



Minutes of the Annual General
Meeting

Wednesday 19 May 2021

Participants

Oliver Pesch (Chair)
Daniel Albertsson
Dimitris Antonakis
Cristina Ashby
Irene Barbers
Behrouz Bagheri Renani
Elizabeth Bal
Magaly Bascones
Melissa Belvadi
Tom Beyer
Jennifer Bleiler
Aaron Binchy
Curtis Brundy
Ilona Burdette
Yvonne Campfens
Todd Carpenter
Ilda Cardenas`
Lauren Castle
Mauro Castillo
Karen Centeno-Casillas
Robin Cook
Poojan Chokshi
Stephanie Church
Angel Clemons
Aileen Cook
Timothy Curran
Joachim Doll
Jill Emery
Bettina Fischer
Andy Flint
Stuart Frazer
Jason Friedman
David Gaither
Jacqueline Gillet
Enrique Gonzales
Tonia Graves
Ann Griffith
Hilary Jones
Nicola Haden
Susan Haering
Karen Harker
Sijean Hill
Stephanie P Hess
Kathryn Hodgkinson
Athena Hoeppepner
Beverley Hughes
Karl Isaksson
Björn Johansson
Youngim Jung
Conni Junge
Youngim Jung
Marie Kennedy
Ronán Kennedy
Maike Kittelmann
Beda Kosata
Nettie Lagace
Jo Lambert
Émilie Lavallée-Funston
Sonja Lendi
Rebecca Lilley
Grace Lilyerd
Tim Lloyd
Dorothy Lockaby
Heather Loehr
Alain Mahier
Dorothea Mayer
Stuart Maxwell
John McDonald
Mike McGuire
Joleen Mcinnis
Donna Meeds
Tasha Mellins-Cohen
Jen Moran
Paul Needham
Joana Novais
Angelia Ormiston
Bernd Oberknapp
John Ochs
Anne Osterman
Sabina Pagotto
Andrew Poggioli
Michael Price
Carla Redden
Craig Uss
Joanna Voss
Vaishali Rele
Waheed ur Rahman
Martyn Rittman
Lori Reinbold
Muna Sharif
Wayne Sime
David Sommer
Heather Staines
J K Thompson

Glenn Truran
Lucy Walton
David Williams
Julia Wolkenhauer

Apologies
Elisabeth Ling

Oliver Pesch welcomed everyone to the Annual General Meeting, noting that it has been an interesting year, but an effective and productive one for COUNTER.

Lorraine Estelle explained that members would be able to vote via the chat box, or if they preferred, more privately by using the Slido links.

1. Minutes of the last Meeting: Members were asked to review the minutes of the meeting in May 2020 at <https://www.projectcounter.org/?p=13259>.

Jill Emery proposed and Paul Needham seconded, that the minutes be accepted as an accurate record. Members voted unanimously to accept the minutes as an accurate record of the last meeting.

2. Directors' Report: Lorraine Estelle presented the report at <https://www.projectcounter.org/?p=13260>. She explained that we have focused on supporting our community in implementing and using the Code of Practice. This would not have been achieved without the hard work that all our volunteer members. They have maintained the code of practice, created training materials, given presentations in English and other languages and built tools, which are open to everyone. Colleagues in CRKN and Couperin have translated our guides and foundation classes into French, and colleagues at Wiley have recently translated our Friendly Guides into Korean. In 2020 we published the first two modules in our Manual for Librarians. Two more modules were in production for publication in 2021. We also published an introductory guide to SUSHI authored by Melissa Belvadi.
We created two new Foundation Classes. Class 11 explains how to use Platform Reports and Class 12 explains the impacts of Covid-19 on usage statistics.

We were delighted when three experts from the COUNTER Executive Committee volunteered to give two virtual workshops in German. In the first of these, Irene Barbers and Bernd Oberknapp provided a thorough explanation of the Code of Practice Release 5. In the second, Conni Jung explained how to use Microsoft Excel when analysing COUNTER reports. She showed us how to pivot tables and create totals for the metrics. Conni also collaborated with UKSG to deliver a webinar about using COUNTER 5 Reports in Microsoft Excel.

Our members build tools which are freely open to the whole community. We continue to collaborate with CC-PLUS, an open-source software, community, and administrative tool for usage-statistics management. Bernd Oberknapp maintains the COUNTER Validation Tool, which enables content providers to test SUSHI and Tabular reports, ensuring their compliance with the Code of Practice.

Every year we survey our members, but in 2020 independent consultants undertook a review via interviews, surveys, and focus groups. The Executive Committee and Technical Advisory Group are working to implement the recommendations in the report.

Paul Needham proposed, and Rebecca Lilley seconded, the motion to accept the Directors' Report. Members voted unanimously to accept the Directors' Report.

3. Financial Report: In 2020, the turnover was just over £140,000, an increase on the previous year. The turnover is the fees that we receive from members. Expenses were higher than in 2019, the reason being that we paid consultants for the research into Release 5 and a technical writer to help author the Manuals for librarians. We finished the year with a surplus of £2,952. The members' fund is £156,919.

Tasha Mellins-Cohen asked about the financial situation for 2021. Lorraine Estelle replied that the Board had looked carefully at our financial stability. Membership fees did not increase this year, and we wrote to all our members asking them to contact us if they had budgetary issues. A few institutions were not able to pay this year, but they want to retain their membership of COUNTER. So, they are resting members this year. We have had fantastic support from our members, and we appreciate it. So, although our income will not be as high this year we are in fairly good shape.

Paul Needham proposed, and Melissa Belvadi seconded, the motion to accept the Financial Report for 2020. Members voted unanimously to accept the Financial Report.

4. Looking Ahead: Lorraine Estelle said that Release 5 of the COUNTER Code of Practice is designed for continuous maintenance. This allows for incremental changes that should not require content providers to invest in significant developments. As part of that continuous maintenance process, in late summer 2021 we will publish version **5.0.2** of the Code of Practice. This version includes corrections and clarifications that will make it easier for publishers and vendors to comply. We will make a full change log available so that the community can easily track the modifications we have made.

Looking beyond version 5.0.2, the next major release of the COUNTER Code of Practice is in active development and will include more substantive changes around things like Open Access usage metrics.

- First draft for consultation: April 2022.
- Publication in final form: October 2022.
- Effective date: January 2024.

Release 5.1 has some specific areas of focus, including reporting open content. We have established an Open Access Advisory Group, which will meet for the second time in June. We are consulting with publishers about Usage of Open Content Not Attributed to Institutions – this consultation is open until 12 June. We are organizing a library focus group to determine how useful non-attributed usage might be to the library community. We also aim to improve the audit process, and our Audit Task and Finish Group has met four times, considering how to lower barriers to compliance, build greater trust in COUNTER compliance and improve transparency in the audit process and

results. We are also building a new Registry of Compliant Content Providers, which will make verifying compliance and obtaining SUSHI details much easier.

The Chair noted that Bernd Oberknapp, Beda Kosata and Paul Needham and others have worked extremely hard to introduce some best industry practices and how we maintain the code of practice. We are using GitHub and tools and techniques within that to control the change logs and change history. One of the challenges we had with the early R5, was that the PDF and the HTML were not necessarily in alignment and they have done a great job in that we will be able to effectively use GitHub, to manage the text of the Code of Practice and dynamically generate the PDF. So, we eliminate the problem of keeping these versions of the Code of Practice synchronized. It is amazing work, so thank you.

Promoting Library Analytics: a presentation by John McDonald

John McDonald: John thanked COUNTER for inviting him to present at the annual general meeting. He explained that he is the Director of Product Management for Analytics & Assessment for EBSCO Information Services, leading the development of products that help libraries and librarians to better understand their users, their usage, and the value of their collections & services. Prior to that, he served as a librarian at a number of academic institutions, in Southern California where he is based, He served on the COUNTER Executive Committee from 2007 to 2013.

His concern is that people do not see librarians using usage statistics actively, other than to inform cancelations. His research interests lie with quantitative use of data and in libraries to help librarians, use COUNTER usage data with other types of data proactively, and to advance the state of the art of analytics in libraries.

John explained, “one of the reasons why I went to EBSCO was to help do this. In the early days now, two decades ago as librarians we were struggling with online resources and formats, for collections because there were no data, no standards, and no automation. COUNTER really solved a lot of that problem, at least for use of online resources and eBooks. Now librarians can rely on the COUNTER Code of Practice and have some automation tools to pull counter reports and they may subscribe to some services that help them with those.

But they do not have any real robust analytical tools, librarians or staff members can spend a lot of time acquiring data but may only have time for one-off analysis in respect to budget cuts, but no time for a different type of analysis. focusing on budget value rather than focus on supporting the educational outcomes and institutional mission.

What that helps libraries do is raise their visibility on campus, to drive some of the conversation around how the library contributes to learning. So, there is an opportunity to work with putting data integration into other applications. There is also a need for dashboards that visualize, so that librarians can spend more time interrogating and understanding the data rather than just manipulating the data in Excel. We work with libraries to investigate data points of significance, so that instead of presenting raw numbers and giving them to the libraries, we all should be working with libraries to really understand what those numbers mean. There are four points of significance and all vendors and publishers should be doing these things:

Correlate data with other metrics of user engagement.

Integrate new data to produce more robust analyses.

Leverage MORE of the standard for deeper insights.

Explore opportunities for new metrics of user engagement.

We need to encourage usage of Open Access metrics already within COUNTER, and leverage metric correlation to uncover/estimate additional metrics around Open Access. We need to build and promote metrics for transformative agreements.”

Lucy Walton noted that cost per use by discipline would be very welcome. Usage of content published under an open licence is important and Crossref captures at least some of the license information which is essential. It was noted that there are challenges around every publisher providing every library with article level metrics, because of the file sizes, and it was agreed that working more on resolving that would be extremely valuable. Members also noted that cost per use by discipline, LCSH subject headings and merging them with other data sets would enable important types of analysis.

Melissa Belvadi asked about the possibility of anonymized (institution) usage data across all customers for an article written by a member of faculty - the vendors have this data obviously but do not share it with the authors/institutions. It was agreed that librarians are interested in how their users are using content, but they are also interested in how publishing models change, and in how other users are using research outputs from their institutions.

Susan Haering asked if there was still a longer-term objective to measure readership at “free to read”/post-embargo stage and not just open access specific. Oliver Pesch said that in Release 5.1 we are aiming for finer refinement on the breakdown of open access types.

5. Appointment of directors

Lorraine Estelle said that Oliver Pesch having served on the Board of Directors for two consecutive terms is stepping down after the AGM. However, he will remain on the COUNTER Executive Committee and Technical Advisory Group. During his time as chair of the Board he led the development of Release 5 and has provided her with invaluable support and advice. Members took this opportunity to thank Oliver for his contribution over the last six years in this role.

There was one vacancy on the Board of Directors and the Board nominated John McDonald.

Paul Needham proposed, and Athena Hoepfner seconded, the motion to appoint John McDonald to the COUNTER Board of Directors. Members voted unanimously to accept the motion.

6. Renewal of Director, Anne C. Osterman

Anne has served three years and is nominated to serve a second three-year term.

Jill Emery proposed, and Jason Friedman seconded, the motion to appoint Anne C. Osterman to the COUNTER Board of Directors. Members voted unanimously to accept the motion.

7. Appointment of auditors A.J. Carter

Paul Needham proposed, and Wayne Sime seconded, the motion to appoint A.J. Carter as auditors. Members voted unanimously to accept the motion.

Discussion with members

Tasha Mellins-Cohen encouraged librarians to get involved with the non-attributed usage project. We will be running focus groups to include as many time zones as possible.

Bernd Oberknapp explained that non-attributed usage means that publishers can deliver institutional usage to a particular library, and show total usage around the world, either broken down by country and country subdivision, demonstrating all the usage that could not be attributed to a particular institution.

Stuart Maxwell noted that COUNTER has great representation from librarians, vendors, and third parties. But as we change more towards reporting on open access, he asked if any of the funders might be open to getting involved. It was agreed it would be extremely helpful to have their involvement and Lorraine Estelle will reach out to them.

Members were asked to provide suggestions about those funders that are more likely to take an interest. It would be helpful to understand what kind of metrics they would like to see.

Todd Carpenter noted that there are some conversations being led by ESAC and the OA Switchboard on those issues.

Jennifer Moran from the New England Journal of Medicine asked about a COUNTER survey sent by a library, asking them to complete it. Lorraine Estelle explained this is the survey about reporting non-attributed usage and encouraged Jennifer and indeed, all publishers, to complete the survey.

Oliver Pesch noted that there are initiatives attempting to presume a geolocation of a user and assign that to an institution. The initial work that we are doing at COUNTER is more about how to report it.

Tasha Mellins-Cohen added that if a publisher's report tool can locate an individual to a specific region, they could report it in the new reports proposed by COUNTER. The example that we have given in the consultation is usage in Canada, or at a more granular level, usage in British Columbia.

Sabina Pagotto asked if COUNTER was looking at different categories of free-to-read. She publishes books and government documents that are available in Canada under crown copyright, and these are free for everybody to read. She has been grappling with reporting them accurately using the current definitions and Release 5, because this content is not OA_Gold and currently must be reported as Controlled. **Oliver Pesch said he is aware that other organisations are grappling with the same issue, and more granular reporting of open content will be considered for Release 5.1.**

There being no further business the meeting was closed.