Introduction to Release 2 of the COUNTER Code of Practice for Journals and Databases

Release 2 of the COUNTER Code of Practice has been developed with input from librarian focus groups, from the COUNTER International Advisory Board and from other sources. One very strong message received from all groups was that COUNTER should concentrate on ensuring that vendors can provide a reliable set of basic usage reports, and not develop an ever- expanding list of increasingly detailed usage reports. This philosophy is reflected in Release 2.To avoid confusion, the original format and structure of Release 1 has been retained as far as possible.

Release 2 becomes the valid Code of Practice for Journals and Databases on 1 January 2006, from which date vendors must comply with Release 2.

Features of Release 2

The majority of the changes in Release 2 are designed to provide more specific information to assist vendors to create COUNTER-compliant usage reports, and to enable customers to use them. There are only two major changes to the content of the Usage Reports themselves. These are: first, the inclusion of additional columns in the usage reports that indicate the 'Publisher' and the 'Platform' of the database or journal; second, the modification of Journal Report 1, to allow successful requests for html and PDF full-text articles to be reported separately. The main new features in Release 2 of the Code of Practice are listed below, by Section:

Section 3
- The complete list of Definitions of Terms Used has been moved from Section 3 to an Appendix to the Code of Practice. A subset of those definitions that are specific to the usage reports included in Release 2 has been extracted from this list and is published as Table 1 in Section 3 of the Code of Practice itself.

Section 4
- *4.1* Examples of the required usage reports are provided in the form of Excel spreadsheets and accompanied by detailed display rules, so that vendors have available more precise specifications for compliance. (Examples of CSV formats for the usage reports are provided in Appendix F). The format used for the monthly date column headings has been changed from mmm-yy to mmm-yyyy to avoid ambiguity.
  - *Journal Report 1: Number of Successful Full-text Requests by Month and Journal Formats'* has been modified to include two additional columns that report html and PDF YTD totals separately. This is in response to widespread requests from librarians for this data.
  - The Level 2 usage reports from Release 1 (Journal Report 3 and Journal Report 4) have been moved to Appendix H of Release 2. These more detailed reports are not a requirement for COUNTER compliance, but are provided by several vendors and are valued by many customers. By including these reports in an Appendix we want to provide those vendors who can deliver more detailed usage

statistics with a COUNTER-compliant standard that they can implement.

- ***4.2*** Customer *Categories for Usage Reports* A more detailed specification is provided here for consortium level reporting. Vendors are required, where contractual arrangements permit them to do so, to provide readily accessible aggregated usage reports for the entire consortium, as well as individual reports for each consortium member.

Section 6

- The auditing standards and procedures are outlined here and described in detail in Appendix E. Vendors must have their Release 2 COUNTER compliant usage reports audited by an independent auditor before 30 June 2007, and once per calendar year from 2008 onwards.

Section 7

- ***7.3*** *Aggregators, Gateways and Hosts* The protocols to be used for recording and reporting usage when an intermediary aggregator or gateway is involved have been collected together in the new Table 2. The objective of these protocols is to avoid duplication of counting by the publisher that owns the content and the aggregator/gateway that provides access to it.