COUNTER Code of Practice

12.0 Continuous Maintenance

With R5, the COUNTER Code of Practice will operate under a continuous maintenance procedure to allow incremental changes to be made to the Code of Practice without creating a completely new release. This section describes those procedures.

12.1 Instructions for Submittal of Proposed Change

Changes and updates to the COUNTER Code of Practice can be submitted by anyone. Submissions MUST be made via email and directed to compliance@counterusage.org. Each idea for submission MUST include:

- Submitter contact information:
  - Name
  - Email
  - Phone
  - Affiliation
- Description of the enhancement/adjustment (include the section and paragraph number of the current Code of Practice if applicable)
- Reason for the change (use case and/or goals to be accomplished)
- Any relevant attachments

12.2 Review of Change Requests

All submissions received will be acknowledged and forwarded to the COUNTER Executive Committee for consideration within 30 days of receipt.

12.3 Resolution of Proposed Changes

12.3.1 Responding to Submissions

The COUNTER Executive Committee (EC) will review submissions and provide a response within 90 days of receipt (to allow discussion at a regularly scheduled EC meeting). The EC will respond to every submission with one of the following, providing clarity when needed:

- Proposed change accepted without modification
- Proposed change accepted with modification
- Proposed change accepted for further study
- Proposed change rejected

If further study is needed, the EC may convene a separate working group to study the proposal and make recommendations related to the suggested comments.

12.3.2 Approval of Changes

Changes that are substantive in nature (i.e. would require changes in how reports are generated or consumed) will be presented to COUNTER membership for comments for a period of at least 45 calendar days. All member comments MUST be considered and responded to by the EC or the designated working group.

After the comment period, changes to the COUNTER Code of Practice MUST be voted upon by the COUNTER Executive Committee and approved by committee majority. EC Members can respond to a ballot by voting Yes, No or Abstain. For clarity, the number of affirmative votes MUST be greater than 50% of the total number of EC members minus abstentions (a non-vote is considered a “No” vote.)

12.3.3 Communication of Changes

COUNTER will inform the COUNTER membership about upcoming changes to the COUNTER Code of Practice through email and on the COUNTER website. Additionally, proposed and pending changes will be published on the Usus website and through posting on listservs that discuss usage topics.

12.3.4 Version and Change Control

Each update to the COUNTER Code of Practice will generate a new version number (i.e. the initial release of “R5” will be designated as version 5.0). A non-substantive change (fixing typographical errors) would increment the version by .0.1, creating version 5.0.1. A substantive change (requiring changes in implementation of the Code of Practice) would increment the version by .1, creating version 5.1.

All changes included in each release will be included in the Change History section of the Code of Practice. The prior release will be archived as a PDF document and access to that release provided via the COUNTER website.

12.4 Implementation Schedule

Changes to the COUNTER Code of Practice may be non-substantive or substantive. A non-substantive change may be a clarification or correction of typographical errors that does not affect how the Code of Practice is implemented. A substantive change is one that would affect the implementation of the COUNTER Code of Practice. Examples of substantive changes are adding a new metric type or report, changing the requirement for including a data element from “may” to “MUST”, or changing processing rules.

Non-substantive changes can become effective immediately upon publication of the new version of the Code of Practice.
Substantive changes become effective for a given content provider within 12 months of publication of the new release or with the next audit, whichever date is later.

Substantive changes will be clearly marked in the change log in Appendix B to ensure they can be easily identified.

All other requirements of the Code of Practice will remain in effect during the implementation period for changes brought about by a new release.