

**Compilation of Questions and Responses about the ACRL Annual Survey**  
revised: 2016 April 23

Please note: the numbering of questions and responses are sequential within **Categories** highlighted in yellow and bolded text.

**Some General Questions**

1. **Question:** The survey asks to report the data as of November 1. I checked IPEDS and they say “November 1 of the reporting year”, but it still wasn't 100% clear to me. Is that November 1, 2014 for the 2014-2015 data cycle or November 1, 2015?

**Response:** November 1, 2014 because it falls within the FY2015 reporting period as defined in the AL component.

2. **Question:** Include or exclude the data for law, medical and other types professional libraries?

**Response:** Include these libraries. IPEDS states the following from their AL component instructions:

“Report the number of branch and independent libraries at your institution that were open all or part of fiscal year 2015. EXCLUDE THE MAIN OR CENTRAL LIBRARY. Branch and independent libraries are defined as auxiliary library service outlets with quarters separate from the central library of an institution, which have a basic collection of books and other materials, a regular staffing level, and an established schedule. Include virtual/digital-based branch and independent libraries.

Branch and independent libraries are administered either by the central library, or as in the case of some libraries (such as law, medical, etc.), through the administrative structure of the other units within the university. Departmental study/reading rooms are not included. Please note that data for libraries on branch campuses (i.e., located in another community) are included if those campuses are registered under the same NCES Unit ID number as the main campus.”

**Follow-up Question:** You have confirmed that we should combine our law library data with ours to complete ACRL statistics, and I can do this. My concern in doing so is with our ability to adequately use ACRL data to benchmark our library with our peers, since many of our peers do not have law schools. Resources not equitably divided between the main and law libraries. For example, what our law library spends per law student is much, much higher than what the main part of campus spends per non-law student. This fact, along with many others, will be masked by combining the two libraries on one form. I truly believe that combining the two will render any future meaningful use of ACRLmetrics useless for us. Is there any way we can submit our law library data separately to ACRLmetrics, and still get a combined file to submit to IPEDs?

**Follow-up Response:** Lindsay Thompson at Counting Opinions has replied that they can accommodate a separate form(s) for reporting for the main library as well as other libraries such as law and medical. Therefore, libraries with law and/or medical libraries may submit a separate ACRL survey form for each library; Counting Opinions will manage the data combination process to produce the IPEDS-aligned file for submission to IPEDS. Please contact [acrlsupport@countingopinions.com](mailto:acrlsupport@countingopinions.com) for assistance.

3. **Question:** Why are certain item numbers missing (i.e., 10-19, 28-29, 32-39, 77-79, 81-90) in the instructions?

**Response:** It's just the manner in which the survey form and instructions are set up so that questions could be added in the major sections in future surveys without having to renumber each question.

4. **Question:** Does a crosswalk exist between the new ACRL instrument and the current ARL definitions? It seems like most are very similar, if not identical, but I wanted to clarify before we start organizing our data.

**Response:** a document with several crosswalks was created while developing the 2015 annual survey. For those interested in a copy, please contact Bob Dugan at [robert.dugan@gmail.com](mailto:robert.dugan@gmail.com). Updating a crosswalk is being considered; may coincide with the development of the 2016 survey form and instructions.

### **Staffing Types, FTEs and Expenses**

1. **Question:** a question come in about the staff data. The survey asks to report the data as of November 1. I checked IPEDS and they say "November 1 of the reporting year", but it still wasn't 100% clear to me. Is that November 1, 2014 for the 2014-2015 data cycle or November 1, 2015?

**Response:** IPEDS states for the Reporting Period Covered: Report all data for fiscal year (FY) 2015. Fiscal year 2015 is defined as the most recent 12-month period that ends before October 1, 2015, that corresponds to the institution's fiscal year.

Because we are reporting what has actually occurred, we will use November 1, 2014 because it falls within the FY2015 reporting period as defined in the AL component.

### **Expenses (exclude staff)**

#### One-time purchase of books, serial backfiles, and other materials

##### *E-books expenses*

Lines 20, 20a and 21

1. **Question:** In the area of materials costs, it seems you want all subscriptions to book resources, such as ebrary, to fall into "all other materials". Is this correct? If so, I think this does

a grave disservice to them. As the person who uses these numbers for my institution, I would rather have more granularity than to have licensed books dumped into the same pot with utilities and tools like ClassWeb.

**Response:** IPEDS views ebrary as a database and it may be reported in three places:

- a. as **Expenses**, it could be a *One-time purchase of books, serial back-files, and other materials* (line 20) OR, if ebrary is an ongoing (annual expense) at your library, its annual cost should then be reported as an *Ongoing commitments to subscriptions* (line 21).

We also ask that you report the library's expenses for e-books in the e-books' block only if the library can identify these expenses separately. (line 20a)

- b. as a collection, you may be able to report the ebrary collection under Digital/Electronic Books (include government documents) (line 40, column (2)). "Report the number of e-book titles owned or leased by the library if individual titles are cataloged and/or searchable through the library's catalog or discovery system. Count e-book titles as the equivalent of one volume, regardless of the number of users."
- c. as a database under Databases (line 42, column (2)). "Report the total number of licensed digital/electronic databases in your collection if the library provides bibliographic or discovery access at the database level. Each database is counted individually even if access to several databases is supported through the same vendor interface. [AL component]. Include e-book databases but report the individual e-book titles within the database separately under Digital/Electronic Books (line 40, column (2))."

2. **Question:** If you could confirm that the subscription ebooks will fall into the "all other materials" bucket, or if they should go with the other subscriptions (databases and serials), that would be very helpful. We have a substantial amount of our book money going to subscription book packages, so I want to ensure I'm at least counting them the same way everyone else is.

**Response:** Please review the response in #1 above.

3. **Question:** Short-term loan fees in a PDA program are reported in line 22, according to the ACRL instructions, but there is no mention of triggered PDA purchases. Where are those expenses reported? In line 20 and 20a? I'm thinking of the part that says,

"Include one-time acquisitions of access rights for digital/electronic materials held locally and for remote materials for which permanent or temporary access rights have been acquired."

**Response:** excellent question. It's an expenditure of information content so lines 20 or 22. If it were an e-book, and I am assuming that it is, then it would be reported in 20a which is information only and does not roll up into line 20. Line 20a is related to line 20. Therefore, as an expenditure, and as an e-book, I am proposing reporting triggered PDA expenditures (if an e-book) in line 20. I expect the need to update the 2016 ACRL annual survey instructions to reflect this excellent point if either lines 20 or 22, and I am leaning towards 20.

4. **Question:** Related to that, when do we count the expenditure if we use a deposit account for such arrangements (PPV or PDA)? When we place the funds in the deposit account or when the charges are incurred against the deposit account? In another library survey, we were instructed to count funds in a deposit account for a DDA program as expended for the fiscal year it is placed in the account. It seems to me that doing so will result in double counting--once when the monies go into the deposit account, and again when we report the fees for STLs and for triggered purchases. Last year for that survey we agreed that we would report only the transactions that occurred during the reporting period, and not report the funds placed into the account.

**Response:** Another excellent question. I propose counting it as an expenditure when you receive something for the deposit. You are right -- to count the deposit and then also count the expenditure from the deposit would inflate your expenditures reporting. What we are looking for is what was expended during a fiscal year that resulted in a tangible acquisition.

*Ongoing commitments to subscriptions*  
Line 21

5. **Question:** standing orders and expenditures -- with standing orders (when you have a book series on standing order), should you put those expenses in the One Time Purchase of Books (Line 20) or the Ongoing Commitment to Subscriptions column (Line 21)?

**Response:** if it is a standing order, then it is an ongoing commitment as opposed to a one-time purchase. If you were to cancel the standing order, then you would no longer get the content.

*All other materials/service cost*  
Line 22

6. **Question:** Where do we include expenditures for per-per-view (PPV) journal article transactions such as ScienceDirect, Wiley tokens, and so on?

**Response:** line 22. Responding on line 22 would place the cost within the collections area (as opposed to staff and other operations and maintenance costs). And, it is neither a one-time purchase (that you would keep in the collection) nor an ongoing subscription. IF, however, the library places the journal article in the collection (you get to keep it), then it should be reported in line 20.

7. **Question:** The instructions for line 22 state: Include fees paid to bibliographic utilities if the portion paid for the interlibrary loan can be separately counted.

We pay the bulk of our ILL expenses to our bibliographic utility. I can break out the ILL costs, but I do not see any place in the survey for ILL expenses. What then is the reason for separating those expenses?

**Similar Question:** My bibliographic utility fee (OCLC) includes interlibrary loan access fees (WorldShare), and there is no way to separate these costs. I am unsure about where to record my bibliographic utilities cost. The instructions for Line 22 say:

“Document delivery/interlibrary loan services. Include fees paid for photocopies, costs of facsimile transmission, royalties and access fees paid to provide document delivery or interlibrary loan. Include fees paid to bibliographic utilities if the portion paid for the interlibrary loan can be separately counted.”

Then, the instructions for Line 25 include this:

“National, regional, and local bibliographic utilities, networks and consortia.”

Should the instructions for Line 22 read “Include fees paid to bibliographic utilities if the portion paid for the interlibrary loan cannot be separately counted?” Since I cannot separate interlibrary loan costs from bibliographic utility costs, where should I record this cost?

**Response:** This language comes directly from the instructions of the current IPEDS Academic Libraries (AL) component; it is not ACRL's language.

ILL costs are intended to be captured in Line 22. What IPEDS is meaning to say is that (my quotation marks) "include the ILL fees paid to bibliographic utilities if the ILL costs paid can be separated out from the expenses paid to the bibliographic utility."

Then, the non-ILL expenses for "National, regional, and local bibliographic utilities, networks and consortia" is captured in line 25 (All other operations and maintenance expenses under section Operations and Maintenance Expenses). What IPEDS is also meaning to say here is (again my quotations) "if ILL is included as an expense with bibliographic utilities but the costs cannot be separated out, include the ILL costs here with the library's expenses of the bibliographic utilities in line 25."

#### Operations and Maintenance Expenses

##### Line 25

8. **Question:** To confirm, you are no longer requesting information on Consortia/Networks/Bibliographic Utilities Expenditures (question 12 from 2014). I can see nowhere to report that.

**Response:**

**Text from the 2014 Survey:** EXPENDITURES FROM EXTERNAL SOURCES 12.

Consortia/Networks/Bibliographic Utilities Expenditures from External Sources Instructions: Consortia/Networks/Bibliographic Utilities Expenditures from External Sources. If the library receives access to computer files, electronic serials or search services through one or more centrally-funded system or consortial arrangements for which it does not pay fully and/or directly (for example, funding is provided by the state on behalf of all members), enter the amount paid by external bodies on its behalf. If the specific dollar amount is not known, but the total student FTE for the consortium and amount spent for the academic members are known, divide the overall amount spent by the institution's share of the total student FTE.

Correct, this information is not collected. We are following IPEDS AL component expenditure guidelines. IPEDS and ACRL is seeking expenditure information from the institution, not expenditure information from consortia. A Task Force (mentioned later) will work with IPEDS about their collection of this information in their 2017-2018 survey.

9. **Question:** In review of the instructions for ACRL Survey question 25, we noticed that we're told to both include and exclude computer hardware. Can you please clarify whether we should include computer hardware in "other operations and maintenance expenses"? It looks like you would include computer and hardware expenses as long as they aren't part of new library buildings, but the definition isn't entirely clear, and does seem to conflict.

**From the 2015 Instructions:** All other operations and maintenance expenses - Report any other maintenance expenses that have not already been reported in this section. **Include:**

- **Computer hardware and software expenses.** Report expenses from the library budget for computer hardware and software used to support library operations, whether purchased or leased, local or remote. Include the expenses for equipment used to run information service products when that expense can be separated from the price of the product.
- National, regional, and local bibliographic utilities, networks and consortia.
- All other operating expenses. Report all other expenses from the library budget not already reported. Exclude expenses for new buildings and building renovations. **Include all expenses for furniture and equipment except computer hardware.** Include any related maintenance costs.

**Response:** The phrase "except computer hardware" in the third bullet in this section was confusing; it was deleted by IPEDS on September 23, 2015 and also deleted from the 2015 ACRL survey instructions.

10. **Question:** Where do you report

- Registration for staff to attend conferences/professional development and
- Travel expenses for staff to attend conferences/professional development

**Response:** both are also operation and maintenance expenses, under all other operations and maintenance expenses (line 25).

## **Library Collections**

Books (physical and digital)  
Line 40

1. **Question:** the instructions state:  
"Include e-book titles in aggregated sets in which the library selected the aggregator even if not each individual e-book title."  
Can you give an example of when the library would not have selected the aggregator?

**Response:** this is an excellent point. An example would be when aggregators aggregate others. eBrary is an aggregator; they aggregate other publishers who aggregate their works. However, the "first" aggregator would be eBrary. The Editorial Board was trying to ensure that titles from aggregators were included in the count since most libraries acquire subscriptions to a multiplicity of titles in this manner in place of acquiring e-book titles on a title-by-title basis. Oftentimes, the aggregator can provide aggressive pricing of a bundle of publishers (in themselves aggregators) over title-by-title acquisition.

2. **Question:** a library in a consortium said that their databases are chosen by a representative committee, not the member library themselves, but all the member libraries have access to the databases. So I am trying to figure out if this falls under the library not selecting the aggregator and I am also trying to understand based on the instructions if the library should count the consortium-selected e-books?

**Response:** this is the most common occurrence. A consortium of libraries selects an aggregator for which all (or most) of the members in the consortium benefit. The library indirectly selected an aggregator through a representative body of the membership; this is just a local consortium approach likely because they could not place all members on the selection committee. As a result, we propose that these e-books be counted if the titles meet the other criteria of being cataloged or in the discovery tool.

3. **Question:** I was hoping you could help us clarify how we should report electronic reference materials such as encyclopedias, dictionaries, etc. in the ACRL survey. In the past, I would have assumed we would report these as eBooks. However, last year we upgraded to LibGuides 2 and as part of that process we added a lot of encyclopedias and handbooks to our A-Z list and the Question 42 (databases) definition could easily include these items as follows:

“A database is collection of electronically stored data or unit records (facts, bibliographic data, and texts) with a common user interface and software for the retrieval and manipulation of the data.”

Could you please confirm for us if those items should be included under eBooks or under databases?

**Response:** if the individual titles are searchable through catalog or discovery tool, then they should be counted as e-books. If these sources are not searchable via their individual titles, then it is a database.

4. **Question:** Additional survey guidance under instructions for Digital/Electronic Books (include government documents) (line 40, column (2)) state:

“- include open access (OA) titles if the individual titles are searchable through the library’s catalog or discovery system. [AL component]”

Do we include the HathiTrust collection in our count?

**Response:** This is an interesting question, and it was not expected as the Editorial Board developed the instructions for the 2015 annual survey. The ACRL survey instructions align with the IPEDS Academic Libraries (AL) component.

Technically, the requestor is correct; the HathiTrust collection could meet this definition for inclusion. Another perspective is that the HathiTrust is a database; “partners pay for the basic infrastructure costs of content preserved in the repository, including the costs of storage, backup, data centers, servers, and some staff. In 2013, HathiTrust moved to a new model of distributing fees among the partners that is based on the benefits partners derive from the aggregate collection. In this model, fees are comprised of two elements: first, partners pay an evenly distributed share of the cost to support public domain volumes in HathiTrust; second, partners

pay a share of the cost of in-copyright volumes that overlap with volumes held in their print collections” (<https://www.hathitrust.org/cost>, accessed on December 18, 2015).

The ACRL Academic Library Trends and Statistics Survey Editorial Board’s intent was to count open access acquisitions through intentional acquisition processes including collection development and demand-driven acquisition processes. In most instances, access to the HathiTrust collections is provided through a library’s discovery services. A temporary solution may be to count only those open access books intentionally added to be searchable through the library’s catalog. The ACRL Academic Library Trends and Statistics Survey Editorial Board will address this for the 2016 annual ACRL survey.

5. **Question:** if an ebook title is available in more than one database is that title counted multiple times?

**Response:** Based upon this instruction (somewhat truncated)

“Report the number of e-book titles owned or leased by the library if individual titles are cataloged and/or searchable through the library’s catalog or discovery system. E-books are digital documents (including those digitized by the library), licensed or not, where searchable text is prevalent, and which can be seen in analogy to a printed book (monograph). Include e-book titles in aggregated sets in which the library selected the aggregator even if not each individual e-book title. Report the number at the administrative entity level; do not duplicate unit count for each branch.”

the key phrase is "individual title." Looking at the print side, a library generally has one cataloged title (the bibliographic record); then, the library may have multiple copies (item records). This can be the same in the e-book side; one title that has one or more links to multiple copies in the various databases. Therefore, the e-book would be reported as one title if cataloged properly. The cataloged title (bibliographic record) does not care where it is sitting in the system; it would then point to one or more "copies" in the databases (item records).

Serial Titles (physical and digital)

Line 41

6. **Question:** About the Additional survey guidance for the Serial title counts: The 2 sentences in red below are contradictory:

Additional survey guidance:

- report serial titles, not subscriptions.
- include count of ceased titles if available.
- **do not count earlier title changes. Do not worry about removing any earlier titles in title changes.**
- include open access (OA) titles if the individual titles are searchable through the library’s catalog or discovery system.
- if possible, for each measure, report the count of only those de-duplicated or otherwise unique serial titles searchable through the library’s catalog or discovery system. A source for counting e-serials may be a library- or vendor-developed A-Z title list of e-journals.

I'm for getting rid of the first as I don't think it's possible to do in any reasonable amount of time. Maybe others can?? Maybe the point in red should be paired with the last point and we could ask people to remove the earlier title changes if they can, but not to worry if they can't?

**Response:** The Editorial Board and others involved in the review of the instructions had a considerable amount of discussion on this specific point as we developed the instructions. The instructions have been revised (on October 10, 2015) as you suggest and we will see if that helps 2015 ACRL survey responders.

#### Databases

Line 42

7. **Question:** how would the Pronunciator (<http://www.pronunciator.com/>) learning language app should be counted? It is an online language learning that uses audio and video to teach language. Should it be counted as a database or media?

**Response:** it is a database because the user links to the service as a whole and then the user may pick those resources that would best serve their needs. It does not lend itself well to a "title" format as does streaming media, film titles, etc. that can be cataloged or discovered.

#### Physical Media

Line 43

8. **Question:** I have reviewed the new ACRL survey Instructions and Definitions document, and the instructions regarding physical media (line 43, column 1) are very confusing.

The opening line of the instructions reads "Report the total titles of media materials . . ." but the last line of the same paragraph reads "Items packaged together as a unit and checked out as a unit are counted as one physical unit." Why even include this sentence if we are only to report titles? Or are supposed to track items as well for future reporting? The "Additional survey guidance" below the introductory paragraph enforces that we are to report only titles.

**Response:** The wording of this particular paragraph is directly from the IPEDS AL component; a title is a physical media (line 43, column 1). The rationale for the last line is to recognize those media in which two discs may be included in the same packaging and would be counted as one physical unit -- one title. We are not expecting a library to track items packaged together other than as one physical unit -- one title -- in/for future reporting.

**Follow-up Question:** For the sake of clarity, I think you should delete that sentence.

**Follow-up Response:** As stated above, the instruction belongs to the IPEDS AL component. However, to reduce confusion, we will "strikeout" the sentence rather than delete it and explain the strikeout in a "Please note" following the strikeout (done on October 10, 2015).

**Follow-up Question:** You equate a circulating AV unit with an AV title. The assumption is that libraries package multiple disks in one box, which may be true for the most part, isn't always true. For example, when we purchase a Blue-ray/DVD combo, we break them up

into two containers so each disc can circulate separately. Both item records are attached to one bibliographic record, so it is one title, but two circulating units. I assume I count it as one title, since titles are to be reported. The same is true for a number of our spoken word audio discs. While we try to package them into one container to make one circulating unit for each title, sometimes we have to break them up into two or three containers. Again, one title, but multiple circulating units, that I will be counting as one.

**Follow-up Response:** For the breaking up of the Blue-ray and DVD: it would count as 1 title for physical media collection. If both circulated (and not necessarily at the same time since you have broken it up into two containers as I understand it), it would count as 2 circulations. A title can circulate more than once. ACRL and IPEDS are not counting unique titles for circulation, but the number of circulation transactions.

9. **Question:** The instructions regarding physical media (line 43, column 1) first bullet point gives the example to "count microform titles not the number of boxes of microfilm rolls." This leads me to believe that we are to include cataloged microforms as part of our AV collection. Is this correct? We have never included microforms, title or otherwise in our AV count before.

**Response:** The count here is for "physical media." To IPEDS and ACRL, physical media is more inclusive than just AV resources. Microforms of any type are identified as media by IPEDS rather than physical books. Maps are also counted in this section if in print as physical media rather than physical books. Microforms and maps are specifically excluded from Physical Books (line 40, column 1).

10. **Question:** The question is regarding how to count microforms. The IPEDS instructions state to count by title not unit but that isn't feasible for Government Documents collections when individual titles are not in the OPAC. For example, we have many years of ERIC - is that one title, or x number of titles, or x number of fiche? Any suggestions of examples on how to handle this?

**Response:** if the title is in the catalog or discovery system, to count it. Therefore, while the thousands of titles in ERIC may not be in the catalog, ERIC likely is. Therefore, I would count it as 1. That is an example of how we have actually under counted the number of titles in academic libraries for decades. Best not to count the number of fiche because that would be over counting titles as units.

11. **Question:** Our printed flat maps are not listed in our cataloged or discovery system, but they are accessible through a separate (albeit cryptic) index. We have only a piece count for them, but in this case each piece does represent a unique title. Can we include them in our reported AV count, even though they are not in our catalog?

**Response:** As to the maps you identify, yes, count them. We purposely refer to it as a discovery system rather than a discovery tool. System is broader, and your index is an example of a discovery system.

### Institutional Repositories

Lines 50 and 51

12. **Question:** Do we want to know the number of items added to the repositories in FY15 or the number in the repositories at the end of FY15?

**Response:** Number at the end of FY2015. We have added “(i.e., number of all items available in)” to the instructions for clarification.

13. **Question:** And should our library include a repository it maintains, which is not an institution-specific repository? The definition says “Please note: libraries have established, or host or administer institutional repositories to manage, preserve, and maintain the digital assets, intellectual output, and histories of their own **as well as other institutions.**” When libraries are considering this question, do they have to think about what percent of the documents in a repository are specific to their university?

**Response:** No, they should not consider the percentages. During the instruction writing phase, the Editorial Board was aware of a couple of libraries that manage IRs for their institution as well as others. That is why the instructions enable the management of other repositories in this measure.

14. **Question:** I assume the downloads wanted are those within the year and not over all time?

**Response:** Yes, the number of downloads as usage just for the fiscal year. A change to the Instructions was made on October 17, 2015 to clarify that usage is for the reported fiscal year.

15. **Question:** Since this is the first year ACRL is collecting data on institutional repository uploads and downloads, we are hoping to see how other institutions have interpreted which “digitized special collections” to include. We use Digital Commons for our IR and ContentDM for our Digital Collections (which includes special collections’ images, archived yearbooks, student journals, etc.). Since the question is titled “institutional Repositories” we had originally planned to include only our IR stats. However, this line in the instructions has us wondering if we should include our digital collections stats as well:

“Include digitized special collections including rare and unique materials as well as college publications that may include alumni magazines, class catalogs, and annual reports”

We weren’t sure if that only means digitized special collections that are housed in the IR or if this would include our entire digitized special collections holdings.

**Response:** We are just looking the collections housed in the IR, not all of special collections. In some cases, the library's IR hosts other collections in the institution from Alumni Relations, Advancement, etc. This is a great question -- we may want to expand inclusion for the 2016 survey.

16. **Question:** Locally, we call our Digital Commons collection our “institutional repository” but we also have ContentDM for our digitized special collections. In both cases we or our users

are digitizing materials (or preserving born-digital materials) and making them publicly available. There are some distinctions but also a lot of overlap: Digital Commons is mostly textual, ContentDM is mostly images; Digital Commons is mostly user-generated, ContentDM is mostly special collections' generated. My question then is what is the ACRL definition of an insitutional repository?

**Response:** Here is where we are for the 2015 survey: if a library can provide usage statistics for the IR in line 51, then count it in line 50. If a library cannot provide usage statistics in line 51, then do not count it.

The thought behind what was the basis for the definition used in 2015 for an IR is based upon Clifford Lynch's definition of an IR:

“a university-based institutional repository is a set of services that a university [or college] offers to the members of its community for the management and dissemination of digital materials created by the institution and its community members. It is most essentially an organizational commitment to the stewardship of these digital materials, including long-term preservation where appropriate, as well as organization and access or distribution.”

[<https://blogs.libraries.indiana.edu/scholcomm/2011/08/23/2-what-is-an-institutional-repository/>]

The Editorial Board will revisit IR for the 2016 survey. I also encourage any library to contribute their ideas concerning a working definition to me ([robert.dugan@gmail.com](mailto:robert.dugan@gmail.com)) or to Lindsay Thompson at Counting Opinions ([acr1support@countingopinions.com](mailto:acr1support@countingopinions.com)).

**Follow-up Question:** I have a question regarding our institutional repository, and I just want to confirm that my understanding of what was written in the FAQ is correct -- we should only consider items uploaded and downloaded from our Institutional Repository - Scholarsphere (<https://scholarsphere.psu.edu/>) and not ContentDM?

**Follow-up Response:** Yes. If this does not answer your question, could you please get back to me and we can email about it? IR is one of the areas we know we need to clarify in next year's survey and your help with this would be appreciated.

**Follow-up Question:** We should only include those digitized special collections (year books, etc.) that are housed in the IR? Since our digitized special collections are located in ContentDM, we don't include them. So -- to sum up, we will only report what has been uploaded and accessed from the IR proper (in our case, "Scholarsphere").

**Follow-up Response:** Yes. And, we will continue to refine the IR definition and instructions for the 2016 ACRL survey; interestingly, NISO does not have a definition of an IR so we are on our own until they do. Hopefully they will have a definition by mid-2017.

## **Library Services**

### Library Circulation / Usage: Initial Circulation

Line 60

1. **Question:** Regarding Question 60, I have 8 platforms with BR1 and MR1 data, 13 platforms with BR2 data. Should I just use BR1 and MR1 data for Line 60 because that more closely reflects what the question is asking for or should I go with BR2 data, since I have that data for more platforms?

I'm working on the IPEDS survey, so whatever data I use for the ACRL Line 60 survey, I'll enter as "Total Digital/Electronic Circulation or Usage" for IPEDS."

Which would be the correct choice - BR1 which may be more accurate or BR2 where the library has more data?

**Response:** BR1 and MR1.

2. **Question:** We are not to automatically add e-book usage COUNTER BR1 digital/electronic (line 63, column (2)), and e-book usage COUNTER BR2 digital/electronic (line 64, column (2)) and E-journal usage - digital/electronic (line 65, column (2)) to Initial circulation - digital/electronic (line 60, column (2))?

**Response:** Correct. If line 60, column (2) is blank but there are counts in any or all lines 63, 64, and 65 in column (2), sum that upwards into line 60, column (2). In all cases, if there is any count reported by the library in Line 60, column (2), we expect that that is the number to be used and reported to the current IPEDS AL component 2015-2016 (spring collection, December 2015 until April 2016) as well.

It may be that the library expects the survey instrument to sum lines 60, 63, 64 and 65 and if cases are found, Counting Opinions may need to follow up with the library to ascertain if they thought Lines 63, 64 and 65 would be added into line 60. If such cases are confirmed by the library, the Editorial Board may need to clarify the language for the 2016 survey.

3. **Question:** I understand that the recommendation for the reporting of digital circulation is to use COUNTER BR1 or BR2 report (BR1 reports are not available for most ebook platforms, so we are left with BR2 in most cases). Our biggest use, based on BR2 report comes from ebrary – surpassing 2 million “successful section requests” for FY2015. It came to our attention recently that ProQuest defines this as “the sum of the number of pages viewed, + copies made + pages printed + instances of PDF printed + instances of Full.”

I believe that such definition of ‘successful section requests’ does not meet the COUNTER definition (for instance, see the definition of section and page, etc.) grossly inflating our circulation for this platform vis a vis other platforms.

**Response:** COUNTER BR2 seems to be a challenge for some information services vendors. I have not heard of any other eBrary and BR2 issues (as of December 18, 2015), but thanks to your email, BR2 will be on the Editorial Board’s radar.

This will be brought to the attention of the ACRL Trends and Statistics Editorial Board at the midwinter 2016 meeting in Boston via the subcommittee that is revising the 2015 survey into the 2016 survey; and, it will also likely be raised with the IPEDS Academic Libraries component survey director.

4. **Question:** what I need to fill in for line 60 column 2?  
So here’s what I’ve got:

- In FY15 our users used 90,611 ebooks (unique titles from BR1, BR2, MR1).
- In FY15 the total number of uses of ebooks and streamed music and video is 2,290,244 (BR1, BR2, MR1 plus Naxos).

So if they want us to report:

- “the total number of digital/electronic units accessed from the general collection” then that would be 90,611 ebooks/digital music or video/

If they want us to report:

- “the total number of times e-book and e-media titles ..... are used” then that would be 2,290,244 uses.

The standard ACRL ebook reports that Intota Assessment provides report only at the title level, 90,585, so I suspect that is what they want.

**Response:** the IPEDS guidelines for counting the media collection is “Report titles of the media if it is owned or leased by the library if the titles are cataloged and/or searchable through the library catalog or discovery system.” For initial circulation, it is “Count only downloadables that you have access to that are in your library’s catalog or discovery system.” From IPEDS, last accessed on March 17, 2016 at

<https://surveys.nces.ed.gov/IPEDS/VisFaqView.aspx?mode=vis&id=17&show=all#1029>.

Therefore, if the media titles are cataloged or searchable through the catalog or discovery system (Library Collections), then their usage should be counted in line 60 column (2).

5. **Question:** The instructions don’t seem to have any definitions or guidance related specifically to line 62 apart from the general guidelines for Initial Circulation – line 60. Do those same inclusions and exclusions apply to line 62 as well? This is an important clarification in the context of my library, because laptops and equipment are classified as reserves, and constitute the substantive majority of all circulation transactions, though those items are excluded from line 60. In short: are laptops and other forms of electronic equipment also excluded from line 62 – reserves?

**Response:** include the laptops and other electronic equipment as reserves in Line 62, column 1. Line 60 is related to library collections which in content as opposed to equipment -- therefore, do not include the counts for equipment through the reserve collection in Line 60.

### Information Services to Individuals

Lines 66 and 67

6. **Question:** We're getting stuck on the 'scheduled' aspect of consultations as reported in line 67. The specific example that was given was: a question is posed at the reference desk that can't be answered at the desk due to complexity - it's too in-depth, or it requires the expertise of someone who doesn't happen to be at the desk. The person at the desk has two options: give the patron a business card and encourage them to schedule an appointment, or call the appropriate person in their office to see if they're available. If the desired person is available and comes out to the desk, or invites the patron back to their office, this would be a reference transaction. If the desired person is not available and a meeting is scheduled instead, this would be a consultation. This feels like a pretty arbitrary distinction. We're trying to figure out how to reconcile this in a

way that acknowledges the complexity of the work that is being done, the expertise required, and the actual traffic on and off the desk.

**Response:** good point. Differences between reference transactions and consultations used to be related to time frames -- under 20 minutes and over 20. We moved away from the time frame because the 20 minutes seemed arbitrary. As an example, a 19-minute response is only a transaction.

We can clarify this by revising the instructions for next year's survey. Your example should be a consultation because the person initially asked could not answer the question and the question is being referred to another person with the appropriate and aligned knowledge. Whether consultation happened at the time (spontaneous) or is formally scheduled later, either should be a consultation.

7. **Question:** If a patron requests an item from Document Delivery then it is not counted in Information Services to Individual. But, if in part of a consultation a librarian finds and delivers a document to an individual electronically - then it is counted as Information Services to an Individual and not Document Delivery. Am I correct?

**Response:** Correct.

#### Branch and Independent Libraries

Line 69

8. **Question:** Include or exclude law, medical and other types professional libraries?

**Response:** Include these libraries. IPEDS states the following from their AL component instructions: "Report the number of branch and independent libraries at your institution that were open all or part of fiscal year 2015. EXCLUDE THE MAIN OR CENTRAL LIBRARY. Branch and independent libraries are defined as auxiliary library service outlets with quarters separate from the central library of an institution, which have a basic collection of books and other materials, a regular staffing level, and an established schedule. Include virtual/digital-based branch and independent libraries.

Branch and independent libraries are administered either by the central library, or as in the case of some libraries (such as law, medical, etc.), through the administrative structure of the other units within the university. Departmental study/reading rooms are not included. Please note that data for libraries on branch campuses (i.e., located in another community) are included if those campuses are registered under the same NCES Unit ID number as the main campus."

**Follow-up Question:** You have confirmed that we should combine our law library data with ours to complete are ACRL statistics, and I can do this. My concern in doing so is with our ability to adequately use ACRL data to benchmark our library with our peers, since many of our peers do not have law schools. Resources not equitably divided between the main and law libraries. For example, what our law library spends per law student is much, much higher than what the main part of campus spends per non-law student. This fact, along with many others, will be masked by combining the two libraries on one form. I truly believe that

combining the two will render any future meaningful use of ACRLmetrics useless for us. Is there any way we can submit our law library data separately to ACRLmetrics, and still get a combined file to submit to IPEDs?

**Follow-up Response:** Lindsay Thompson at Counting Opinions has replied that they can accommodate a separate form(s) for reporting for the main library as well as other libraries such as law and medical. Please contact [acrlsupport@countingopinions.com](mailto:acrlsupport@countingopinions.com) for assistance.

9. **Question:** do we include professional libraries with the main library or as separate libraries such as medical and law?

**Response:** with the main library. We understand the question; however, we are concerned with trying to define a “professional school” so as to be able to say “this is a professional school and this is not.” A common definition of a professional school is a postgraduate school or college which trains students for a particular profession. That focus would depend largely on the institution. For example, a hospitality management program may be a graduate degree or a professional school based upon the institution’s focus. Inclusion of professional schools at this time is more subjective than identifying law and health schools.

#### Information Services to Groups

Line 71

10. **Question:** for participants in Information services to groups, do we want to say “For multi-session classes with a constant enrollment, count each person only once”?

**Response:** The ACRL survey is seeking to count each person only once per session. We have added “For multi-session classes, count each person only once regardless of the number of sessions attended if possible/feasible.” to the Instructions (October 10, 2015).

#### Gate Counts

Line 73

11. **Question:** Our system has 3 library locations and only 2 of them have gate counts. The 3rd has a head count. For the part of the survey about gate counts, should I leave off the library that doesn’t have gate counts? Or use the head count as an alternative? [we had a follow-up question: How does the 3rd library do a head count? Would this give them approximately the same count as if they had the means for counting as they do in library #1 and library #2?] The response was that the library at this location is very small (the size of a classroom), staffed by one librarian as basically a computer lab, and conducts an hourly head count which is totaled for the day. The librarian likely ends up double counting some visitors. If this location were as busy as the other two locations I would say the head count and the gate count would not be similar, but since it’s so small and quiet I think the counts would be close to the same.

**Response:** The survey responder could have just reported the gate count for library #3 with libraries #1 and #2 and we would have never known. Include the head count from library #3 with the gate counts of libraries #1 and #2, and then include a note that states "a percentage

(actual \_\_\_\_%) of the gate count is a head count done hourly at one library-managed and library-staffed location open \_\_\_\_ hours a week.”

#### Total interlibrary loans and documents provided to other libraries

Line 75

12. **Question:** A question has come in concerning borrowing between consortium members. Should these be ILL or circulation counts? As the lending is between different libraries - I am thinking these should be ILL counts but please confirm if I am correct.

**Response:** Confirmed -- these are interlibrary loans rather than circulation.

Line 76, parts 76a, 76b, 76c and 76d

13. **Question:** "We are having trouble narrowing down which ILL transactions should fall into question 76c. We technically pay some fees for articles through IFM to libraries, we pay copyright and royalties in some cases, but we are not technically buying the article outright. If we are doing that it is usually through something like Get It Now, a publisher site, or another site that sells documents direct to consumers. Can you clarify which items you would want broken out into 76c, and if 76c is supposed to be a subset of items reported in either 76a or 76b?"

And, 76c is not a subset of 76a or 76b as it is part of the total in 76d.

**Response:** IFM would not be included in 76c. IFM is a fee-based returnable or non-returnable transaction managed through a deposit account at OCLC. I would not consider IFM as commercial, but as a ILL tool to deal with libraries that assess a fee to a borrowing library. Those transactions should be reported as a count in either 76a or 76b.

Get it Now is a commercial service -- it is almost exclusively e-documents. Any publisher site that sells documents directly to consumers in which the library is involved in the borrowing transactions, either directly (the library makes the decision to use the service) or indirectly (the user makes the decision but the library ends up paying for the transaction) is also a commercial service. Both of these instances are commercial transactions that should be included in 76c.

And, you are right -- 76c is not a subset of 76a or 76b but is summed in 76d.

#### **Notes**

Line 90

1. **Question:** Is the last notes field the only one that will be in the NCES upload file? If so, should the survey instructions specify so? If so, is there a limit on the number of characters?

**Response:** Yes, there is only one note field. We should specify that on the instructions; good point. No limit to characters.

#### **General Comments / Questions**

1. **Question:** maybe a growing knowledgebase/FAQ as you answer questions would be good. I know last year when many of us did the new IPEDS library survey, there was pandemonium on [a listserv] list as the IPEDS people could not get their answers straight. I'd love to have a list of answered questions for surveys like this.

**Response:** Sorry to hear about the pandemonium on the [listserv] list last year. A FAQ was accessed over 5,000 times which compiled questions for, and responses from, IPEDS (<http://libguides.uwf.edu/c.php?g=215171&p=1419642>). A new FAQ was created on October 10, 2015 and is available at <http://libguides.uwf.edu/c.php?g=215171&p=2694009>. The FAQ will be updated and maintained throughout the 2015 ACRL survey period. A subcommittee from the Editorial Board is working on increasing the awareness of the new ACRL survey, while a second subcommittee will work with IPEDS to get the word out about the changes made from the first to second years of their data collection.

2. **Question:** With this new method of counting, our numbers are going to be vastly different than in previous years, but I presume that is to be expected for everyone. For example, counting pieces in the automated system is accurate, but counting titles by format will be problematic. We can use our system to count purely AV titles, but we AV units that accompany physical books will not be counted. If the book is the primary element, the record is coded as book at the title level, but there will be one item record for the book, and another item record for the AV. Again, one title but two circulating units, and in this case one is print and the other is AV. For the reverse, when the AV is primary and is accompanied by a printed book, we can catch the book item record from our system because books counted physical volumes. We are also going to miss many microforms titles, because many of our microform serials were attached to the same record as the print volumes.

**Response:** Numbers are going to fluctuate; while the ACRL survey tries to be more inclusive, the IPEDS survey states that it is not trying to measure everything in the library. Plus, IPEDS numbers will change from the 2015-2016 survey as a result of the changes in IPEDS definitions.

As to print volumes versus titles that change may evolve over the years; several changes were made in IPEDS for this second year of their survey and titles versus volumes may come up this year in ACRL-ARL discussions with IPEDS and its AL component survey director.

3. **Question:** In the survey, one can report many of the counts as a whole if the breakouts requested are not available. I wonder if we could try to do that for all such measures, as a total count is better than no count at all.

**Response:** The Editorial Board may be able to do this with the 2016 survey; we will have to consider it measure by measure. For example, we expect the IPEDS survey to continue to differentiate between one-time materials expenditures and ongoing commitments to subscriptions, so we would be hesitant to provide an option to combine these costs, or any measure, when the measure is designed to align with IPEDS. However, this is a good discussion point as we develop the 2016 ACRL survey.

4. **Question:** I completely understand that it's likely too late to make any changes this year – I'm sure I'm not the only one from the [Counting Opinions] webinar who immediately

downloaded the forms and started looking for the changes. I've always wondered if with a survey this big and important, it might not help to have a small group of people that could serve as consultants in terms of how we use the data, so that the survey could be reviewed with that in mind. Just a thought.

**Response:** the members of the ACRL Academic Library Trends and Statistics Survey Editorial Board developed the survey. The survey documents have been in development and review since November 2014. The survey instrument first released publicly was actually draft #11; the instructions document was draft #14. During development members of the then current Editorial Board (2014-2015) were joined by members of the future Board (2015-2016):

#### Editorial Board 2014 - 2015

Paul Beavers, Wayne State University  
Jay Bernstein, Kingsborough Community College  
Jane Carvajal, DeVry University  
Bob Dugan, University of West Florida  
Bradford Eden, Valparaiso University  
Gale Etschmaier, San Diego State University  
Teresa Fishel, Macalester College  
Mark McCallon, Abilene Christian University  
Ted Mulvey, University of Wisconsin - Oshkosh  
Sarah Passonneau, Iowa State University  
Mary Jane Petrowski, ACRL  
Joshua Petrusa, Butler University  
Amanda Kay Rinehart, Illinois State University

In addition to the 2015-2015 Board, new members scheduled to start in July 2015 were invited in February and March 2015 to work on the survey before their terms started:

Georgie Donovan, College of William and Mary  
Jennifer Mayer, University of Wyoming  
Linda Miller, Cornell University  
W. Bede Mitchell, Southern Georgia University  
Nancy Turner, Temple University  
Caryl Ward, Binghamton University (SUNY)  
Clay Williams, Hunter College

Many others reviewed the drafts as developed and sometimes commented.

The ACRL Board of Directors reviewed the Editorial Board's progress towards the new survey in January 2015 and then again in June 2015. They voted to accept the 2015 survey via a virtual vote in August 2015. Members of the Editorial Board held face-to-face presentations at both the Chicago 2015 and San Francisco 2015 ALA meetings to discuss the work while in development.

The work of the Editorial Board was also informed by the ACRL-ARL Joint Task Force to Clarify Academic Library Definitions in IPEDS Survey. The members developed

recommendations to change or otherwise improve several of the definitions used in the IPEDS AL component. Members of the Joint Task Force were:

Co-chairs:

Robert Dugan, Chair of the ACRL Academic Library Trends and Statistics Survey Editorial Board; University of West Florida

Robert Fox, Chair of the ARL Statistics and Assessment Committee; University of Louisville

Members:

Elizabeth Edwards, University of Chicago

Terri Fishel, Macalester College

Steve Hiller, University of Washington

Martha Kyriolidou, Association of Research Libraries; Chair of the NISO Z39.7 Data Dictionary

David Larsen, University of Chicago

Bao Le, National Center for Education Statistics, IPEDS Academic Libraries component

Bede Mitchell, Georgia Southern University

Kenley Neufeld, Santa Barbara City College

Mary Jane Petrowski, Association of College & Research Libraries

Kathy Rosa, Office of Research & Statistics, American Library Association

Beginning in May 2015, the Task Force worked on its recommendations through a virtual shared document. Five or six conference calls were conducted to review the drafts of the recommendations. Members then convened in Washington, DC at ARL offices on June 19 to meet with Bao Le, the IPEDS AL component survey director, and to discuss the draft recommendations. Those recommendations from the June 19 meeting were presented at an ARL Assessment Forum and at a presentation by the ACRL Academic Library Trends and Statistics Survey Editorial Board during the ALA annual conference in June in San Francisco. The draft recommendations were also made available through listservs. After the period for feedback ended, the final recommendations were sent to IPEDS on July 14, and the IPEDS responses to the recommendations were received through Bao Le on July 23.

Bao Le also reviewed the drafts of the ACRL survey as it was developed beginning in November 2014; her last comments were received on July 27, 2015.