
**Information and documentation —
Library performance indicators**

*Information et documentation — Indicateurs de performance des
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 document 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).

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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 fourth edition cancels and replaces the third edition (ISO 11620:2014), which has been technically revised.

The main changes are as follows:

- addition of library training participation indicators aligned with relevant UN Sustainable Development Goals (UN SDGs);
- addition of library awareness, impact related indicators;
- addition of staff research and research support related indicators; and
- deletion of several indicators no longer relevant or feasible.

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 is concerned with the evaluation of libraries of all types.

The main purpose of this document is to endorse the use of performance indicators regarding the quality of library services in libraries and to spread knowledge about how to conduct performance measurement.

Performance indicators can be used for comparison over time within the same library. Comparisons between libraries can also be made, but only with caution. Comparisons between libraries will need to consider any differences in the constituencies of the libraries and library attributes, with a good understanding of the indicators used, limitations to comparisons, and careful interpretation of the data.

There are other limitations to the performance indicators in this document that depend on local factors, such as the community the library serves, service mandates, and the technological and financial infrastructure. Results from the use of performance indicators in this document are intended to be interpreted with regard to these factors.

Performance indicators are not specified for all services, activities, and types of use of the library, either because such indicators have not been proposed and tested at the time of formulation of this document, or because they did not fulfil the criteria specified (see [5.2](#)).

The performance indicators included in this document do not reflect all possible measures or evaluation techniques. It offers accepted, tested, and publicly accessible (i.e. non-proprietary) methodologies and approaches to measuring a range of library service performance.

The quality of library services is related to the broader topic of quality management and quality assurance. This document acknowledges and supports the International Standards prepared by ISO/TC 176.

Every indicator in this document is given a unique name. This name sometimes differs from the literature upon which its description is based. Such differences are documented in the descriptions of the indicators.

The performance indicators included in this document are either in widespread use, well documented in the literature, or sufficiently field-tested. Additional indicators have been developed by the working group in analogy to existing ones in order to cover as far as possible all library services and activities.

Library services will continue to develop and evolve, and such evolution will require monitoring as related to the indicators in this document. The library and information community is encouraged to establish mechanisms and to give high priority to developing relevant indicators for existing and emerging library services and resources.

This document will be maintained by a working group that will monitor developments and incorporate additional indicators as they are tested and validated.

Information and documentation — Library performance indicators

1 Scope

This document specifies the requirements of a performance indicator for libraries and establishes a set of indicators to be used by libraries of all types. It also provides guidance on how to implement performance indicators in libraries where such indicators are not already in use.

This document is applicable to all types of libraries in all countries. However, not all performance indicators apply to all libraries. Limitations on the applicability of individual performance indicators are listed in the scope clause of the description of each indicator (see [Annex A](#)).

This document provides a standardized terminology and concise definitions of the performance indicators. Furthermore, it contains detailed descriptions of the indicators and of the collection and the analysis of data needed.

This document is not intended to exclude the use of performance indicators not specified in it.

2 Normative references

There are no normative references in this document.

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

access

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

[SOURCE: ISO 2789:2022, 3.2.1]

3.2

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” has been added.]

3.3

accessibility

ease of reaching and using a service or facility

3.4 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.

[SOURCE: ISO 2789:2022, 3.2.3]

3.5 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 should be counted separately.

[SOURCE: ISO 2789:2022, 3.2.4]

3.6 appropriateness

suitability of any given indicator for evaluating a specific activity

3.7 availability

degree to which content, documents, facilities, or services are actually provided by the library at the time required by users

3.8 capital expenditure

expenditure which results in the acquisition of, or addition to, fixed assets

Note 1 to entry: This includes expenditure on building sites, new buildings and extensions, furnishings and equipment for new and expanded buildings, computer systems (hardware and software), etc. When applicable, local and national sales/purchase taxes [e.g. Value Added Tax (VAT)] are included.

[SOURCE: ISO 2789:2022, 3.6.1]

3.9 closed stacks

stacks that are not accessible to users

[SOURCE: ISO/TR 11219:2012, 2.19, modified — Note 1 to entry has been deleted.]

3.10 conservation

preservation measures and actions applied to prevent, arrest or delay deterioration of a document or other material object

[SOURCE: ISO 5127:2017, 3.12.1.01]

3.11 content unit

original or a digest of other published work

Note 1 to entry: This includes documents or parts of documents (e.g. articles, abstracts, content tables, images) and descriptive records.

Note 2 to entry: PDF, Postscript, HTML and other formats of the same content unit will be counted as separate items.

[SOURCE: ISO 2789:2022, 3.3.9]

3.12

database

collection of electronically stored descriptive records or content units (including facts, texts, pictures, and sound) with a common user interface and software for the retrieval and manipulation of the data

Note 1 to entry: The units or records are usually collected with a particular intent and are related to a defined topic. A database can be issued on CD-ROM, diskette, or other direct-access method, or as a computer file accessed via dial-up methods or via the Internet.

Note 2 to entry: Licensed databases are counted separately even if access to several licensed database products is affected through the same interface.

Note 3 to entry: A common interface providing access to a packet of serials or digital documents, usually offered by a publisher or vendor, is also to be counted as database. Additionally, the single serials or digital documents should be counted as serials or digital documents.

[SOURCE: ISO 2789:2022, 3.3.10]

3.13

descriptive record

computer-processed bibliographic or other individual record in a standard format that references and/or describes a document in any physical form or a content unit

Note 1 to entry: A collection of descriptive records is usually published in the form of a database.

Note 2 to entry: The record can include elements such as title, author, subject, abstract, date of origin.

[SOURCE: ISO 2789:2022, 3.3.12]

3.14

digital collection

all resources in digital form in the library collection, whether born digital or digitized

Note 1 to entry: The digital collection includes databases, electronic serials, and digital documents.

Note 2 to entry: Free Internet resources which have been catalogued by the library in its online catalogue or a database are counted separately.

Note 3 to entry: The resources can be networked, installed on stand-alone workstations or stored on physical carriers.

[SOURCE: ISO 2789:2022, 3.3.13]

3.15

digital document

information unit with a defined content, born digital, or digitized, that has been created or digitized by the library or acquired in digital form as part of the library collection

Note 1 to entry: This includes eBooks, electronic patents, networked audiovisual documents, and other digital documents, e.g. reports, cartographic and music documents, preprints, etc. Databases and electronic serials are excluded.

Note 2 to entry: Items incorporated in databases are covered by [3.12](#).

Note 3 to entry: A digital document can be structured into one or more files.

Note 4 to entry: A digital document consists of one or more content units. Before digitization, the library should decide which content units should be searchable afterwards, e.g. articles in serials or songs on records.

[SOURCE: ISO 2789:2022, 3.3.14]

3.16

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.

[SOURCE: ISO 2789:2022, 3.2.10]

3.17

digitization

process of converting analogue materials into digital form

Note 1 to entry: Digitization for document supply from the library collection to a user or institution is excluded.

Note 2 to entry: Digitization for preservation purposes is included.

Note 3 to entry: Mass digitization is included.

Note 4 to entry: Purchase of electronic copies for replacing print copies is excluded.

[SOURCE: ISO 2789:2022, 3.3.17]

3.18

document

recorded information or material object, which can be treated as a unit in a documentation process

Note 1 to entry: Documents can differ in form and characteristics.

[SOURCE: ISO 5127:2017, 3.1.1.38, modified — Notes to entry have been deleted and replaced.]

3.19

download

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

[SOURCE: ISO 2789:2022, 3.2.12]

3.20

eBook

electronic book

non-serial digital document, licensed or not, where searchable text is prevalent, and which can be seen in analogy to a print book (monograph)

Note 1 to entry: The use of eBooks is, in many cases, dependent on a dedicated device and/or a special reader or viewing software.

Note 2 to entry: eBooks can be lent to users either on portable devices (eBook readers) or by transmitting the contents to the user's PC or other device for a limited time period.

Note 3 to entry: Doctoral dissertations in electronic format are included.

Note 4 to entry: Documents digitized by the library are included.

[SOURCE: ISO 2789:2022, 3.3.22]

3.21 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]

3.22 effectiveness

measure of the degree to which given objectives are achieved

Note 1 to entry: An activity is effective if it maximizes the results it was established to produce.

3.23 efficiency

measure of the utilization of resources to realize a given objective

Note 1 to entry: An activity is efficient if it minimizes the use of resources or produces better performance with the same resources.

3.24 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: Can 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.

[SOURCE: ISO 2789:2022, 3.2.14]

3.25 evaluation

process of estimating the effectiveness, efficiency, utility, and relevance of a service or facility

3.26 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.

[SOURCE: ISO 2789:2022 3.2.16]

3.27

external user

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

[SOURCE: ISO 2789:2022, 3.2.19]

3.28

facilities

equipment, study places, etc. provided for library users

Note 1 to entry: Includes photocopiers, online terminals, CD-ROM workstations, seats for reading, and study carrels, but excludes toilets, cafes, and public telephones.

3.29

fixed level of proficiency

FLP

minimum benchmark of basic knowledge in a domain (literacy or numeracy) measured through learning assessments

[SOURCE: UNESCO SGD indicator metadata – Indicator 4.4.1 (Harmonized metadata template - format version 1.0)]

3.30

free Internet resource

internet resource with unrestricted (open) access for which no payment is required

[SOURCE: ISO 2789:2022, 3.3.26]

3.31

full-time equivalent

FTE

measurement equal to one staff person working a full-time work schedule for one year

Note 1 to entry: For example, if out of three persons employed as librarians, one works quarter-time, one works half-time, and one works full-time, then the FTE of these three persons would be $0,25 + 0,5 + 1,0 = 1,75$ librarians (FTE).

Note 2 to entry: Not all libraries can use the same number of hours per year to determine an FTE. Thus, any comparative measures between libraries might need to consider any differences in hours.

3.32

functional literacy

ability to understand, evaluate, use and engage with written texts to participate in society, to achieve one's goals, and to develop one's knowledge and potential

[SOURCE: OECD, 2016]

3.33

functional numeracy

ability to access, use, interpret and communicate mathematical information and ideas, in order to engage in and manage the mathematical demands of a range of situations in adult life

[SOURCE: OECD, 2016]

3.34

goal

desired state of affairs to be achieved by the implementation of agreed policies

3.35

impact

difference or change in an individual or group resulting from the contact with library services

Note 1 to entry: The change can be tangible or intangible.

[SOURCE: ISO 16439:2014, 3.25]

3.36

ICT

information and communication technology

diverse set of technological tools and resources used to transmit, store, create, share or exchange information

Note 1 to entry: These technological tools and resources include computers, the Internet (websites, blogs and emails), live broadcasting technologies (radio, television and webcasting), recorded broadcasting technologies (podcasting, audio and video players and storage devices) and telephony (fixed or mobile, satellite, visio/video-conferencing, etc.).

[SOURCE: UNESCO SGD indicator metadata – Glossary]

3.37

ICT proficiency

ability to perform an ICT related activity, which constitutes a learning target that can be assessed in the context of a training lesson

[SOURCE: UNESCO *SGD indicator metadata – Indicator 4.4.1 (Harmonized metadata template - format version 1.0).*]

3.38

ICT skills

skills that allow an effective use of ICT, independently of the device used, measured through the accomplishment of ICT related activities.

[SOURCE: UNESCO *SGD indicator metadata – Indicator 4.4.1 (Harmonized metadata template - format version 1.0).*]

3.39

indirect user

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

[SOURCE: ISO 2789:2022, 3.2.22]

3.40

indicator

expression (which can be numeric, symbolic, or verbal) used to characterize activities (events, objects, persons) both in quantitative and qualitative terms in order to assess the value of the activities characterized, and the associated method

3.41

in-house use

in-library 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.

[SOURCE: ISO 2789:2022, 3.2.24]

3.42

institutional repository

open access repository for storing the publications of an institution, or a group of institutions, such as e-prints, technical reports, theses and dissertations, datasets, and teaching and learning materials

[SOURCE: ISO 2789:2022, 3.3.29]

3.43

interlibrary loan

transaction of lending a document in its original 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.

[SOURCE: ISO 2789:2022, 3.2.25, modified — Note 2 to entry has been omitted]

3.44

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.

[SOURCE: ISO 2789:2022, 3.1.6]

3.45

library research

systematic study and analysis of some aspect of library and information science

Note 1 to entry: The results are usually published in a journal of library and information science or presented at a library and information conference.

[SOURCE: ISO 2789:2022, 3.5.4]

3.46

library staff research publication

research publication by library staff in professional and academic subjects

Note 1 to entry: Includes publications in all formats, and presentations at conferences.

[SOURCE: ISO 2789:2022, 3.5.5]

3.47

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 can 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.

[SOURCE: ISO 2789:2022, 3.2.27]

3.48

loan

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

Note 1 to entry: Renewals are excluded but can 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.

[SOURCE: ISO 2789:2022, 3.2.29, modified — Note 6 has been omitted.]

3.49

metadata

structured data about data

Note 1 to entry: The data are associated with either an information system or an information object for purposes of description, administration, legal requirements, technical functionality, use and usage, and preservation.

Note 2 to entry: Adapted from Dublin Core Metadata Initiative, 2005.

3.50

mission

statement approved by the authorities formulating the organization's goals and its choices in services and products development

3.51

mobile device

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

[SOURCE: ISO 2789:2022, 3.2.32]

3.52

non-user

person belonging to a specific library's population to be served but not using that library's physical and/or digital services

Note 1 to entry: The definition includes former users of the library.

[SOURCE: ISO 16439:2014, 3.39]

3.53

objective

specific target for an activity to be attained as a contribution to achieving the goal of an organization

3.54

opening hours

hours in a normal week when the main physical services of the library (e.g. reference and loan services, reading rooms) are available to users

[SOURCE: ISO 2789:2022, 3.4.8]