

Experiences on the ground: usage statistics as a practical tool in the library

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Why is usage data important?

- Evidence of whether / how much a resource is being used
 - Doesn't tell us whether that usage has been helpful or productive (the impact). But...
 - Starting point to highlight under-used resources/expensive resources/areas for further investment
 - Could highlight need to improve discovery tools/information skills training/publicity
 - Could help us bid for funds, demonstrate what we are buying is being used and evaluated
- Benchmarking
 - Compare resources internally
 - Compare usage nationally or with specific institutions
 - Requirement to provide SCONUL statistics
- Renewal decisions
 - Usage data balanced with more qualitative data (eg academic feedback)

Financial climate in UK universities

- Government funding reduced already
- Tuition fees from 2012/13 will plug the gap, but nothing more
- Postgraduate funding situation still uncertain
- Research funding reduced

The content budget at York

- Subscriptions budget around 6 times larger than one-off purchases budget
 - Balance needs to be re-dressed
 - Most of our one-off purchases budget is spent buying books on reading lists, both print and electronic
- External and local pressures
 - Journal inflation, currency exchange rates, increase in VAT
 - New departments of Law and Theatre, Film & Television coming into regular budget for the first time in 2010/11 (capital funding come to an end)
 - Continual demand for more journals and more books
 - Increased student expectations resulting from increased tuition fees

What usage statistics are out there?

- Publisher/vendor
 - COUNTER stats
 - Other stats
- Gateways, hosts and aggregators
 - COUNTER stats
 - Other stats
- Authentication systems
 - Athens DA etc.
 - EZProxy
- Discovery systems e.g.
 - MetaLib , Primo
 - SFX
- Web-logging software
 - Google analytics

What can we combine with usage data?

- Costs
- FTE numbers
- Type of user (JISC project RAPTOR)
- Type of device (eg mobile)



Renewal decisions

Subscriptions review at York 2009/10

- Usage data compiled as a starting point
 - Used to categorise and rank resources
 - Sent out to departments with invitation to feedback
- Feedback from academics ultimately more important
 - Allowed this to override the data – this time anyway!
 - Resulted in £100K cancellations for 2011

Subscriptions review at York 2010/11

- Big deals included this time
- Usage data sent out to departments once again
- Again, we will listen to their feedback
- Scenario planning a range of options
 - Don't yet know how much we will have to save
 - We would like to cancel some things in order to subscribe to new resources

Problems with usage data

- PDF/HTML double-counting
- Double-counting from publishers/gateways
- Inaccurate data (subsequent reissues)
- Excessive downloading and spikes
- Different COUNTER standards for the same type of resource, eg. BR1 vs BR2, JR1a vs JR5
- No consistent standard for databases
- Lack of comparable data for print

Analysing big deals: particular issues and challenges

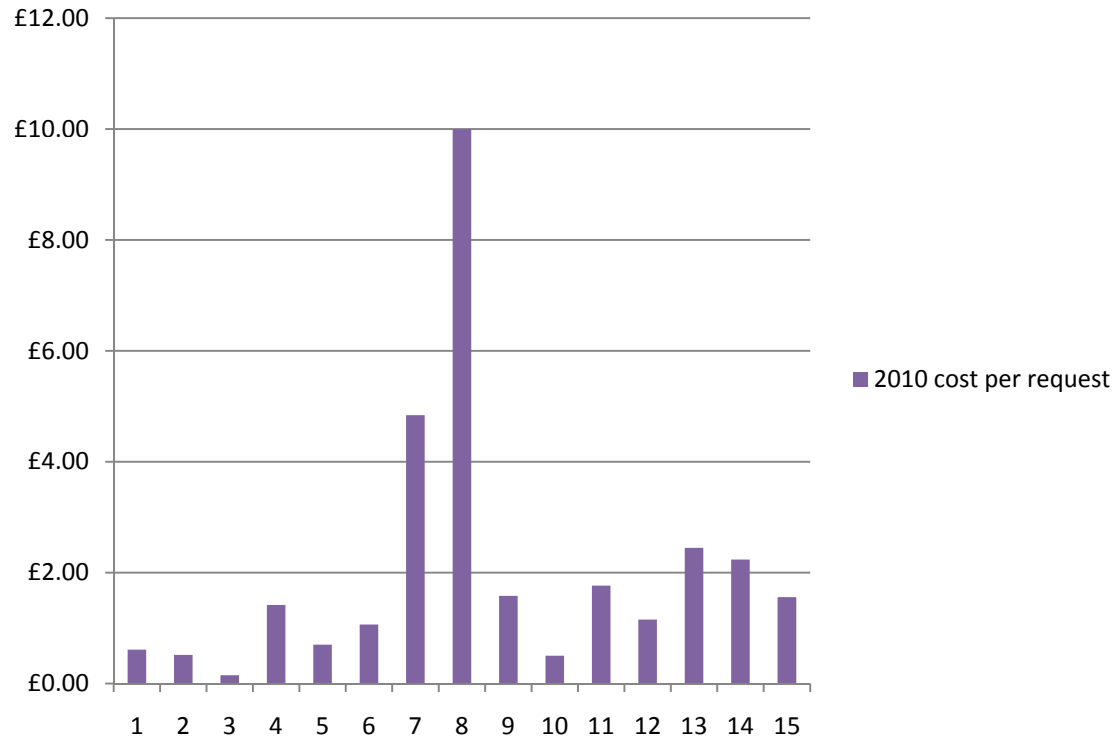
- Title changes
- Change of publishers
- Trial usage
- Usage of open access titles/articles

Sensible to take a broad brush approach at the first pass, then drill down in more detail to fully analyse 'at risk' resources

Big deal analysis at York

- We are analysing 15 big deals
- Cost per download ranges from £0.15 to £10
- Average cost per download is £1.29
- We will be seeking to scale down some packages

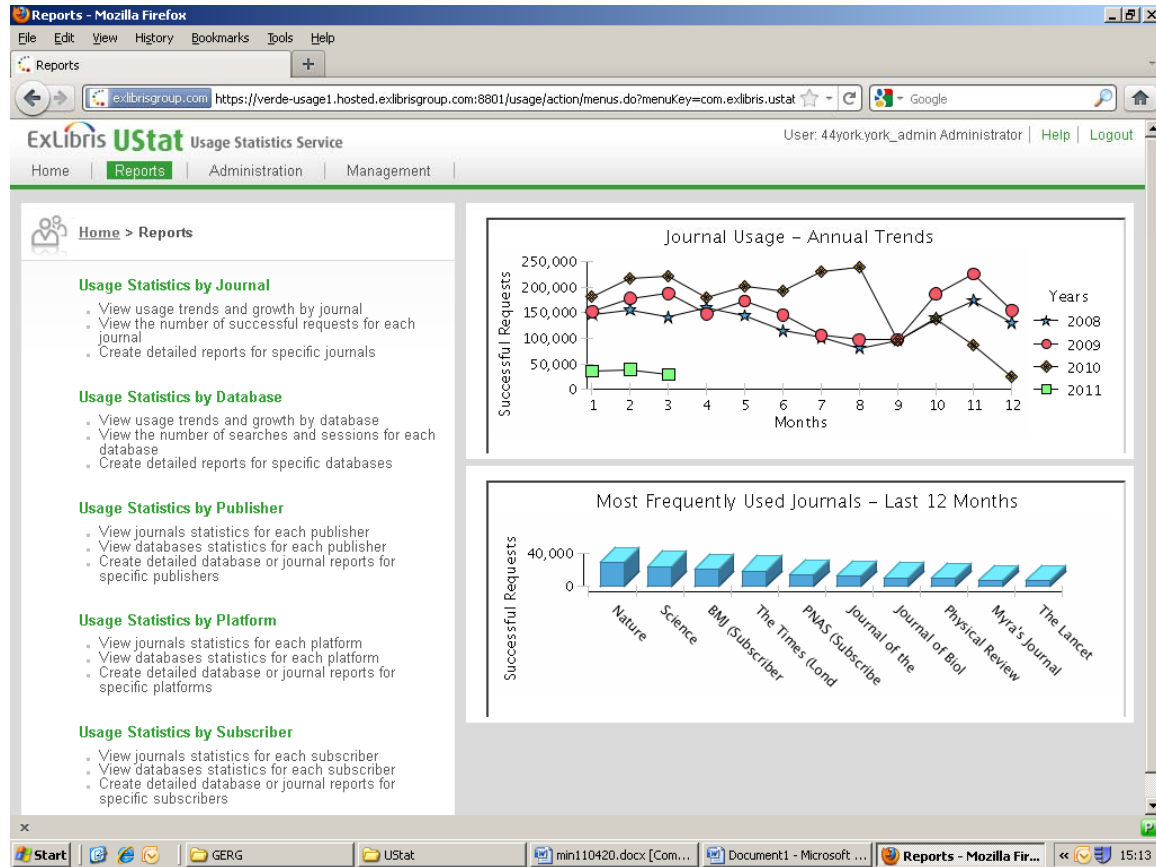
2010 cost per request



Overview of big deals at York

E-Journal usage: points to consider

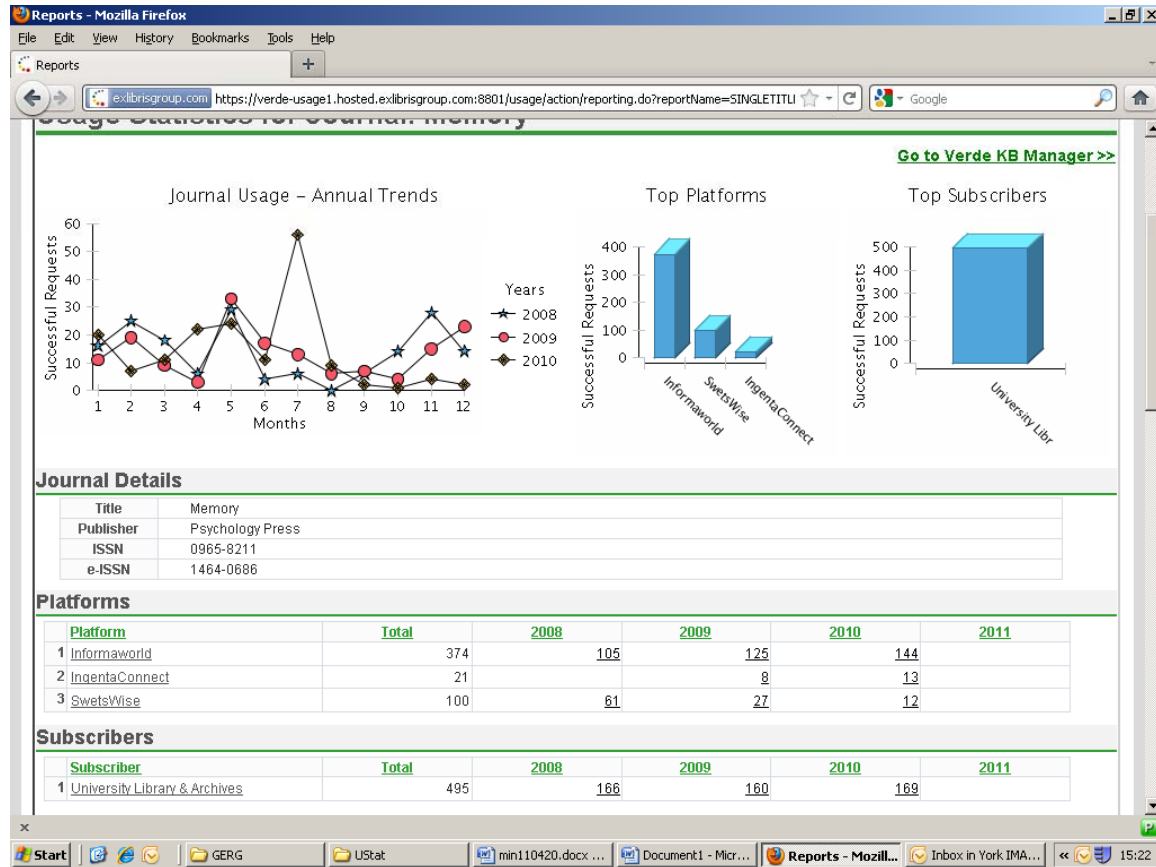
- Subtract archival use from overall totals
 - JR1, JR1a, JR5
- Consider whether other tools can help you (in addition to Excel and Access)
 - UStat, JUSP, 360 Counter, SwetsWise Selection Support



UStat

Reports home page





UStat

Report for an individual e-journal

E-book usage: points to consider

- BR1: Number of Successful Title Requests by Month and Title
 - Only provided if BR2 cannot be
- BR2: Number of Successful Section Requests by Month and Title
- Under COUNTER, publishers must report zero usage but aggregators do not have to

Database usage: points to consider

- Variety of reports available depending on the database content
 - DB1 report (Total Searches and Sessions by Month and Database) and/or Counter BR6 report (Total Searches and Sessions by Month and Service)
 - JR1 report (Number of Successful Full-Text Article Requests by Month and Journal) and/or Counter BR2 report (Number of Successful Section Requests by Month and Title)
 - Other usage reports which indicate sessions, searches and content usage (where applicable)



...and what it can help us with

What can be done to improve usage?

- Improved search and discovery services
- Improved information skills teaching
- Raised awareness of library e-resources
 - Publicity
 - Marketing
 - Academic advocates

Making purchasing decisions

- Analyse use of journal content to highlight key subject areas then invest in other resources in that subject area
 - E-books, journal backfiles, aggregated databases, other journals
- Evidence-based selection
- Analyse overlap between aggregated databases and other resources
 - JISC ADAT tool

Funding and budgets

- Justify what you already have
 - Zero-based budgeting
- Make the case for further resource
- Do more with what you have
 - Negotiate better pricing or terms and conditions
 - Divert funds internally between subject areas or types of resources



Benchmarking

- Sconul statistics
 - Raw data available
 - Top-level comparisons possible
- Journal Usage Statistics Portal (JUSP)
 - Data at publisher level
 - Confidentiality issues; benchmarking reports are currently only available to JISC Collections and to the JUSP project team

Some current initiatives

- SUSHI
- PIRUS2
- Journal Usage Factor

Mailing lists

- Lib-stats lib-stats@newcastle.ac.uk

<http://www.lib-stats.org.uk>

- MUDL: Managing and understanding data in libraries mudl@jiscmail.ac.uk

<http://www.jiscmail.ac.uk/>

Best practice

- What is your main driver(s)?
 - e.g. need to submit statistics to Sconul, provide information for senior management, conduct a subscriptions review
- Build processes around that
- Do staff have the right skills (Excel, Access) and capabilities and time?
- Assess the tools you need

Use with caution!

- Raw data not always the full or true story
- Interpretation needed and that is inevitably subjective
- Qualitative feedback from academics therefore just as, if not more, important
- Use usage data to inform decisions, not make them

Any questions?

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Thank you!