
**Information and documentation —
International library statistics**

*Information et documentation — Statistiques internationales de
bibliothèques*

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ISO 2789:2022

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Published in Switzerland

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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 of the voluntary nature of standards, the meaning of ISO specific terms and expressions related to conformity assessment, as well as information about ISO's adherence to the World Trade Organization (WTO) principles in the Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT), see www.iso.org/iso/foreword.html.

This document was prepared by Technical Committee ISO/TC 46, *Information and documentation*, Subcommittee SC 8, *Quality — Statistics and performance evaluation*.

This sixth edition cancels and replaces the fifth edition (ISO 2789:2013), which has been technically revised.

The main changes are as follows:

- problems in the practical application of ISO 2789:2013 have been addressed;
- new development in library services have been taken into account.

Any feedback or questions on this document should be directed to the user's national standards body. A complete listing of these bodies can be found at www.iso.org/members.html.

Introduction

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

[Clauses 3](#) and [7](#) form the core of this document. [Clause 3](#) provides definitions for most of the elements which constitute a library service; these are for statistical purposes only. [Clause 7](#) recommends how each of these elements should be counted. Users need to consult both clauses for the complete picture.

This document includes definitions and counting procedures for all types of resources and services that libraries offer to their users.

It is recognized that not all measures specified in this document 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.

As the use of digital library services has become a main issue for showing the role and impact of libraries, [Annex C](#) has been added, giving an overview of methods for measuring digital usage.

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

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

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

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Information and documentation — International library statistics

1 Scope

This document 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 Normative references

The following documents are referred to in the text in such a way that some or all of their content constitutes requirements of this document. For dated references, only the edition cited applies. For undated references, the latest edition of the referenced document (including any amendments) applies.

ISO 11799, *Information and documentation — Document storage requirements for archive and library materials*

3 Terms and definitions

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

ISO and IEC maintain terminology databases for use in standardization at the following addresses:

- ISO Online browsing platform: available at <https://www.iso.org/obp>
- IEC Electropedia: available at <https://www.electropedia.org/>

3.1 Library

3.1.1

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.

3.1.2

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 7.1.1.

3.1.3

branch library

part of a larger *administrative unit* (3.1.2) 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.

3.1.4

central library

main library

part or parts of an *administrative unit* (3.1.2) where centralized functions of administration, collections, and services are located

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

3.1.5

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 digital 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.

3.1.6

library

organization, or part of an organization, whose main aim 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.

3.1.7

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 can also serve the general public.

Note 2 to entry: This is a type of academic library.

3.1.8

mobile library

library, sometimes a division of a *public library* (3.1.10), using transport means, motorised or not, to provide documents and services directly to users as an alternative to access on library premises

EXAMPLE Motor vehicles, carts, ships, bicycles, donkeys

3.1.9**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.

3.1.10**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.

3.1.11**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 can also serve the general public.

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

3.1.12**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 [3.1.12.1](#) to [3.1.12.7](#) (differentiated according to funding institutions).

3.1.12.1**government library**

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

3.1.12.2**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 are included under [3.1.12.4](#).

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

3.1.12.3

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

3.1.12.4

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.

3.1.12.5

media library

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

3.1.12.6

regional library

major library serving a particular region whose primary function cannot be described as that of a public, school or *academic library* (3.1.1) nor as part of a national library network

3.1.12.7

other special library

any library not included elsewhere

EXAMPLE Library within voluntary organizations, museums, religious institutions.

3.1.13

storage library

library whose primary function is to store less-used material from other *administrative units* (3.1.2)

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.

3.2 Library services and use

3.2.1

access

<virtual> successful request of a library-provided online service

3.2.2

access

<physical> right, opportunity, means of finding, using or retrieving information, of using a service, or entering a building

[SOURCE: ISO 15489-1:2016, 3.1, modified — "of using a service, or entering a building" have been added.]

3.2.3

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.

3.2.4**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 can include the use of digital library services, if it is possible to identify digital 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 are counted separately.

3.2.5**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.

3.2.6**browser**

application allowing a person to retrieve and read hypertext, to view the contents of hypertext nodes (Web pages), to navigate from one Web page to another, and to interact with the content, such as changing the visual appearance of the displayed content

[SOURCE: ISO/IEC/IEEE 23026: 2015, 4.5]

3.2.7**caching**

process of storing data in a temporary storage area on a mobile device, computer or server, so that future requests for that data are served up faster than is possible by accessing the data's primary storage location

3.2.8**client**

soft- or hardware that can request specific services from a server

3.2.9**device detection**

process of capturing accurate real-time intelligence about the devices being used to access online information

3.2.10**digital service**

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

Note 1 to entry: Digital library services include the online catalogue, the library website, the digital collection, electronic lending, electronic document delivery (mediated), digital reference service, digitally delivered user training, 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) digitally.

3.2.11**diversity**

characteristics of differences and similarities between people

Note 1 to entry: Dimensions of diversity are demographic or other personal characteristics, often expressed statistically, for example, age, disability, sex, sexual orientation, gender, race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin, religion or belief.

[SOURCE: ISO 30415:2021, 3.7]

3.2.12

download

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

3.2.13

educational services

learning sessions and learning materials and programmes in all formats for children and adults for the purpose of enhancing skills in library and information use

Note 1 to entry: This includes the provision of services for schools and the cooperation with other libraries in preparing and offering educational services.

Note 2 to entry: Education of librarians is excluded.

[SOURCE: ISO 21248:2019, 3.22]

3.2.14

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 digital collection of the library is excluded.

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

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.				

3.2.15

equity

principle that people should be subject to policies, processes and practices that are fair, as far as possible, and free from bias

[SOURCE: ISO 30415:2021, 3.10]

3.2.16

event

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

EXAMPLE Exhibitions, author visits, literary discussions, workshops.

Note 1 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 2 to entry: User training lessons and library tours are excluded.

Note 3 to entry: Ongoing programs are included. Each session of a program is counted as one event.

Note 4 to entry: Virtual events are included.

3.2.17

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.

3.2.18

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 document are shown in [Table 1](#).

3.2.19

external user

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

3.2.20

geolocation

process or technique of identifying the geographical location of a person or device by means of digital information processed via the internet [ISO 2789:2022](#)
[4f53295/iso-2789-2022](#)

Note 1 to entry: Frequently Global Positioning System (GPS) or related technologies are used for fixing geographic positions.

3.2.21

inclusion

practice in which all individuals are treated fairly and respectfully, are valued for their distinctive skills, experiences, and perspectives and have equal access to resources and opportunities

3.2.22

indirect user

non-registered user who uses library services via a registered user

3.2.23

informational question

directional and/or administrative inquiry delivered to library staff

Note 1 to entry: This includes, for example, 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 [3.2.43](#).