

Reporting Guidelines for Standardized Holdings Counts and Measures for Archival Repositories and Special Collections Libraries

Introduction

The SAA-ACRL/RBMS Joint Task Force on the Development of Standardized Holdings Counts and Measures for Archival Repositories and Special Collections Libraries is responsible for the development of guidelines that will provide metrics, definitions, and best practices for quantifying the holdings of archival repositories and special collections libraries. The Guidelines will consider and address both the wide range of types and formats of material typically held and the different ways in which collection material is managed and described. The Guidelines might also accommodate a two-tiered approach involving basic/minimum (Level 1) counts and measures and advanced/optimum counts and measures (Level 2) and/or include recommendations for institutions that wish to engage in collections assessment.

With this charge in mind, we:

- Identified eight categories or types of collection material to guide reporting, regardless of whether those materials are physical or electronic (see attached)
- Articulated three types of counts or measures that are appropriate for and relevant to the quantification of holdings information
 - Intellectual Units Held (titles or title-equivalents)
 - Physical Units Held (volumes, sheets, audiocassettes, film reels, etc.)
 - Space Occupied (linear feet, cubic feet, or gigabytes)
- Considered the need to distinguish between the following:
 - Material described and managed at the collection level from material described and managed at the item level
 - Material that is described online and therefore discoverable from material that is not [yet] described online or discoverable

Our focus has been on developing and promoting a common language to communicate holdings so that we can talk about and share information about what we hold, not on prescribing a methodology for obtaining that data.

About the Level 1 Count

The myriad of systems, standards, and local practices governing how archival repositories and special collections libraries perform their work has created a unique information environment that prohibits any one practice for individual entities to compile the data necessary to satisfying Level I reporting criteria (described below). Our institutions vary, not just by collection management system or ILS (if one is even available), but by purpose of the repository, size and types of collect held, staffing levels, financial resources, and communities served. Most important, the data we collect—including data compiled about our holdings—reflects specific local needs and utilities. As a Task Force, we recognize that repositories will seek to utilize pre-existing data for the purpose of meeting Level I reporting criteria.

The following principles govern the use of the guidelines:

- Online descriptions of holdings need not be limited to catalog records or finding aids to be discoverable. To achieve the broadest participation possible, a description can be web content (such as a blog post or list of collections on a website), a PDF, a spreadsheet, or another declaration of holdings, as long as it is publicly available online
- Do not count bibliographic units or space occupied for any holding more than once

- Do not count surrogates of collection materials held by the repository and counted elsewhere, or derivatives in general, including access copies and/or preservation masters of digital objects, microfilmed collections, microfiche, or photocopies of holdings created post-acquisition
- Specific format categories of materials apply only if a holding is comprised of a single format
- Cubic feet should be used to report all holdings except for books and other printed material, which should be reported in linear feet
- A container count (number of manuscript cases, records center cartons, shelving units, other) is not part of reporting physical space occupied; however, container counts are useful for the purposes of calculating cubic feet occupied and using existing conversion tools. Containers are not holdings

Level 1 Count

The Task Force is proposing a Level 1 Count that consists of the following counts and measures (only):

- Titles/title equivalents representing collection material described and managed at the collection level that is described online/discoverable, by type/category of material
- Titles/title equivalents representing collection material described and managed at the item level that is described online/discoverable, by type/category of material
- Physical space occupied by collection material that is described online/discoverable, by type/category of material, in cubic or linear feet as appropriate
- Digital space occupied by collection material that is described online/discoverable, by type/category of material, in gigabytes

Level 1 count summary:

- Provide/report counts and measures only for collection material that is described online and therefore discoverable
- Distinguish collection material that is described and managed at the item level from collection material that is described and managed at the collection level
- Provide/report counts of intellectual units held
- Provide/report measures of space occupied
- Do not provide/report counts of physical units held

Level 2 Count (Proposed)

- Counts and measures for collection material that is not yet described online or discoverable will be reported in a Level 2 Count
- Counts of physical units held are to be provided/reported in a Level 2 Count
- Level 2 counts can be considered analogous to parallel and/or multiple extent statements