

RESULTS DISCUSSED BY RESOURCE / FUNCTION

Chapter 10 Results discussed by resource / function

TECHNICAL REVIEW

Staff numbers It appears that the Full Time Equivalent (FTE) basis for counting staff is now generally used - and little difficulty was experienced except with data for the earlier years.

Modernisation It was hoped that the survey would give some useful indication through the inclusion of two new questions. Of the nine public library replies on **Open Access (L13)** all but Romania showed more than two thirds of stock on open access - with several estimates above 85 per cent. The move to open access has been a major achievement of this half century.

There were only six public library replies to the question on the **Percentage of Catalogue records automated (L14)**. Neither of these data types figure in traditional library statistics - and the data may well be more appropriately collected by periodic sample survey than by a formal annual statistical count. Both items feature in the proposals to update ISO 2789 *Library Statistics*. These features are vital and essential elements in a modern public library service.

In future **LIBECON should encourage response estimates, where necessary, produced by careful survey as an alternative to precisely accumulated data.** However, guidelines may need to be given in some detail to emphasise the importance of truly representative and adequate sampling and to control this. In the cases cited above - and in sampling, for instance, types of information enquiry answered - drawing a satisfactory sample and estimating the total result is relatively straightforward. There are more intractable problems with sampling where the size of the universe is unknown - the situation with much of the special library and school library sectors - and with estimating 'in house use', for example. To achieve results in these circumstances that are useful and acceptable for international comparisons will be a major challenge. But, with LIBECON 2000, the first steps have been taken.

AMENDMENTS AND POSSIBLE ADDITIONS

The following are put forward as firm proposals (1 - 4) and as items for further consideration (5 - 7).

1. *Current Periodicals: Titles & Subscriptions*

The present arrangement is working badly. Most people respond to either Titles or Subscriptions - with a fairly even distribution. The distinction matters most in large public libraries where many branches may take a newspaper title. But the statistic is most important for academic and special libraries - where multiple subscriptions are rare. Some countries count donations and legal deposit items as titles but not as subscriptions.

For future surveys it is suggested we request Current Periodical Subscriptions with the following notes: (1) If data are only available for 'titles' then they should be supplied; (2) Donations and legal deposit should be included in the count; (3) where both titles and subscriptions are counted always submit the higher figure.

At a convenient time we should amend our 1991-98 data to take the higher of L05 and L06 and consolidate the existing data into one line.

2. *Seating*

It would be an improvement all round to request data on **Study Seats/Reading places** as well as Workstations. This is an important indication of the value of library building space to users. This is generally collected and published - and, for the medium term future, the relation of this to Workstations will also be an interesting pointer to the spread of IT.

3. *Loan count*

In **Loan Transactions** the Guidelines are silent on whether or not to include 'Items issued from closed access for use on the premises'. The French university libraries have separate figures for each. The international guidelines are confused. UNESCO's wording is "works loaned out", "prêtés au dehors", "prestados al exterior" - which can be interpreted as loans for use off the premises. But ISO 2789 has "Direct lending transaction of a document to a user, including registered loans within a library" (2.3.1)

The revised ISO will propose two counts, plus counts for "In Library Use" of material taken from the shelves by the user. There will also be options to count Material on Loan. The separate transaction types will be clarified - but the combinations may not be specified.

There may be other cases to deal with like the French where one figure or the other can be taken. (Rightly or wrongly the lower French figure for external use has been taken as more closely corresponding to our wording "loaned out".) It is proposed to alter the Guidelines to include specific Transactions for use on the premises - as corresponding most closely to the present ISO 2789.

4. *Expenditure*

The Guidelines should specify that the cost of **Binding** be included in Expenditure on Stock - when it is carried out by an external supplier.

5. *Material not in stock & Inter Library Loans*

It is quite possible that in some countries material fetched from other branches is counted, wrongly, as an Inter Library Loan. This needs investigation. But there is a strong case for an extra statistic to count all material supplied to users that was not in stock and was specifically requested. Such a count would include items on loan to someone else and reserved as well as items fetched from another branch. The terminology is not straightforward.

6. *Catalogue Records*

Consideration should be given to counting those (a) acquired - whether for payment or under a co-operative arrangement and (b) the total of 'original cataloguing', i.e. those created in house.

7. *Photocopying*

Most libraries count the volume of photocopying - either by the user or for the user.

FUTURE STRATEGY

1. The present survey has extended the data to cover Electronic Materials. The new proposals for ISO 2789 will take time to agree and to launch. It is not easy to find other items where there is a strong case for inclusion - if added to a standard set for all sectors.
2. LIBECON should consider a new strategy whereby some additional items might be collected onto the database - but optionally and not necessarily for all sectors. For example, public libraries might have the option to supply extra data on Materials and Loans categorised by Adult Fiction, Adult Non Fiction, Children's, and Reference; Tertiary Libraries might divide their Materials Expenditure into Books and Periodicals; National Libraries might subdivide their material acquired, material donated (possibly), and material under legal deposit.

Such a strategy would correspond with that proposed for ISO 2789 where Annexe B contains a large number of optional items - but where standardised definition will be valuable.

