



Midwinter Online Conference 2024

Questions from Session 3: Enriching GOBI expenditure reports with usage statistics

Q1: Can you include a link to that paper by the "ease of use" paper you just referenced?

[Hughes, M. P. \(2020\). How I Stopped Worrying and Learned to Love the Usage Data. College & Research Libraries, 81\(7\), 1168-. https://doi.org/10.5860/crl.81.7.1168](https://doi.org/10.5860/crl.81.7.1168)

Q2: How do you get the in-house usage statistics? These are the books from stacks that students use in the library but do not check out.

Unfortunately, we don't record in house use at the University of Ottawa.

Q3: Was "Has Use" differentiated by year of use, or was all use during the multiyear period considered "1" for has use?

It wasn't. I suppose it could have been, but it just didn't scale to the amount of time our team had to give the project. That said, the idea of the has use/ does not have use is to simplify the usage data, so I don't think it's absolutely necessary, more of a nice to have.

Q4: This is an important topic for all library departments. You've done a great job. Did you find any trends toward e-book usage vs. print book usage?

Thank you very much. We haven't quite got to that part of the analysis yet, so I'm not ready to report on this subject. Maybe an idea for next year's conference!

Q5: How did you go about learning new skills in an area of interest pertinent to your role as a new librarian? What helped you become more comfortable doing this work?

My advice would be to look for opportunities to take on side projects that interest you. You will definitely learn new skills as you need them for whatever project it may be. In my experience, I've found people to be very supportive. Hopefully you have some very knowledgeable people

around you who are willing to lend their experience and answer your questions/ come up with solutions with you.

Q6: In the presentation & visualization of your results – how did you overcome the problem that 2014 purchases had 9 years of usage data but 2023 purchases less than 1 year?

I had the same question - I am no mathematician, so I asked one of our math librarians for help with this problem. We came up with a calculation that accounted for this problem (that would be different for each institution). The general idea was that each year that we have something available, the use of material increases - so we need to calculate that into the use. We calculated that, on average, each year 4% more of the collection has use - so we correct the has use calculation by multiplying by the number of uses by x 1.04, 1.08, 1.12... depending on the year (i.e. in 2014-2015 = # of items with use x 1, 2015-2016 = # of items with use x 1.04, 2016-2017 = # of uses x 1.08...) we can then calculate the percentage of items with use corrected for each year of shelf life. You can also use this to look at cost per number of items used. For example, take the number of items with use from 2015-2016, multiply that by 1.04 to get the "corrected number of items with use" and then divide the sum net price by that new number of items with use and you get the corrected cost per number of items used. It can also be applied in other ways, but I suppose it depends on what you're trying to look at. Again - not a mathematician and if anyone has other ideas, I would welcome them with open arms!

Q7: Did you have any cases where you couldn't make an ISBN match between the GOBI data and the Alma data, and if so, how did you handle this? Did you have a way to differentiate between cases where there was 0 use and cases where there was just no data match?

Most were actually not bad because the ISBNs that GOBI provided were given to them from the platforms where they were hosted - meaning it was usually the same ISBN for that exact volume, format etc. That said, there were a few platforms that gave me grief - namely JSTOR and Ebsco. For these we used book IDs, requested from our GOBI rep and included in the COUNTER statistics, as the matching identifier (perhaps something to look into doing for other platforms as well, as a fail safe). There were also a select few where I had to go manually title-by-title, as they were not matching and they didn't have other unique IDs available. Luckily these platforms did not have that many books, so it wasn't too labour intensive. Finally, I did a lot of spot checking after each platform input - to ensure that they were consistently matching and recording the correct data.

Q8: What could you see being scalable to an annual review?

Good question, I think that this project could be scalable annually if you were using SUSHI to link COUNTER data automatically in Alma Analytics. We are not currently doing that, but it is something we are looking into. If all usage data was linked that way, and you could export a report of eBook usage and print usage from Alma - it would be much easier to link the

COUNTER data to the expenditure data each year, as it would only be two matching sessions, rather than 30-odd.

Q9: I think you said that you matched the usage data from the COUNTER reports to the report from Gobi using ISBNs? Did the COUNTER reports have ISBNs that matched well with the ISBNs in the report from Gobi?

For the most part yes, but please see my answer to the question above - which goes into more detail.

Q10: Did ILL usage count in your data gathering stats?

No it didn't, but that's a good idea for expansion.

Q11: Is there a link for last year's session by Nat Gustafson?

[How to Combine Journals Data from Multiple Data Sources Cleanly & Efficiently](#)

Resources/pertinent discussions shared in chat by attendees:

- Fuzzy Lookup Add-In for Excel: <https://www.microsoft.com/en-us/download/details.aspx?id=15011&>
- <https://crl.acrl.org/index.php/crl/article/view/24676/32497>
- In house use discussion:
 - “Alma users can use the ‘register in house use’ function when scanning books that were left out and about”
 - “I love that we count In House use. So helpful”
 - “In Alma if you “return” a book that wasn’t checked out , it automatically registers as an in-house use. (I recently figured this out and it made things easier for our student workers!)”
 - “In house use has been helpful when reviewing parts of the collection for withdrawal; be aware that most faculty who are familiar with your classification system will think they are helping by reshelving things. It has taken some re-education.”
 - “Unfortunately the automatic in-house use counts can also artificially inflate usage if staff use the “return” screen for all materials (like after transit). Procedures need to be clean and staff careful to make use of it!”
 - “We have carts in the stacks with eye-catching signs asking patrons to place books there and not reshelve. They say why we want them too do so -- count usage!”
 - “We're on Alma and everything goes through our discharge process twice -- a longstanding practice -- which makes for fake in house use stats.”

- “We have the same problem. The only effective workaround is not to count in house usage within a certain number of hours of a checkin.”
- “the second discharge can be a "scan in" with in-house use unchecked”
- “Yes we can have in-house usage unchecked but our problem has been Library staff forgetting to untick the in-house usage.”
- “That is a problem! I have a ticket in with Ex Libris asking them to either default to unchecked or allow the library to select defaults. It's in "Tier 2" status. Fingers crossed it happens!”
- “If you’re not, make a NERS/Idea Exchange! I’d vote for it!”
- Idea Exchange to address in-house use configuration:
<https://ideas.exlibrisgroup.com/forums/308173-alma/suggestions/47709329-default-options-for-tasks-should-be-configurable-b>
- ISBNs not matching discussion
 - “Hopefully this isn't a silly question, but why would ISBNs not match?”
 - “Because hardcover, paperback, and print would have different ISBNs. ISBNs can be so frustrating to work with.”
 - “I've always found that COUNTER reports have not always used the same ISBN (print or e) and I have to run matching several times to make sure I'm getting all the use for a particular ebook.”
 - “Ah, so it may be looking at different formats and editions! That makes sense but sounds frustrating for sure”