Collection Management Overview of Statistics

Recording statistics is an important part of working in the Rutgers University Libraries. Collection Management staff use statistics to evaluate our work and assess the priority of ongoing work and projects. Other groups in the libraries also use our statistics to evaluate the collections, decide on long term goals and report to the university in general. Finally, reporting statistics shows how much hard work we put into maintaining our collections.

Every Rutgers library has a statistics page in the shared folder for the Collection Management Group. These spreadsheets record statistics on shelving, In-Processing of new materials, shelf reading, search results, shifting projects, and the Adopt-a-Shelf program. All the pages are also linked to a page that records and combines statistics for all units.

Shelving

The first tab on the statistics page is for shelving. We record shelving on a weekly basis. Each page is customized for that specific library, so only collections in your library will appear on your page.

Shelving statistics demonstrate how many books are being reshelved over the course of one academic year. This statistic generally shows how much each of our collections are being used, but is not the best metric for use. A better metric would be total number of ongoing checkouts. Analyzing our shelving statistics allows us to determine when our peak times for returns will occur and allows us to shift our priorities accordingly. Shelving statistics may also be useful to students taking classes for their MLA as they study library usage.

In-Processing

In-Processing statistics record the number of new books added to our collections in an academic year. In-Processing statistics are vital for using our space management databases to analyze collection growth. Without recording incoming new materials, we would have to measure the collection every time we wanted to evaluate our collection space.

We record In-Processing statistics on a monthly basis. Statistics are parsed by collection and then by various call number classifications. The call number classifications are customized to best represent the subject specialties in each of our libraries.

Shelf Reading

Shelf reading statistics show the number of hours spent making sure the books in our collection are on the shelf in correct call number order. Traditional shelf reading has
been minimized with the introduction of the Adopt-a-Shelf program, but still occurs on a small scale.

Shelf reading statistics are recorded monthly and are recorded individually for each collection. We record the amount of time spent shelf reading, the number of books found out of order during that time and the number of sections that have been shelf read. Analyzing shelf reading statistics allows us to determine what call number areas in our collections require more attention to keep them in correct call number order.

**Searching**

Collection Management performs various searches throughout our collection. The majority of these searches are to find books that have been reported as missing, but there are other types of searches as well. We record statistics for books on our bimonthly missing book reports, for internal stack check requests made by email, for books on the bimonthly In-Transit report, for books that have been claimed returned, and for our quarterly missing book reports.

Generally, we record the number of books being searched for, the number of books found during that particular search, and the amount of time we spent searching for these books. The bimonthly missing book reports are searched between two and four times depending on the size of the library.

**Shifting**

Collection Management performs shifting projects to distribute free space to areas of high growth throughout our collection. Statistics are recorded as the project continues, and each project has a start and end date. Some project span more than one academic year and will be recorded on multiple statistics pages.

We record the start and completion date (or end of the academic year if not completed) for each project, the collection being shifted, the first and last call number in that collection that will be shifted, the reason the project was needed, the amount of time spent shifting, and the number of sections shifted.

**Adopt-a-Shelf**

Some Rutgers libraries have instituted an Adopt-a-Shelf program. This program assigns all student workers a part of the collection to shelf read and maintain throughout the semester. Each student records the amount of time they spent shelf reading and the number of books they found out of order in their area. This allows us to maintain large amounts of the collection simultaneously.

Statistics are recorded at the end of the academic year and are reported directly on the CMG statistics page for each library. Not all libraries have an Adopt-a-Shelf program and may rely more heavily on traditional shelf reading.