
**Information and documentation —
International library statistics**

*Information et documentation — Statistiques internationales de
bibliothèques*

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Foreword

ISO (the International Organization for Standardization) is a worldwide federation of national standards bodies (ISO member bodies). The work of preparing International Standards is normally carried out through ISO technical committees. Each member body interested in a subject for which a technical committee has been established has the right to be represented on that committee. International organizations, governmental and non-governmental, in liaison with ISO, also take part in the work. ISO collaborates closely with the International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC) on all matters of electrotechnical standardization.

The procedures used to develop this document and those intended for its further maintenance are described in the ISO/IEC Directives, Part 1. In particular the different approval criteria needed for the different types of ISO documents should be noted. This document was drafted in accordance with the editorial rules of the ISO/IEC Directives, Part 2 (see www.iso.org/directives).

Attention is drawn to the possibility that some of the elements of this document may be the subject of patent rights. ISO shall not be held responsible for identifying any or all such patent rights. Details of any patent rights identified during the development of the document will be in the Introduction and/or on the ISO list of patent declarations received (see www.iso.org/patents).

Any trade name used in this document is information given for the convenience of users and does not constitute an endorsement.

For an explanation on the meaning of ISO specific terms and expressions related to conformity assessment, as well as information about ISO's adherence to the WTO principles in the Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT) see the following URL: Foreword - Supplementary information

The committee responsible for this document is ISO/TC 46, *Information and documentation*, Subcommittee SC 8, *Quality — Statistics and performance evaluation*.

This fifth edition cancels and replaces the fourth edition (ISO 2789:2006), which has been technically revised to overcome problems in the practical application of ISO 2789:2006 and to take account of the new developments in library services.

Introduction

This International Standard provides guidance to the library and information services community on the collection and reporting of statistics.

[Clauses 2](#) and [6](#) form the core of this International Standard. [Clause 2](#) provides definitions for most of the elements which constitute a library service; these are for statistical purposes only. [Clause 6](#) recommends how each of these elements should be counted. Users will need to consult both clauses for the complete picture.

This International Standard includes definitions and counting procedures for all types of resources and services that libraries offer to their users. The former [Annex A](#), including definitions and procedures for electronic resources and services, has been integrated into the main part of the standard, as these resources and services have become a normal part of library activities.

In order to explain the reasons for incorporating a number of new library services into this International Standard, [Clause 3](#) has been added to describe the current tasks of libraries.

It is recognized that not all measures specified in this International Standard can be collected by libraries of different types and sizes. To give greater completeness, several additional measures (important for some sectors only) are described in [Annex A](#). The aim is to ensure that, where a particular statistic is collected, the same definitions and methods are used.

[Annex B](#) is important for the compilation and publication of national statistics so that they can be truly comparable between countries and over time.

The strong requirement to describe and publicize library activities can only be satisfied if data collection in libraries follows the lines of this International Standard. As far as possible, it is advisable that libraries collect all data named in this International Standard that concern their activities.

Developments in relation to this International Standard will be monitored and additional statistical measures will be incorporated as needed.

An alphabetical index is given in [Annex C](#).

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Information and documentation — International library statistics

1 Scope

This International Standard specifies rules for the library and information services community on the collection and reporting of statistics:

- for the purposes of international reporting;
- to ensure conformity between countries for those statistical measures that are frequently used by library managers, but do not qualify for international reporting;
- to encourage good practice in the use of statistics for the management of library and information services.

2 Terms and definitions

For the purposes of this document, the following terms and definitions apply.

2.1 Libraries

2.1.1

academic library

library whose primary function is to cover the information needs of learning and research

Note 1 to entry: This includes libraries of institutions of higher education and general research libraries.

2.1.2

administrative unit

any independent library, or group of libraries, under a single directorate or a single administration

Note 1 to entry: The term “independent” does not imply legal or financial independence but only that the library is a recognizably separate unit, typically within a larger organization.

Note 2 to entry: The administrative unit can be a single library or a larger organization, typically containing a central/main library, branch libraries and administrative functions. See the Example in [6.1.1](#).

2.1.3

branch library

part of a larger administrative unit providing, in separate quarters, a service for a particular user group (e.g. children, faculties) or for a locally defined clientele

Note 1 to entry: Institute, departmental and other affiliated libraries are included. Mobile libraries and external service points are excluded.

2.1.4

central library

main library

usually that part or those parts of an administrative unit where the main administrative functions and the important parts of the library collection and services are located

Note 1 to entry: An administrative unit comprising several branch libraries does not necessarily include a central library.

2.1.5

external service point

point away from library premises at which a certain service is regularly offered to users

Note 1 to entry: This includes places within a locality at which library material is deposited for informal circulation to a restricted group of users but without other library services, for example, old people's homes, community centres, collections for hospital patients.

Note 2 to entry: This includes service points that offer electronic services, but no print collections.

Note 3 to entry: Mobile libraries and their stops are not counted as external service points.

Note 4 to entry: A simple computer connection to a place outside the library (e.g. in a students' residence hall) is not counted as an external service point.

2.1.6

library

organization, or part of an organization, the main aim of which is to facilitate the use of such information resources, services and facilities as are required to meet the informational, research, educational, cultural or recreational needs of its users

Note 1 to entry: The supply of the required information resources can be accomplished by building and maintaining a collection and/or by organizing access to information resources.

Note 2 to entry: These are the basic requirements for a library and do not exclude any additional resources and services incidental to its main purpose.

2.1.7

library of an institution of higher education

library whose primary function is to serve students, academic and professional staff in universities and other institutions of education at the third (tertiary) level and above

Note 1 to entry: It may also serve the general public.

2.1.8

mobile library

library, sometimes a division of a public library, using transport means to provide documents and services directly to users as an alternative to access on library premises

Note 1 to entry: Adapted from ISO 5127:2001.

2.1.9

national library

library that is responsible for acquiring and conserving copies of all relevant documents published in the country in which the library is located

Note 1 to entry: A national library will also normally perform some or all of the following functions: produce the national bibliography; hold and keep up to date a large and representative collection of foreign literature including documents about the country; act as a national bibliographic information centre; compile union catalogues; supervise the administration of other libraries and/or promote collaboration; coordinate a research and development service; etc.

Note 2 to entry: The definition of "national library" allows for more than one national library in a country.

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2.1.10**public library**

general library that is open to the public and that serves the whole population of a local or regional community and is usually financed, in whole or in part, from public funds

Note 1 to entry: A public library is defined as open to the public, even if its services are primarily intended for a particular part of the population to be served, such as children, visually impaired persons, or hospital patients. Its basic services are free of charge or available for a subsidized fee. This definition includes services provided to schools by a public library organization and services provided to public libraries in a region by a regional organization.

2.1.11**school library**

library attached to all types of schools below the third (tertiary) level of education whose primary function is to serve the pupils and teachers of such a school

Note 1 to entry: A school library may also serve the general public.

Note 2 to entry: This includes libraries and resource collections in all educational institutions below the third level, which may be described as “Colleges”, “Colleges of Further Education”, “Vocational Institutes”, etc.

2.1.12**special library**

independent library covering one discipline or particular field of knowledge or a special regional interest

Note 1 to entry: The term “special library” includes libraries primarily serving a specific category of users, or primarily devoted to a specific form of document, and libraries sponsored by an organization to serve its own work-related objectives.

Note 2 to entry: The statistics of special libraries should be collected and presented separately for those in the areas given in [2.1.12.1](#) to [2.1.12.7](#) (differentiated according to funding institutions).

2.1.12.1**government library**

library maintained to serve any government service, department or agency, or parliament, including both international, national and local (regional) government organizations

2.1.12.2**health-service library****medical library**

library which serves health-service professionals in hospitals or elsewhere, whether in the private or public sector

Note 1 to entry: Pharmaceutical company libraries should be included under [2.1.12.4](#).

Note 2 to entry: These libraries may also include materials for patients.

2.1.12.3**library of professional and learned institutions and associations**

library maintained by professional or trade associations, learned societies, trade unions and other similar bodies, whose primary objective is to provide services to the members and practitioners of a specific trade or profession

2.1.12.4**industrial and commercial library**

library in any industrial enterprise or business firm, maintained by the parent organization to serve the information needs of its staff

Note 1 to entry: The term “industrial and commercial library” includes libraries maintained by information and management consultants, manufacturing and service industries and libraries of commercial legal practices.

2.1.12.5

media library

library serving media and publishing firms and organizations, including newspapers, publishers, broadcasting, film and television

2.1.12.6

regional library

major library serving a particular region whose primary function cannot be described as that of a public, school or academic library nor as part of a national library network

2.1.12.7

other special library

any library not included elsewhere

EXAMPLE Library within voluntary organizations, museums, religious institutions.

2.1.13

storage library

library whose primary function is to store less-used material from other administrative units

Note 1 to entry: Storage libraries that are part of or administrated by another library (e.g. national or regional library) are excluded.

Note 2 to entry: Libraries whose stock remains the possession of the storing libraries are excluded. The collections and their use are counted with the proprietary libraries.

2.2 Library services and use

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2.2.1

access

successful request of a library-provided online service

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Note 1 to entry: An access is one cycle of user activities that typically starts when a user connects to a library-provided online service and ends by a terminating activity that is either explicit (by leaving the database through log-out or exit) or implicit (timeout due to user inactivity).

Note 2 to entry: Accesses to the library website are counted as virtual visits.

Note 3 to entry: Requests of a general entrance or gateway page should be excluded.

Note 4 to entry: If possible, requests by search engines should be excluded.

2.2.2

active borrower

registered user who has borrowed at least one item during the reporting period

Note 1 to entry: This count underrates the number of active users, but is still for many libraries the only manageable measure.

2.2.3

active user

registered user who has visited or made use of library facilities or services during the reporting period

Note 1 to entry: This includes active borrowers.

Note 2 to entry: This may include the use of electronic library services, if it is possible to identify electronic use and virtual visits of the individual user, or if data can be obtained by means of surveys.

Note 3 to entry: If a library identifies non-registered active users, e.g. by surveys, these should be counted separately.

2.2.4 blog weblog

web page that provides frequent continuing publication of web links and/or comments on a particular topic or subject (broad or narrow in scope), often in the form of short entries arranged in reverse chronological order, the most recently added piece of information appearing first

Note 1 to entry: The information can be written or collected by the site owner or contributed by users.

2.2.5 blog post entry in a blog

2.2.6 download

successful request of a content unit from a library-provided online service or other internet service

2.2.7 electronic document delivery, mediated

electronic transmission of a document or part of a document from the library collection to a user, mediated by library staff, not necessarily via another library

Note 1 to entry: Electronic transmission of documents to members of the population to be served is included. Fax transmission is excluded.

Note 2 to entry: May be split up as to transmission with or without charge to the user.

Note 3 to entry: Unmediated downloading by users from the electronic collection of the library is excluded.

Note 4 to entry: The forms of lending and delivery services defined in this International Standard are shown in [Table 1](#).

ISO 2789:2013
Table 1 – Forms of lending and delivery services

Supplier		Library		Document supplier
Recipient		User	Other library	User (via library)
Transmission format	Original	Loan	ILL	EDS
	Print copy	Loan	ILL	EDS
	Electronic	Time-limited: Loan No time limit: EDD	EDD	EDS
ILL: Interlibrary lending. EDD: Electronic document delivery (mediated). EDS: External document supply.				

2.2.8 electronic service

library service delivered via electronic means, whether from local servers or provided via networks

Note 1 to entry: Electronic library services include the online catalogue, the library website, the electronic collection, electronic lending, electronic document delivery (mediated), electronic reference service, user training by electronic means, services for mobile devices, services for interactive use (including services on social networks), and Internet access offered via the library.

Note 2 to entry: This does not include booking physical services (e.g. rooms or library tours) by electronic means.

2.2.9

event

pre-arranged activity with cultural, educational, social, political, scholarly, or other intent

EXAMPLE Exhibitions, author visits, literary discussions, workshops.

Note 1 to entry: Adapted from ISO/TR 28118:2009

Note 2 to entry: Only events arranged by the library on its own or in partnership with other institutions are included, whether inside or outside the library premises. Events inside the library premises organized by institutions outside the library without the library's cooperation are excluded.

Note 3 to entry: User training lessons and library tours are excluded.

Note 4 to entry: Ongoing programs are included. Each session of a program is counted as one event.

Note 5 to entry: Virtual events are included.

2.2.10

exhibition

time-limited display of objects, organized or co-organized by the library

Note 1 to entry: Exhibitions can take place inside or outside the library premises.

2.2.11

external document supply

document or part of it, in print or electronic form, delivered from outside the library collection by non-library suppliers (not through interlibrary lending) with the library being involved in the transaction and/or the payment

Note 1 to entry: It is irrelevant whether a number of individual transactions are paid per view or a certain number of transactions have been prepaid.

Note 2 to entry: The forms of lending and delivery services defined in this International Standard are shown in [Table 1](#).

2.2.12

external user

user of a library who does not belong to that library's population to be served

2.2.13

informational question

directional and/or administrative inquiry delivered to library staff

Note 1 to entry: This includes e.g. questions for locating staff or facilities, questions regarding opening times and registering procedures and questions about handling equipment such as printers or computer terminals.

Note 2 to entry: The question can be delivered personally or by means of telephone, regular mail, fax or electronic media (via email, the library website or other networked communication mechanisms).

Note 3 to entry: For reference questions, see [2.2.26](#)

2.2.14

in-house use

use of documents on the premises having been taken by a user from open access stock

Note 1 to entry: In-house use includes browsing at the shelves in the sense of a short investigation of the contents, but excludes looking at the side or spine titles only for selecting material.

2.2.15

interactive library service

online library service with social software that facilitates a bidirectional exchange of information among users or between users and the library

2.2.16**interlibrary loan**

loan of a document in its physical form or delivery of a document, or part of it, in copied form, from one library to another which is not under the same administration

Note 1 to entry: Mediated transmission of documents in electronic form is counted as electronic document delivery.

Note 2 to entry: The forms of lending and delivery services defined in this International Standard are shown in [Table 1](#).

2.2.17**Internet access**

Internet connection by a user from a workstation owned by the library or from a user's private computer in the library via the library's network

Note 1 to entry: Internet accesses can only be counted if users have registered or authenticated themselves when accessing the Internet.

Note 2 to entry: Internet access via a user's private computer (e.g. laptop or handheld) via the library's wireless network inside the library should be counted and reported separately.

2.2.18**library website**

unique domain on the Internet consisting of a collection of web pages that is published by a library to provide access to the library's services and resources

Note 1 to entry: The pages of a website are usually interconnected by the use of hypertext links.

Note 2 to entry: Excludes documents that fit the definitions of electronic collection and free Internet resources that may be linked from the library website.

Note 3 to entry: Excludes web services in the library's domain that are operated on behalf of other organizations.

2.2.19**loan**

direct lending or delivery transaction of an item in non-electronic form (e.g. book), of an electronic document on a physical carrier (e.g. CD-ROM) or other device (e.g. eBook reader), or transmission of an electronic document to one user for a limited time period (e.g. eBook)

Note 1 to entry: Renewals are excluded, but could be counted separately.

Note 2 to entry: Loans include registered loans within the library (on-site loans).

Note 3 to entry: Loans include copied documents supplied in place of original documents (including fax) and printouts of electronic documents made by library staff for the user.

Note 4 to entry: Loans of documents in physical form to distance users are included.

Note 5 to entry: Mediated electronic transmission of documents is counted as electronic document delivery if their use is permitted for unlimited time. This includes transmissions to members of the population to be served.

Note 6 to entry: The forms of lending and delivery services defined in this International Standard are shown in [Table 1](#).

2.2.20**mobile device**

computing device, typically having a display screen with touch, pen and/or keyboard input and Internet connection

2.2.21**online catalogue**

database of bibliographical records describing the collection usually of one particular library or library system

2.2.22

on-site loan

document delivered, in most cases from closed access, for use on the premises

2.2.23

podcast

digital media file (audio or video) syndicated over the Internet via an RSS feed

Note 1 to entry: Once available online, podcasts can be downloaded for listening or viewing on portable media devices and personal computers.

Note 2 to entry: Online directories of podcasts are usually browsable by subject and searchable by keyword(s).

2.2.24

point-of-use training

unstructured user training conducted by library staff at the impromptu request of users and usually at their point of use

2.2.25

population to be served

number of individuals for whom the library is set up to provide its services and materials

Note 1 to entry: Adapted from ISO 11620:2008.

Note 2 to entry: For public libraries, this will normally be the population of the legal service area (authority); for libraries of an institution of higher education, this will normally be the total of academic and professional staff plus students.

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2.2.26

reference question

information contact that involves the knowledge or use of one or more information sources (such as printed and non-printed materials, machine-readable databases, the library's own and other institutions' catalogues) by library staff

Note 1 to entry: Adapted from ANSI/NISO Z39.7-2004.

Note 2 to entry: This may also involve recommendations, interpretation, or instruction in the use of such sources.

Note 3 to entry: One reference question may address several issues.

Note 4 to entry: The question can be delivered personally or by means of telephone, regular mail, fax or electronic media (via email, the library website or other networked communications mechanisms).

Note 5 to entry: It is essential that libraries do not include informational (directional and administrative) questions, e.g. for locating staff or facilities, regarding opening times or about handling equipment such as printers or computer terminals (see [2.2.13](#)).

2.2.27

reference service

provision of information and assistance, in response to requests, by an information and documentation organization

[SOURCE: ISO 5127:2001, definition 5.5.06]

2.2.28

registered user

person or organization registered with a library in order to use its collection and/or services within or away from the library

Note 1 to entry: Users may be registered upon their request or automatically when enrolling in the institution.

Note 2 to entry: The registration should be monitored at regular intervals, minimum every three years, so that inactive users can be removed from the register.

2.2.29 rejected access turnaway

unsuccessful request of a licensed online service provided by the library by exceeding the simultaneous user limit

Note 1 to entry: Request failure because of wrong passwords is excluded.

2.2.30 renewal

extension of the loan period for a document usually initiated by the user

Note 1 to entry: Automatic renewals generated by the library system without user interaction are included.

2.2.31 reservation

action taken when a user requests the supply of a document that is in the library collection or in the process of acquisition but not available at the time

2.2.32 search

specific intellectual query, typically equated to submitting a search form of a library-provided online service to the server

Note 1 to entry: Adapted from COUNTER code of practice, Release 4, 2012.

Note 2 to entry: A search is recorded each time a search request is submitted to the server.

Note 3 to entry: Immediately repeated duplicate searches, double clicks, or other evidence indicating unintended user behaviour are excluded.

2.2.33 social network service

electronic service designed to allow users to establish a personal or organizational profile and contact other individuals for the purpose of communicating, collaborating, and/or sharing content with them

Note 1 to entry: Users can be individual persons or institutions such as libraries.

Note 2 to entry: Most services allow members to restrict the visibility of their profile information to registered service members only, people on an established list of contacts, or particular groups of service users.

2.2.34 target population

groups of actual and potential users appropriate to an individual library as the object of a specific service or as the primary users of specific materials

[SOURCE: ISO 11620:2008, definition 2.4.1]

2.2.35 target population with special needs

part of a library's population to be served with needs that require special library services

Note 1 to entry: The special needs can be caused by physical and health impairment, economic disadvantage (e.g. long-term unemployment), cultural difference (e.g. non-native speakers, new arrivals), educational background, or other circumstances that require special library services.

Note 2 to entry: Children, young people and seniors without additional needs are not included.

Note 3 to entry: A library may have more than one target population with special needs.

Note 4 to entry: An individual may belong to more than one such target population.