Monday 9 April 2018

Directors’ report to members
Developing Release 5 of the COUNTER Code of Practice

COUNTER’s focus in 2017 has been the development and publication of Release 5 of the Code of Practice, and helping prepare its community for the transition in January 2019.

Published in July 2017, the new release is consistent, unambiguous and flexible. It can be adapted and extended as digital publishing changes over the years.

Release 5 was developed by COUNTER’s Technical Sub-Group, which is made up of expert volunteers from libraries, library consortia, publishers and vendors.

The members of the group who contributed their time and expertise are:

- Oliver Pesch (Chair)
- Senol Akay
- Daniel Albertsson
- Irene Barbers
- Simon Bevan
- Sarah Bull
- Andrew Goldthorpe
- Enrique Gonzales
- Kornelia Junge
- Sonja Lendi
- Tasha Mellins-Cohen
- Paul Needham
- Bernd Oberknapp
- Heather Staines

However, input from our wider membership and stakeholder community has also been essential in informing the final development.

The Technical Sub-Group had 32 meetings between January and July 2017, approximately 330 person-hours. The Group gave a further 660 hours working on the development of the Code of Practice.
Drafts and consultation

The first draft of Release 5 was published in January 2017. Feedback was sought from all our stakeholders during a 72-day consultation period. Comments were gathered from a series of interactive webinars in English and German, at conference presentations and through a structured survey. Stakeholders were also encouraged to provide unstructured feedback via email.

The feedback received through these channels enabled the Technical Sub-Group to refine and improve the Code of Practice. On 2 May, a revised draft was published, and additional feedback sought through more webinars and by email. The Technical Sub-Group used this feedback to further refine the Code of Practice prior to publication.

Outreach and support

The new Code of Practice was published on 18 July. To assist content providers in its implementation COUNTER also published two supporting guides: The Friendly Guide to Release Technical Notes for Providers and The Friendly Guide to Release 5 for Providers, both written by Tasha Mellins-Cohen. We also published our Transition Timeline and Transition Options graphics.

To facilitate the adoption of Release 5 and to ensure that all stakeholders are prepared for the transition in January 2019, outreach activity has been an important focus in the latter part of this year. As well as our own webinars and attendance at conference events, collaboration with other organizations has been vital in reaching stakeholders.

The following organizations have hosted webinars about Release 5:
- Accessible Archives
- ACRL/NEC
- CAUL (Council of Australian University Librarians)
- Ingenta
- Jisc
- Lyras
- NASIG
- STM
- UKSG

We also ran a webinar for content providers planning the implementation of Release 5 and established two email forums where questions and answers can be shared: one is for publishers and the other for librarians.
Presentation of Release 5

Feedback from the COUNTER membership emphasized the importance of presenting the Code of Practice in a way which makes it easy to use and accessible to all stakeholders, both technical and non-technical. Financial support from UKSG has enabled technical writers to review the work of the Technical Sub-Group, and made it possible to develop an interactive web version and publish a downloadable PDF version of the entire Code of Practice and its appendices.

Other work

Robots and crawlers

COUNTER publishes a list of internet robots, crawlers and spiders as the minimum requirement for eliminating robots and ‘rogue usage’. However, with the recent trend towards Open Access (OA), it has become apparent that more needs to be done to eliminate usage by ‘bad’ or unknown robots, spammers, hackers, dictionary attackers and other rogue users.

COUNTER’s Robots and Crawlers Group is working on a set of algorithms that will allow publishers, repositories and services to follow a common set of rules to identify and filter out unusual usage and robot activity.

Code of Practice for Research Data

COUNTER has been collaborating with Making Data Count (MDC) to develop a Code of Practice for Research Data which will permit consistent and accurate reporting of the use of such data.

COUNTER releases the Report Validation Tool

This free tool was released in January 2017. It enables publishers, vendors and usage consolidation products to test their implementation of the SUSHI protocol and COUNTER reports, ensuring that errors are caught and corrected before release. The result will be more efficient deployment and improved interoperability. The tool will be updated for Release 5 reports.
Membership

Members make COUNTER possible, both through their membership fees and through their expert input. We have welcomed 13 new members this year.

We consult with our membership annually through our satisfactions survey. The feedback we received in 2017 informs our operational plan for 2018.

Welcoming 13 new members:
- Bibilotech Education Ltd
- The British Library
- Palni
- Decker Intellectual Properties
- The Hungarian Academy of Sciences
- Kortex
- The Chinese University of Hong Kong
- University of Bournemouth
- The Microbiology Society
- Accessible Archives
- Vital Source
- Macquarie University
- Carleton University

COUNTER membership by category

- Libraries
- Library consortia
- Large vendors/publishers
- Medium vendors/publishers
- Smaller publishers
- Industry organization
COUNTER Board of Directors

- Oliver Pesch  
  Chair
- Lorraine Estelle  
  Director and Company Secretary
- Enrique Juan Gonzales
- Ross Macintyre
- Anne C. Osterman
- Dr Peter Shepherd
- Heather Staines

COUNTER Executive Committee

- David Sommer  
  Chair
- Daniel Albertsson
- Irene Barbers
- Simon Bevan
- Sarah Bull
- John Chodacki
- Jill Emery
- Kornelia Junge
- Thomas Jouneau
- Marie Kennedy
- Paul Needham
- Tasha Mellins-Cohen
- Bernd Oberknapp
- Jack Ochs
- Elena Zapryanova-Hadjinikolova

Our Sponsors

We would like to thank the following organisations for their support

Gold Sponsor
- Scholarly iQ

Silver Sponsors
- ABC
- Bestlist
- BPA Worldwide
- IOP Publishing
- Jisc
- MPS Technologies
- Springer Nature

Bronze Sponsor
- Sage Publishing

Technical Advisory Group

- Paul Needham  
  Joint chair
- Tasha Mellins-Cohen  
  Joint chair
- Senol Akay
- Joseph Greene
- Andrew Goldthorpe
- Ross Macintyre
- Bernd Oberknapp
- Victoria Rao
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Our audited accounts for 2017

Income statement year ended 31st December 2017

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2017</th>
<th>2016</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>£</td>
<td>£</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turnover</td>
<td>121,876</td>
<td>112,622</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Income from members and sponsors)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other income</td>
<td>18,422</td>
<td>31,027</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>140,298</td>
<td>143,649</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other charges</td>
<td>(111,043)</td>
<td>(124,531)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Profit</td>
<td>29,255</td>
<td>19,118</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Our balance sheet

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2017</th>
<th>2016</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>£</td>
<td>£</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Current assets</td>
<td>164,626</td>
<td>136,940</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creditors: amounts falling due within one year</td>
<td>62,456</td>
<td>64,026</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Net current assets</td>
<td>102,170</td>
<td>72,914</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total assets less current liabilities</td>
<td>102,170</td>
<td>72,914</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capital and reserves</td>
<td>102,170</td>
<td>72,914</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2017</td>
<td>2016</td>
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<td>---------------------------</td>
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<td>140,298</td>
<td>143,649</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administrative expenses</td>
<td>(111,043)</td>
<td>(124,531)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Profit</td>
<td>29,255</td>
<td>19,118</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
For the year ending 31st December 2017, the company was entitled to exemption from audit under section 477 of the Companies Act 2006 relating to small companies.

**Directors’ responsibilities:**

• The members have not required the company to obtain an audit of its financial statements for the year in question in accordance with section 476;

• The directors acknowledge their responsibilities for complying with the requirements of the Act with respect to accounting records and the preparation of financial statements.

• These financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the micro-entity provisions.

• These financial statements were approved by the board of directors and authorized for issue on 1st February 2018.