How Do You Count That?
Statistical Reporting of Online Library Instruction Activities

Tim Bottorff
University of Central Florida, Rosen campus

Andrew Todd
University of Central Florida, Cocoa campus
What We’ll Cover...

- Background
- Survey Design
- Survey Findings
- Summary and Next Steps
- Questions and Feedback
Background
Library Instruction Statistics...

- You teach a course...

- You record the class and the number of students...
But How Do You Count...

- ...A librarian actively participating in an online class through courseware?
- ...Instruction delivered through an online tutorial?
- ...Instruction delivered through an online video?
- ...For-credit library research course delivered online?
Genesis of the Project

- Librarians at the University of Central Florida (UCF) formed a taskforce to examine library-wide reporting of instructional statistics
- Purpose: to examine collection and reporting of library instruction (LI) statistics, particularly LI conducted through courseware, online tutorials, or other online mechanisms
ARL Guidelines

- “30. Presentations to Groups: Report the total number of sessions during the year of presentations made as part of formal bibliographic instruction programs and through other planned class presentations, orientation sessions, and tours. If the library sponsors multi-session or credit courses that meet several times over the course of a semester, each session should be counted. Presentations to groups may be for either bibliographic instruction, cultural, recreational, or educational purposes. Presentations both on and off the premises should be included as long as they are sponsored by the library….”
“31. Participants in Group Presentations: Report the total number of participants in the presentations reported on line (30). For multi-session classes with a constant enrollment, count each person only once. Personal, one-to-one instruction in the use of sources should be counted as reference transactions on line (32). Please indicate if the figure is based on sampling. Use a footnote to describe any special situations.”
Taskforce Recommendations

- Count online LI only if analogous to a face-to-face (F2F) situation, e.g.:
  - The “session” can be associated with a particular professor
  - The number of “participants” can be accurately determined
  - Some proof exists that participants completed the task, tutorial, quiz, etc.
Survey Design
Survey Overview

- 14 question exploratory survey designed to understand how academic librarians are counting online LI activities
- Targeted four key areas:
  - General characteristics of respondents
  - Embedded instruction
  - Online tutorials
  - For-credit library research courses
Terminology Examples

- **Embedded**: participating in a course for the purpose of providing instruction to students that is meaningful within the context of the class.

- **Online tutorial**: “An instructional tool in electronic format, usually available via the Internet, designed to teach library users, in a step-by-step and sometimes interactive process, how to use a specific resource (usually an online catalog or bibliographic database), or all the services and resources needed to research topics in a specific discipline or subject area” (Reitz).

Survey Distribution

- Secured IRB approval
- Mounted the survey on the web and tested
- Sent survey invitations to professional electronic mailing lists such as:
  - ACRL-ULS
  - ACRL-CLS
  - ILI-L
  - OFFCAMP
  - RCL-DG
  - RUSA-L
Survey Findings
Profile of Respondents
Primary funding status

- Public: 64%
- Private: 34%
- Other: 2%

n=305
Highest level of degree granted by parent institution

- Doctorate: 50%
- Master's: 21%
- Baccalaureate: 12%
- Associate: 15%
- Other: 2%

n=307
Approximate number of students at your institution

- 0-999: 6%
- 1,000-2,999: 18%
- 3,000-9,999: 28%
- 10,000-20,000: 21%
- More-than-20,000: 27%

n=305
Level of involvement in LI activities

Teach face-to-face library instruction (LI) Sessions 93%
Teach LI sessions online and/or serve as an embedded librarian 47%
Coordinate/schedule LI sessions at my institution 59%
Develop online tutorials or other materials for online instruction 71%
Report statistics related to library instruction at my institution 73%
Collect/compile statistics related to LI at my institution 47%
Other 4%

n=307
Online Embedded LI
Which of the following most closely describes how your library counts an activity where a librarian is embedded in a course through courseware?

- Counted as a One-Shot F2F LI session: 15%
- Counted as Multiple F2F LI sessions: 7%
- May or may not be counted as instruction: 16%
- Counted differently than F2F: 3%
- Not counted as instruction: 10%
- No courseware: 32%
- Not sure: 12%
- Other: 5%

n=305
Activity where a librarian is embedded in a course through courseware – A closer look

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Counted as a One-Shot F2F LI session</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Counted as Multiple F2F LI sessions</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May or may not be counted as instruction</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Counted differently than F2F</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not counted as instruction</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not sure</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

n=208
Average time a librarian is embedded in a course through courseware as compared to F2F

- Significantly Less: 5%
- Slightly Less: 4%
- About the Same: 11%
- Slightly More: 9%
- Significantly More: 19%
- Cannot compare: 51%

n=295
Average time a librarian is embedded in a course through courseware – A closer look

- Significantly Less: 10%
- Slightly Less: 9%
- About the Same: 23%
- Slightly More: 19%
- Significantly More: 39%

n=144
Comments – Embedded librarians

Time:

• “Currently we count each online class that I embed in as two instruction sessions, because I will generally spend at least two hours interacting in the discussion board area with the students. In most classes, I probably spend more than two hours.”
• “Compared to one-shot face-to-face instruction sessions, I spend more time preparing for classes in which I am embedded, a little more time teaching in the classroom, and significantly more time working with students. I also grade a student assignment for embedded classes which I do not do for one-shot instruction sessions.”
• “It takes more time initially to prepare the online/embedded instruction, but it is less once it is launched in the courseware.”

Awareness:

• “Thank you for reminding me that [online LI] does not currently ‘get counted’ within the current realm of statistical collection in my library!”
• “I better look into this more since I am responsible for statistics here!”
How does your library count library instruction delivered through an online tutorial:

- Counted as a One-Shot F2F LI session: 7%
- Counted as Multiple F2F LI sessions: 2%
- Differently than F2F: 20%
- Not counted as Instruction: 44%
- No Tutorials: 13%
- Not Sure: 10%
- Other: 5%

n=303
Activity where library instruction delivered through an online tutorial – A closer look

- Counted as a One-Shot F2F LI session: 8%
- Counted as Multiple F2F LI sessions: 2%
- Differently than F2F: 23%
- Not counted as Instruction: 50%
- Not Sure: 11%
- Other: 5%

n=264
How much time do you dedicate to an average online tutorial as compared to a face-to-face session?

- Significantly Less: 7%
- Slightly Less: 4%
- About the Same: 10%
- Slightly More: 15%
- Significantly More: 32%
- Cannot compare: 31%

n=295
How much time do you dedicate to an average online tutorial compared to f2f – A closer look

- Significantly Less: 11%
- Slightly Less: 6%
- About the Same: 14%
- Slightly More: 22%
- Significantly More: 46%

n=203
Comments – Online Tutorials

Time:
• “I was amazed the first time I created an online tutorial. I had no idea the amount of time it would take. Many of our tutorials are inserted into WebCT and we have created online quizzes that the students take to prove they have taken the tutorials.”

Awareness:
• “We are still trying to figure out how to count and report our library instruction delivered through online tutorials.”
• “This is something we probably should be counting but don't”

Alternative Approaches and/or Problems:
• “Because we are an ARL library and online instruction does not meet the definition of instruction used in the ARL Statistics, we maintain two counts of the number of sessions and participants - ARL and non-ARL.”
• “Any online tutorial is counted as an instructional session.”
• “For some of the tutorials, we are not able to get ‘hits’ or break down hits in any meaningful way.”
Online For-Credit Courses
How does your library count activity in the case where a librarian teaches a for-credit library course using an online delivery mechanism?

- Counted as a One-Shot F2F LI session: 5%
- Counted as Multiple F2F LI sessions: 5%
- Not counted as Instruction: 6%
- No for-credit courses: 68%
- Not Sure: 7%
- Other: 10%

n=304
Activity where a librarian teaches a for-credit library course using an online delivery mechanism – A closer look

- Counted as a One-Shot F2F LI session: 15%
- Counted as Multiple F2F LI sessions: 15%
- Not counted as Instruction: 18%
- Not Sure: 20%
- Other: 31%

n=98
How much time do you dedicate to an average online for-credit library course (including preparation) as compared to a f2f library course?

- Significantly Less: 0%
- Slightly Less: 1%
- About the Same: 6%
- Slightly More: 4%
- Significantly More: 10%
- Cannot compare: 79%

n=284
How much time do you dedicate to an average online for-credit library course compared to a f2f library course - A closer look
Comments – Online For-credit Courses

Time:

• “This past semester, I taught a face-to-face course and a totally online course. This was exactly the same course except for the format it was offered in. It definitely takes much more time for a totally online course!”

Alternative Approaches and/or Problems:

• “We report it but do not get ‘credit’ for it. It does not go in our stats.”
• “Each time I post a learning module online, I count it as an instructional session.”

Awareness:

• “The number of students enrolling in and completing our LIR110 classes are not included in our annual count of students receiving library instruction via face-to-face classroom sessions and tutorial results submitted--maybe we should get ‘credit’ for those students, too.”
• “Perhaps we should re-evaluate how we count these types of instruction.”
Final Comments

- “For my internal statistics reporting, I separate out online instruction and other types of instruction that are not the traditional 50 minute classroom session into a separate category. But these numbers don't get reported outside the institution.”

- “Before taking this survey, it never even occurred to me that embedded information literacy instruction or tutorials might be considered in IL instruction statistics. Something to discuss at our next instruction committee meeting!”

- “We are at an early stage of providing and measuring such instruction. As the assessment/statistics person in my library, I see ARL's point in not including such instruction in its instructional counts. Until we can narrowly define what we are measuring (and can demonstrate that the definitions allow consistent measurement) online instruction should not be part of our formal instruction counts.”
Final Comments (cont.)

- “You have given me some things to think about and share with my director as we plan for the future.”
- “I had not thought about counting online instruction before. This has really opened my eyes. Thanks.”
- “I think this is an interesting topic. Many librarians have moved beyond the traditional face-to-face instruction and we need to start thinking how we will keep track and collect data on this.”
- “Thank you for sending this out. It has prodded me to think more about accounting for and recording the amount of time and effort that I put into being embedded in what is now approximately 13-14 courses per 8 week term (6 terms per academic year).”
Summary and Next Steps
Summary of Major Findings

- Very little literature or published guidelines exist on this topic.
- Considerable variance and confusion exists about the statistical counting and reporting of online LI activities.
- Online LI activities account for a significant amount of many librarians’ time.
- Awareness of these issues is heightening.
Next Steps

- Further expansion and analysis of our results
- Work towards standards or guidelines for the reporting of online LI activities
- Feedback
Comments? Questions?
What Do You Think?

Contact:

- **Tim Bottorff**
  University of Central Florida
  tbottorff@mail.ucf.edu

- **Andrew Todd**
  University of Central Florida
  atodd@mail.ucf.edu