Licensed electronic resources are a major means of access to information in all libraries. Online resources, especially large aggregated databases, for example EBSCOHost (see UNP library website), have proven to be very popular among users. However, as library budgets continue to shift toward e-content, academic libraries are under increasing pressure to prove the value of these costly resources. The problem facing librarians however, is that it is difficult to prove the value of e-resources without accurate e-usage statistics. Librarians and publishers need to understand how often these databases are used and when. Within an aggregated journal collection, which titles are used the heaviest, and which the least? How the content is used? How much is printed, e-mailed, or downloaded?

Many librarians believed that the electronic world promised a vastly improved means to measure usage which would assist them in responding to their users needs. Publishers thought it would help them understand the value of the publications they sold. However, this has never materialised primarily due to a lack of definitions. Publishers have never agreed on what constitutes a “search” or a “hit”. Without a common language it is difficult to formulate a standard calculation for e-usage. Also, the statistical data that libraries receive from publishers is often inconsistent. Sometimes specific counts are provided, sometimes they are not, and often librarians need to go to a site and retrieve data. Even if publishers report on usage, what they report on will differ. Some may track and release the number and length of sessions, or downloads, or views; others may provide the number of hits and requests.

Thus librarians, vendors and publishers have recognised that the development of acceptable, global standards for measuring online usage required an international response. This was the impetus behind the creation of Project COUNTER. The project which started in the UK, was launched in March 2002. To date COUNTER has gained broad international acceptance, including the support of the National Committee on Libraries and Information Science, and the National Information Standards Organization (NISO). The object of COUNTER is to address the e-usage measurement problem by developing an international Code of Practice governing the recording and exchange of online usage data. The first part (Release 1) of the Code of Practice contains an extensive list of data elements, definitions and terms used in usage reports throughout the Code of Practice. The full text of Release 1 (available at www.projectCounter.org) specifies the requirements vendors must meet for their usage reports to be “COUNTER-compliant”.

In complying with the COUNTER Code of Practice publishers will be providing libraries with statistics that are consistent, credible and compatible. More importantly, many librarians will make COUNTER-compliant usage statistics a condition of signing agreements with publishers for online services. The COUNTER project therefore assists librarians in tracking e-usage and provides them with a tool to illustrate the value of online resources.

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LIBRARY FACTS AND FIGURES 2002

Staff: After significant downsizing stabilised at 46 posts (5 part-time). University Librarian post is vacant and has not been released pending merger with UD-W. The Deputy Librarian has been appointed as Acting University Librarian.


Allocation to Faculties after Library topslice:
- Science and Agriculture 47.06%
- Human and Management Science 33%
- Law 10.28%
- Education 9.66%

Acquisitions: Books: totalled 4670, decline of 19.9% in purchases from 2001
Periodicals: 1780 current subscriptions
- 113 of these to be terminated
E-journals: 493 based on print-subscriptions
- 600 free (most peer-reviewed)
(http://www.library.unp.ac.za)

Total number of records on database (including CATNIP):
- Grand total: 922 626
- Library: 392 735

Circulation: Issue Desk loans: 123 403, 3.7% decline on 2001
- Reservations: 135, 4% decline on 2001

Electronic databases usage:
- CD-ROM: stats for 2002 incomplete, Jan-Jun 5000 logins to databases recorded
- Online (web-based): 87 884 searches
- Most heavily used: Sabinet (59 730); EBSCOHost (23 868)

Inter Library Loan:
- A 14% decline in overall transactions that were fulfilled: total 8 799, but UNP Library remains a net lender, ratio 60:28.

User Education:
- Orientation week 553
- Introductory sessions 218
- Under grads 601
- Post grads 320
- Mastering Library Resources 69
- Winter School & non UNP users 16
- Total 1 777

Credit Bearing Courses:
- Legal Methods II 100
- AGRI 220 (Info Retrieval Skills) 203
NEW REFERENCE WORKS


NEW JOURNALS

International journal of research in marketing
Vol. 20, 1, 2003+
Main Library

Journal of international marketing
Vol. 11, 1, 2003+
Main Library

Open learning: the journal of open and distance learning
Vol. 18, 1, 2003+
Main Library

NATIONAL LIBRARY WEEK 2003

National Library Week was celebrated at the Main Library from the 17 – 22 March. The theme this year was Your Right to Read and the Main Library celebrated the week by way of a display and a competition. The prize for the competition was a R150 book voucher from MAST Bookshop. The winner of the prize was Oseaus Dube, a Postgraduate Diploma of Library and Information Studies student. The Library congratulates Oseaus on winning the prize and thanks MAST for the donation of the book voucher.

STAFF NEWS

Congratulations to Jillian Viljoen who moves from a half-day to a full-day position in the Cataloguing Section. The post that Jillian fills was left vacant after the retirement of Margaret Quick.

ALAN PATON CENTRE NEWS

Alan Paton: a celebration of his life - the 10th Alan Paton Lecture

The 10th Alan Paton Lecture will take place at 18h30 on 15 May 2003 (Thursday) in the Colin Webb Hall, UNP. As it is the Centenary Lecture the format will be different from usual in that there will be three short speeches and a short video, instead of one speaker. Peter Brown will speak on Paton’s political role in the Liberal Party of South Africa; Prof. Colin Gardner will speak on Paton’s literary career, and Jonathan Paton will speak on the family aspect of his father’s life. The speeches will be followed by a video of an interview with Alan Paton.

The lecture is organised by the Liberal Democratic Association and the Alan Paton Centre, and sponsored by the Standard Bank Foundation. The lecture is open to all, and if you would like to attend, please contact the Alan Paton Centre, University of Natal, Pietermaritzburg. Jewell Koopman, tel.(033) 260 5926 or Estelle Liebenberg-Barkhuizen, tel/fax (033) 260 6143; e-mail koopmanj@nu.ac.za or liebbe@nu.ac.za

JK
“The landmine has two characteristics which distinguish it from other weapons of war. One is that it knows no ceasefire. Long after a peace treaty is signed and a ceasefire takes hold, it will continue to maim and kill its victims yet unborn. The other is that it has the effect of targeting civilians. Among those civilians two groups are specially vulnerable – children because of their curiosity and energy, and farmers because of their need to reclaim and work their land. The landmine is a weapon of denial.... The landmine is cheap to make and easy to deploy. It claims lives without exposing troops to counter fire, and is attractive to a military commander whose forces are outnumbered. It substitutes for infantry. It doesn’t need to be watered or fed or disciplined” (foreword by Martin Bell, xiv).

The chilling devastation of this weapon of war is lucidly portrayed by Monin and Gallimore as they trace the history of landmines, largely a twentieth century phenomenon although it is thought that a crude version was in use several thousand years ago. With great accuracy they describe graphically, in a matter of fact way, the types of anti-personnel mines in use, the effect of standing on a landmine, physical rehabilitation, the psychological and social impact, demining, production and trade in landmines. The book looks at the situations, over the past 70 years in particular, in which landmines have played a major role, namely the World Wars, Vietnam and Cambodia, Angola, Afghanistan and Bosnia-Herzegovina. These situations are examined in great detail from the perspective and attitude of both those who lay the mines and civilians who live with their threat and campaigns to deal with both demining and non-use of mines.

The authors also trace the history of the campaigns to ban the use of landmines. The International Campaign to Ban Landmines (ICBL) had its roots in the Vietnam War, during which, it has now been claimed, American-laid landmines accounted for 20-30 percent of all US deaths during the whole Vietnam War. It has been mainly non-governmental and aid agencies that have taken up the fight for the banning of landmines and the full internationalization of the campaign only took root in the early 1990’s. The authors’ even give credit to the role Princess Diana played in highlighting to the public at large, the menacing nature of this weapon when she was photographed walking through an Angolan minefield in 1997. The worldwide attention to landmines culminated in the Ottawa Treaty – on the prohibition of the production, transfer, stockpiling and use of anti-personnel mines in 1997. Many signatories have not yet implemented or set a time line for adhering to the principles of this treaty whose processes and implications are complex and intriguing.

With the current war in Iraq still uppermost in one’s mind, it is interesting to note the section in the book on the role of landmines in Saddam Hussein’s campaigns against his neighbours and in general Middle East conflicts.

The book’s epilogue considers whether humankind’s affinity for war will ever allow for the banning of the landmine, a “humanitarian catastrophe” (p.197) on a global scale, especially when it is such a cheap and effective weapon. The battle to ban the landmine is far from over and the real cost of such a weapon upon societies has yet to be fully unveiled and realized.

Rosemary Kühn