

NASIG Newsletter

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Other Serials & E-Resources News

Report on ERIG, ALA Annual, June 2010

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Statistics seem to be a never ending topic of interest in librarianship and this year's presentation by the ALCTS Electronic Resources Interest Group (ERIG) was no exception.

Often a dry presentation topic, the speakers at this meeting used timely and useful information, as well as a little humor, during the panel discussion, "Down for the Count: Making the Case for E-resource Usage Statistics." Topics briefly covered the spectrum of e-resource statistics.

Nadia Lalla of the University of Michigan encouraged deeper analysis of statistics that most of us gather at least monthly. For example, "turnaways" provide a statistic on the number of users that were unable to access a resource, but the librarian should ask why that user could not access a resource. Questions can be generated from a statistical number and answers can determine its usefulness and cost per use, and justify the cost of a resource or its elimination.

Doralynn Rossman of the Montana State University Libraries explained the differences between print book pricing models and those of e-books, as well as weeding practices. Since pricing models are so different between print and electronic, price per book can seriously skew statistics. When using statistics to justify weeding, keep separate statistics for print and electronic. Find overlaps

between print and e-books and weed accordingly. Packages of e-books can be cost effective, but can also add "noise" to a collection so be selective about these types of purchases.

Problematic e-book statistics were presented by Leslie Czechowski from the University of Pittsburgh. "Turnaways" are a common and important statistic for e-journals, but currently, many e-book vendors are not reporting this number in their COUNTER statistics. Definitions in non-COUNTER statistics are difficult to interpret, with statistics labels such as "document count" and "monthly book usage." Conversations with e-book vendors about COUNTER compliant statistics are an important step to rectify this issue.

Monica Metz-Wiseman of the University of South Florida presented her topic on "Counts within Context" as a case study of a recent incident at her university. Statistics were gathered, but did not tell the whole story. In the end, university data such as publishing by faculty and grants awarded to faculty who used library resources in the grant writing process were examined against usage statistics for each resource. The numbers told a story—if cuts were made, someone or something vital to the university would be disadvantaged. The good news is cuts to the library budget were avoided.

Tansy Matthews of the Virtual Library of Virginia presented an interesting, yet somewhat complicated topic on consortium statistics and the difficulty in reporting cost per use to state legislators due to how the data is stored. She has developed a formula using

XML reports that are downloaded into Access, providing consistently formatted data that can be manipulated easily for reporting purposes. The end result is a fiscal year cost per use. She can be contacted with questions about this formula at tansy.matthews@gmail.com

Finally, Bob McQuillan of Innovative provided a NISO SUSHI update. Details on SUSHI 1.6/COUNTER 3.0 can be found at <http://www.niso.org/workrooms/sushi>.