

BI Statistics Tips

Editor's Note: These suggestions were developed by the ACRL Bibliographic Instruction Section Research Committee and submitted by Jacquelyn M. Morris, Chair (outgoing).

When assessing the points of contact one might count as data for BI statistical compilations, it is sometimes difficult to know just what to count. For example, do you count each person who takes a tour with the same weight as a student enrolled in a library research course?

The following represents a distillation of the different ways in which BI statistics are kept, as well as some of the implications which should be considered. They should be used, not as a model list of statistics which should be kept, but to help the BI practitioner decide what statistics are important to keep.

I. NUMBER OF PEOPLE

A. Number of students reached may be counted:

1) by type of session or program (e.g., tours, term paper clinics, etc.)—see Part II;

2) by discipline (broad category or specific department);

3) as a percentage of the total enrollment of the individual course, the class level, and/or the university (undergraduate or graduate) enrollment;

4) other categories which might be useful (class level, for example).

B. Number of faculty reached may be counted:

1) by type of session or program (e.g., NEH Fellows Programs, new faculty orientation sessions);

2) by discipline (broad category or specific department);

3) as a percentage of the total numbers of faculty in certain disciplines and/or the university, depending on the scope of the library in relation to the curriculum (i.e., as a percentage of those served in a particular library).

C. Other groups reached may be counted by type of group (e.g., friends, high school groups, non-university groups, other university-affiliated groups such as staff and administration).

II. TYPES OF INTERACTIONS

Because of the difficulty of trying to count students involved in different experiences (Are students who attend a two-session tutorial counted once or twice? Are students enrolled in a library course counted the same as those in a course-related session?) and because bibliographic instruction may take so many different forms, it is probably best to count the types of interaction separately. These categories might be:

A. Tours: physical orientation to the building and collection. Typically little instruction is given and little preparation is needed.

B. Tutorials: one-to-one or small group instruction given by appointments or prearrangement.

C. Other presentations: large group presentations conducted once or twice with voluntary participation (such as term paper clinics).

D. Course-related instructional sessions: sessions conducted by a librarian for a course for which someone else has instructional control. Count by number of sessions, or by number of sections, or by both.

E. Courses: sessions conducted by a librarian who has instructional control.

1) for credit: can be counted by number of sessions, number of sections, number of courses.

2) not for credit: same as for credit.

III. TIME INVOLVED

A. Precontact:

1) time spent with person requesting the BI session;

2) time spent planning promotional materials.

B. Preparation time spent by librarian, and other staff:

1) class planning;

2) media preparation;

3) room preparation.

C. Delivery time (number of hours actually spent teaching).

D. Follow-up time spent by librarian, and other staff:

1) correcting papers;

2) evaluation;

3) consultation with students or faculty.

IV. COST OF MATERIALS

In the ongoing operation of a bibliographic instruction program, cost of the materials used to support the program may be one of the library's greatest supporting expenses, after that of staff time. As a result, careful statistics should be maintained in this area.

In keeping statistics on bibliographic instruction materials, there are two important distinctions: duplication and equipment. The following are suggestions for consideration in these two areas:

A. Duplication: obvious examples of duplication are the number of hand-outs, transparencies, library brochures, etc., used for instructional purposes. It would be advisable to set a cost for each item since a financial picture would then be easily accessible.

Duplication costs can also result when bibliographic instruction causes heavy use of certain tools and duplicate or replacement copies must be acquired because of the increased use.

B. Equipment: statistics in this area should deal primarily with cost of the equipment. In most cases, the equipment will be video equipment, cas-

sette players, slide-tape machines, etc. These statistics do not have to be kept after each use, but perhaps on an annual basis.

V. MISCELLANEOUS STATISTICS FOR CONSIDERATION

- A. Faculty-initiated vs. librarian-initiated.
- B. Types of promotion and advertising (e.g., poster, memo, personal contact).
- C. Classes in library vs. out of library.
- D. Time of day classes meet (important for

scheduling reasons).

The ACRL BIS research committee has gathered this information from many BI practitioners. There may be other areas that you are using or of which you are aware. The committee would welcome your comments. Please address your comments to: Virginia Tiefel, Chair, Bibliographic Instruction Section Research Committee, Ohio State University Libraries, 1858 Neil Avenue Mall, Columbus, OH 43210; (614) 422-6151. ■■

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