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Profile-Cheryl E. Highsmith

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than clustering eBook management decisions annually, collection reviews may be made in response to vendor offers throughout the fiscal year, and usage reports are pulled and examined to support purchasing decisions per platform as needed.

We are still facing the fact that our select eBook vendors have not congregated around a primary metric. We will now be providing a split metric overview usage report, with the preferred COUNTER Book Report 2 (Number of Successful Section Requests by Month and Title) competing with the second gathered metric of the Book Report 1 (Number of Successful Title Requests by Month and Title). Where the COUNTER Book Report 3 (Turnaways by Month and Title) is applicable, these data may inform future expansion of access, when such options are financially feasible. A single platform currently houses a high percentage of eBook titles under simultaneous usage restriction. This collection has now moved to a platform where the Book Report 3 is available for analysis. Usage for scattered eBooks available on database platforms is not routinely examined or reported, as of now.

Continuity of access is a key factor in analyzing usage and is closely tied to judicious use of collection funds. Raw vendor reports are retained and archived for future reference. Each genre has a dedicated overall fiscal year compilation spreadsheet where the primary arrangement is by vendor or publisher. Ideally, usage statistics would be reductive to one all-encompassing metric. But in the interest of granular examination of usage, for the time being, we are pursuing the worthy goal of comparing apples to apples until such time as that elusive ideal of the one-size-fits-all metric becomes a reality. As we continue to accumulate stored data, time series reporting where grand fiscal year totals are entered into master spreadsheets for continuing e-resources, per genre, allows for usage overview and analysis of trends. Reports in this format must account for such variables as the occasional database and e-journal migration, with the resultant potential overlapping transitional usage data. Other factors challenging continuity in reporting include the detailing or documenting of cancellations or cessations, titles changes, and significant product upgrades.

Future trends and events will necessarily dictate a reflection on existing practices and drive procedures. Emerging and expanding services models, such as patron-driven acquisition (PDA), may influence renewals and prove to be a more cost-effective and responsive option than outright subscriptions or purchases. We would actively consider implementation of a proprietary third-party usage gathering or loading tool, pending available funding. We recently launched a discovery service, and after I have the opportunity to review its impact on the recorded usage of electronic resources, I will act on my observations and suggest refinements for in-house usage gathering, reporting, and analysis, accordingly. The now-combined format coverage of the COUNTER Code of Practice for e-Resources: Release 4, with the deadline date for implementation of 31 Dec. 2013, will inform a reexamination of internal practices, a realignment of reporting priorities, as needed, and the anticipated incorporation of new vendor-provided reports into the mix.

Driven by ever-changing vendor options, the e-resource landscape will continue to evolve. A flexible approach in the management of electronic collections will entail being proactive in exploring new options, while reacting analytically to the data content of usage reports. For the immediate future, the “orange,” “apple,” and “banana” representing the three genres remain in the usage statistics mix, but may be joined in the future by new ingredients.

I began this piece by examining Dr. King’s dreams and how they have been largely realized. We then moved into a brief review of how libraries and the profession followed suit and made it possible for America’s black readers and librarians to join and enrich the mainstream. While there is much yet to be done, I think this is remarkable and is due to the fact that, as my non-librarian wife often remarks, librarians are such nice people. While these changes have been extraordinary, I think the advent of so much non-commercial and relatively affordable commercial e-content is equally amazing. We often talk about the need for “even playing fields.” While I don’t think they completely exist, I do believe that with the advent of the Web we are much closer to achieving the dream of all librarians: To help people to find the information they need.