

Introduction to Release 4 of the COUNTER Code of Practice for e-Resources

April 2012

Release 4 of the COUNTER Code of Practice for e-Resources has been developed with input from vendors, librarians and intermediaries. This Release is a single, integrated Code of Practice covering journals, databases and books, as well as multimedia content. As such it supersedes both Release 3 of the Code of Practice for Journals and Databases and Release 1 of the Code of Practice for Books and Reference Works. The **deadline date for implementation of Release 4 is 31 December 2013**. After this date only those vendors compliant with Release 4 will be considered to be COUNTER compliant; vendors are encouraged to implement Release 4 before that date. Before 31 December 2013, only vendors compliant with the new Release 4, or vendors compliant with Release 3 for Journals and Databases or Release 1 for Books and Reference Works will be considered to be COUNTER-compliant.

Features of Release 4

The main new features in Release 4 are listed below:

- An expanded list of Definitions in the Glossary of Terms (**Appendix A**), including terms such as 'gold open access', 'multimedia full content unit', 'record view', 'result click', as well as different categories of 'access denied', etc. that are used for the first time in Release 4
- Enhancements of the SUSHI (**Standardised Usage Statistics Harvesting Initiative**) protocol designed to facilitate its implementation by vendors and its use by librarians (**Section 3**)
- A requirement that Journal DOI and Book DOI be included in the usage reports, to facilitate not only the management of usage data, but also the linking of usage data to other data relevant to collections of online content. (**Section 4.1**)
- A requirement that usage of Gold Open Access full-text articles within journals be reported separately in a new report: Journal Report 1 Gold Open Access (**Section 4.1.1**)
- An expanded Journal Report 2, which now includes 'access denied: content item not licenced', in addition to the 'Turnaways' (access denied: simultaneous/concurrent user licence limit exceeded) covered in earlier Releases. (**Section 4.1.1**)
- A modified Journal Report 5, covering usage by Year of Publication (YOP), which allows customers to calculate usage of archival packages, is now a required report. Vendors are not required to provide this report to every customer every month, but they must have the capability to provide Journal Report 5 to customers on demand. (**Section 4.1.1**)
- Modified Database Reports, in which the previous requirement to report Session counts has been dropped, and a new requirement to report Record Views and Result Clicks has been added. Database Report 3 has also been renamed Platform Report 1 (**Section 4.1.2**)

- A requirement , in Book Report 2, that the type of Section covered in the report by a particular vendor be defined (**Section 4.1.3**)
- Removal of Book Report 6: Total Searches and Sessions by Month and Service, which is replaced by Platform Report 1 (**Section 4.1.2**).
- A new report, Multimedia Report 1, which covers the usage of non-textual multimedia resources, such as audio, video and images, by reporting the number of successful requests for multimedia full content units (**Section 4.1.4**)
- A new set of optional usage reports, the 'Title' reports that enable the reporting of usage of full-text items in journals, books and reference works that are published on the same platform in a single COUNTER report. (**Appendix H**)
- A set of new optional reports that enable usage of content on mobile devices to be reported separately. (**Appendix H**)
- Flexibility in the reporting period for all usage reports, which allows customers to specify a date range for their usage reports (**Section 4.3**)
- A description of the relative advantages of logfiles and page tags as the basis for counting online usage (**Section 5**)
- A new protocol to help identify abnormal spikes in usage (**Appendix D**)

While this Code of Practice sets out the standards that must be achieved and the reports that must be provided for COUNTER compliance, vendors are welcome to provide additional reports that extend the COUNTER reports, for example by adding further fields (such as subject categories or list prices) or perform calculations based on the COUNTER reports. Where additional reports in excess of the COUNTER requirements are provided, vendors should state whether the data contained in these reports has been subject to the COUNTER rules for processing usage statistics.

For further information, please visit the Code of Practice page of the COUNTER website at: http://www.projectcounter.org/code_practice.html