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# Information Services and Use: Metrics & Statistics for Libraries and Information Provider: Update on NISO Committee AY

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# Information Services and Use: Metrics & Statistics for Libraries and Information Provider: Update on NISO Committee AY

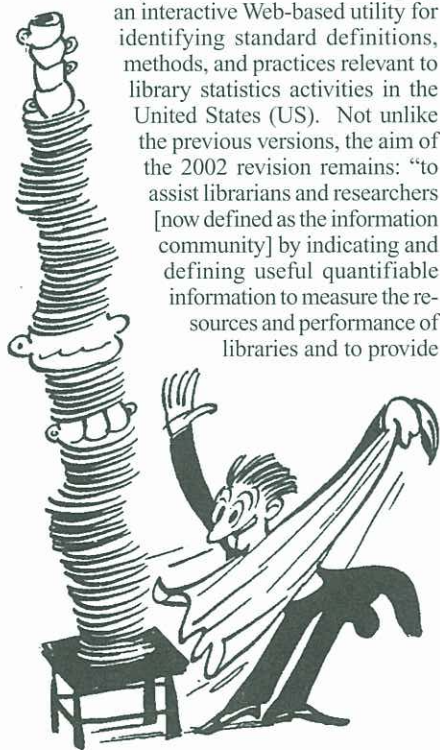
by **Denise Davis** (Program Manager, Library Development, Oregon State Library; Phone: 503-378-4243 x.225) <denise.davis@state.or.us>

NISO Committee AY is now making final edits to **Z39.7-2002, Information Services and Use: Metrics & Statistics for Libraries and Information Providers—Data Dictionary**, and expects to complete its work by the end of 2003. Participation from the information community both in the US and internationally has proven invaluable throughout the development and trial use period.

In final preparation for the ballot, **Committee AY** and **NISO Headquarters** solicited proposals for a maintenance organization for Z39.7. NISO was scheduled to make selections among interested individuals, organizations, or agencies for this organization in November 2003. Please check **NISO's Website** ([www.niso.org](http://www.niso.org)) for the most up to date information.

For those of you unfamiliar with this standard, it was first published in 1968 as **ANSI Z39.7-1968** and was reaffirmed in 1974. The first revision appeared in 1983 (**ANSI Z39.7-1983**), and the second revision appeared in 1995 (**ANSI/NISO Z39.7-1995**), prepared by **NISO Standards Committee UU**. The third revision is this revision (**ANSI/NISO Z39.7-2002**), prepared by **NISO Standards Committee AY**. Information about the Committee, its charge and current work are available at [http://www.niso.org/committees/committee\\_ay.html](http://www.niso.org/committees/committee_ay.html).

The 2002 revision diverges from the previous revisions that focused on developing print-only standards, instead developing an interactive Web-based utility for identifying standard definitions, methods, and practices relevant to library statistics activities in the United States (US). Not unlike the previous versions, the aim of the 2002 revision remains: "to assist librarians and researchers [now defined as the information community] by indicating and defining useful quantifiable information to measure the resources and performance of libraries and to provide



a body of valid and comparable data on American libraries."

This current revision differs significantly from its predecessors in its approach, however. The **Committee AY** charge closely matched recommendations from the **NISO Forum on Performance Measures and Statistics for Libraries**, held February 15-16, 2001 in Washington, D.C. (<http://www.niso.org/news/reports/stat-rpt.html>). At this Forum, current standards and best practices for library statistics and performance measures were discussed and identified as critical to the revision of Z39.7. Therefore, not only does this revision absorb the "de facto" definitions established through the national program for collecting data about libraries (i.e., the **National Center for Education Statistics (NCES)** survey program), it absorbs relevant US association definitions as well as their data collection methods and practices. The value of this approach is that it recognizes the guidelines and "best practices" in the area of library statistics across the profession, not only at the national survey level.

As with the 1995 revision, most of the data elements included here appeared on one or more of the national and association surveys. In addition, relevant definitions from the **International Standards Organization (ISO 2789)** have been incorporated. Many other valuable resources were taken into account in the course of this revision. The appendices to this standard detail the publications and projects considered.

**Committee AY** members include **Brian Auger, Howard County Public Library, MD; John Carlo Bertot, Florida State University; Dianne Carty, Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners; Denise M. Davis, Chairperson, Oregon State Library; Oliver Pesch, EBSCO Publishing; Sue Phillips, University of Texas at Austin; Sherrie Schmidt, Arizona State University Libraries; J.D. Waggoner, State Library of West Virginia; Ann Carlson Weeks, University of Maryland; Peter Young, National Agriculture Library; Patricia Stevens, NISO SDC Liaison; Martha Kyrillidou, Observer, Association of Research Libraries; and Mary Jo Lynch, Ph.D., Observer, American Library Association.**

**Committee AY** met its deadline of June 2002 for the full revision of the base standard. Editorial changes to the Web-accessible data dictionary continued into mid-July. The **Z39.7** draft standard for trial use underwent a name change to "Information Services and Use: Metrics & Statistics for Libraries and Information Providers," and was released for trial use and comment. The **Committee** held a briefing at the **2002 ALA Annual Conference** in Atlanta to unveil the beta version of the online draft stan-

dard for trial use. This event helped the **Committee** explain the rationale for moving away from a print only standard, and to encourage input from the information community during the trial use period. The comment period lasted 12 months and closed in July 2003.

The **Committee** worked "virtually" to evaluate comments and recommendations during the trial use period. Updates to the draft standard were made twice during the comment period and were primarily grammatical in nature. The final editing, which is much more substantive, will happen only once before the release for ballot.

A listserv was created to encourage discussion beyond the formal comment structure (**Z39-7dsftu-on@list.niso.org**). Comments to the draft standard were made via a Web link from the committee Webpage (<http://www.niso.org/committees/public/>), through the committee listserv, and via email.

The input received from a variety of sources including archives, school and special libraries, academic libraries, and the publishing industry during the trial use period was invaluable. Of particular note was the attention paid to the electronic metrics definitions, the virtual transactions section of the base standard, and Appendix A: *Methods of Measurement* and Appendix B: *Measuring the Use of Electronic Library Services*. The migration away from a print standard to a data dictionary searchable by key word and section improved respondent's ability to seek their specific areas of interest and make targeted comments to **Committee AY**. Providing an online feedback link helped as well, and nearly 70% of comments were received through the "Public Comments" link.

As one of the first NISO standards revision committees to undertake the development of an online only data dictionary, and to imbed the feedback link in the database itself, **Committee AY** was well positioned to create a continuous maintenance environment for **Z39.7**. The **Committee** anticipates this model will continue with the Maintenance Organization for the standard. The **Committee** plans to debrief with NISO and outline the value and challenges of a method of continuous revision, rather than a five-year interval revision.

The **Committee** will be participating in the **NISO Standard Briefing** on January 11, 2004. We invite participation and comment during this briefing. The standard will be out for ballot by January 2004, but some of the **Committee** members will be on hand to respond to questions. Please consult the **NISO Website** ([www.niso.org](http://www.niso.org)) for more information on this event. 