customer access. Section 5 provides the data processing requirements, in terms of http return codes, time filters, etc. If your organization does not have the IT knowledge or capability to transform the raw logfiles into the COUNTER usage reports, COUNTER can advise on suppliers who can provide this service.

Step 3: application for COUNTER compliance: once you have prepared the usage reports, COUNTER must review them prior to recognizing them as COUNTER compliant. This review is carried out by one of the COUNTER library test sites; it normally takes no more than a few days and highlights any deviations from the COUNTER standard that must be remedied prior to your being added to the official list of COUNTER compliant vendors.

Step 4: addition to the Register of COUNTER Vendors. Once the library test site approves the usage reports as COUNTER compliant, you will be asked to complete the Declaration of COUNTER Compliance (Appendix B of the Code of Practice). Upon receipt of this, together with the US\$500 Registration Fee, the vendor will be added to the Register of COUNTER Compliant Vendors. *Note: the Registration Fee is waived for COUNTER Members.*

Post-compliance action

- The independent audit: in order to maintain COUNTER compliant status, vendor reports must undergo an independent audit within 6 months of being added to the Register, and annually thereafter. COUNTER will accept an audit by any Chartered Accountant (UK), CPA (USA), or their equivalent elsewhere. Alternatively, COUNTER will also accept an audit by one of the two COUNTER-approved auditors, ABCe or BPA
- Feedback from customers: even after a vendor's usage reports have been reviewed and have passed the independent audit, it is possible for infelicities to creep into the COUNTER reports, as a result, perhaps, of a modification to a system or platform. Such problems are often noticed by the customers receiving the vendor reports before they become apparent to the vendor. For this reason we urge all COUNTER compliant vendors to register with the lib-stats mailing list, which is the main forum for online librarian discussion of usage statistics. Lib-stats is managed by JISC; membership of the list is free and information on how to subscribe to it may be found at: <https://www.jiscmail.ac.uk/cgi-bin/webadmin?A0=lib-stats>

If you have any questions about the COUNTER compliance process, contact COUNTER by email at lorraine.estelle@counterusage.org