Chapter 5

Case Study Part 3:
More Apples, Oranges, and Pears – Interpreting Ebrary, EBSCO, and Safari Non–COUNTER Reports

ABSTRACT

In addition to their COUNTER reports, ebrary, EBSCO, and Safari provide their own custom reports. Vendors' non-COUNTER data, which are unique and more detailed, provide librarians with a potentially deeper perspective of overall usage. Chapter 5, the third part of the case study, evaluates vendor non-COUNTER reports against the same principles; it examines in detail what unique data these "local" reports provide, as well as identifies potential issues in interpreting these reports. The chapter addresses several issues and questions while exploring the uniqueness of the data contributed by the non-COUNTER reports. The chapter also looks at the challenge of comparing variant terminology used to describe data categories among the vendors, and whether, despite their differences, the non-COUNTER data are compatible with COUNTER data. The goal of this chapter is to help the customer sort out the data, interpret their meaning, and find the value of each report.

INTRODUCTION

In addition to their COUNTER reports, ebrary, EBSCO, and Safari provide their own custom reports. For customers, it is important to understand the differences between the usage data provided in both types of reports. In addition, customers should consider what unique data each vendor provides, and how relevant and useful the non-COUNTER data are from each vendor. This chapter will review the non-COUNTER data provided by ebrary, EBSCO, and Safari, and examine their credibility and consistency, in comparison with COUNTER data. It will focus on the following issues and questions:

1. Ebrary, EBSCO, and Safari vary widely on the number and types of non-COUNTER reports they provide. What unique data do these reports offer? Do non-COUNTER reports fill gaps left by COUNTER reports?
2. The terminology used to describe data categories is different among vendors. Are they relatable?
3. Despite their differences, are the non-COUNTER data compatible with COUNTER data?

Bringing uniformity to the "data mess" is the purpose of COUNTER. In light of the standardized COUNTER reports being implemented by vendors to provide consistent, credible, and comparable data, customers might wonder why non-COUNTER reports are offered at all. For example, as stated in Chapter 3, the number of non-COUNTER reports available from the three vendors in this case study varies from one for EBSCO to three for ebrary to 24 for Safari. The goal of this chapter is to help the customer sort out the data, interpret their meaning, and find the value of each report.

NON-COUNTER REPORTS BY VENDOR

EBSCO

This case study includes one non-COUNTER e-book usage report by EBSCO. Although EBSCO offers several non-COUNTER reports to its customers, only one produced relevant data for the library in this case study. This is because the library's EBSCO e-books were purchased through demand driven acquisitions and as a consortium package. EBSCO's Subscription Usage

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