Introduction to Release 3 of the COUNTER Code of Practice for Journals and Databases

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COUNTER provides a set of international, extendible Codes of Practice that allow the usage of online information products and services to be measured in a credible, consistent and compatible way using vendor-generated data. The COUNTER Code of Practice for Journals and Databases specifies: the data elements to be measured; definitions of these data elements; usage report content, format, frequency and methods of delivery; protocols for combining usage reports from direct use and from use via intermediaries. It also provides guidelines for data processing by vendors and auditing protocols. Release 3 of the Code of Practice for Journals and Databases replaces Release 2 and the **deadline date for its implementation is 31 August 2009**. After this date only those vendors compliant with Release 3 will be considered to be COUNTER compliant.

Features of Release 3

The main objectives of this Release of the Code of Practice are: first, to improve further the reliability of the COUNTER usage reports by incorporating new protocols designed to mitigate the potentially inflationary effects on usage statistics of federated and automated search engines, internet robots, crawlers, etc.; second, to provide tools that will facilitate the consolidatation, management and analysis of the COUNTER usage statistics; third, to improve the COUNTER usage reports for library consortia; fourth, to improve the reporting of the usage of journal archives. The main new features in Release 3 are listed below, by Section.

Section 3

- An expanded list of Definitions in Table 1, to include terms such as 'automated search', 'federated search', 'internet robot', 'sectioned HTML', etc. that are used for the first time in Release 3.

Section 4.1

- The SUSHI (**S**tandardized **U**sage **S**tatistics **H**arvesting **I**nitiative) protocol has been incorporated into the COUNTER Code of Practice. SUSHI has been developed by NISO (National Information Standards Organization) in co-operation with COUNTER and in 2007 became a NISO standard (Z39.93). Implementation of the XML-based SUSHI protocol by vendors will allow the

automated retrieval of the COUNTER usage reports into local systems, making this process much less time consuming for the librarian or library consortium administrator.

- Usage Reports must be provided in XML, in addition to the existing prescribed formats (Excel, CSV, etc.). A link to the required SUSHI XML schema is provided below the Excel example of each usage report.
- Vendors that provide journal archives as a separate acquisition from the current journals must provide *either* **Journal Report 1a: Number of Successful Full-text Article Requests from an Archive by Month and Journal** (which was an optional additional usage report in Release 2) OR **Journal Report 5: Number of Successful Full-Text Article Requests by Year-of-Publication and Journal**
- In Database Report 1 and Database Report 3, search and session activity generated by federated search engines and automated search agents must be reported separately as illustrated in the example reports provided.
- New library consortium usage reports. The advent of the SUSHI protocol greatly facilitates the handling of large volumes of usage data, which is a particular advantage for consortial reporting. For this reason COUNTER has developed two new reports for library consortia that are specified only in XML format.

Section 4.3

- A new protocol that requires federated and automated searches to be isolated from *bona fide* searches by genuine users, and reported separately in Database Report 1 and Database Report 3. The growing use of federated and automated searches has the potential to inflate enormously the search and session counts in the database reports and this protocol is designed to mitigate such inflation.
- New protocols that require activity generated by internet robots and crawlers, as well as by LOCKSS and similar caches, to be excluded from the COUNTER reports

Appendix H: Optional Additional Usage Reports

- A new optional additional report Journal/Book Report 1: Number of successful full-text item requests by month and title, specified in XML only, will allow vendors that provide online journals and books on the same platform to report usage of both categories of product in a single COUNTER report.