

Appendix B

Questions and Answers on the CEAL Statistics 2001 Online Input Form

Zero (0) vs. N/A

Q 1. I found it frustrating to have to enter a zero (0) when I meant to enter N/A. Because we do not keep statistics on reference questions and do not keep separate statistics for East Asian inter-library loan transactions, it makes it look as though we don't offer those services when we really do and (unlike the Electronic Statistics form) there is no place for comments.

Q 2. On the characteristic of the form that changed blanks into zero's: I feel that the answer "0" is very different from what I wanted, which is not/applicable or not/available. We did not purchase 0 Western books, we just don't have a figure for that comparable to our CJK figures, hence we never report it, etc. It's not that we never buy videos, they are just not kept/catalogued at our library, etc.

A. I totally understood your frustration on this one. I have received the most input about the "0" vs. "N/A" problem. When I first made this hard decision, I had the exact concern about the difference between "0" and "Not Available/Not Applicable." The Microsoft Access 2000 database we use for the online form can only take one "data type" in each cell. Either "Numeric" or "Text" value has to be defined for each cell in every table/form. The purpose was to create an automated application to shorten the data collection time, to avoid transfer of data by another party, and to utilize the automatic calculation function to ensure data integrity. If "N/A" is allowed in the cells, the calculation function can not be applied, and the online form would function only like an immediate paper form.

If we look at the entire picture of all CEAL institutions, the "Total" would not be immediately available either, due to many N/As. So from a statistics point of view, N/A does mean "0" when one has to escape all counts of N/As that were not available or not applicable.

The use of N/A is now reserved to entire forms that are "Not Available" from participating libraries. The list of Participating Libraries for a statistics data year contains check marks for each form. If a library filled out a particular form in the past years, the forms can be viewed at the [View] "Participated Library" display tables by choosing a particular year and that each form is check-marked is a library has filled it.

A user can choose to display any form from any year of selected libraries. In the user query display, an "N/A" will identify survey forms that were not submitted by the selected library for that particular year. So N/A now has the meaning of "not available" for entire forms or a particular form instead of the previous meaning of "not applicable" to entries within a form. In the printed tables in JEAL, those libraries that didn't fill out the survey forms were never listed. In the online environment, a user can choose to view a library

that didn't fill out all or part of the survey, and will see N/A in all forms that were never actually submitted. If they choose to see the "participating libraries" list of that year, they can see what forms from which libraries were submitted.

Note Fields

Q. Why no Note Fields?

A. The reasons we choose not to maintain note fields this time (except the new Electronic Resources Form) were:

1. They take too much database room. If a note field is allocated to each form, each cell within forms, and each library information form, the entire database would double or triple its current size. A certain space (number of digits) has to be reserved for each note field. There might be only a few notes in each form out of 60 to 80 CEAL library members, however, each form has to have every note field reserved for every library. The current database size has already grown rapidly from 1999, 2000, to 2001 data. We don't have enough database room to allow note fields for each cell in all the forms for continuous data collection in the coming years.

2. Also, while viewing a record on screen, a user would see every other column (the note column) as a mostly blank column. Much of the page would be blank for viewing and would double the size of the viewing page. It would cause extra time to scroll, and the online forms could not be printed correctly.

3. The note fields would require an immense amount of time to edit each table page into printed format for JEAL publication.

4. Most libraries have N/A and footnotes in the JEAL printed version of earlier CEAL statistic forms, and that practice can be continued. For example, if a library has a different fiscal year range than the assumed June to July, they put in a footnote every year for the last many years. From a statistical point of view, the continuous run does not make any difference as long as their fiscal year is consistent, the annual data is still correct. Other libraries should not be concerned about each individual library's treatment of the fiscal year and other such in house practices.

In the future, we plan to develop a way to submit an N/A or other needed notes through a limited note field for each form (but not for each cell) with a combination of choice to display or not to display note columns for viewing.

Volumes Holdings

Q. Does the "Volumes Holdings" include bound periodicals? I used the traditional definition of what libraries have done in the past.

A. I'm glad you used the traditional definition of what libraries have done in the past. The instructions for the online form were meant to continue the same process. I have to admit that they failed the purpose. They caused confusion with the past understanding of the statistics. The terms on the instructions and the online forms didn't follow previous definitions tightly, and I apologize. I made corrections to the instructions on volume

holdings in mid Dec. but the corrected page was not loaded to the server until my return in early January. Hopefully others did that section in the same manner as we have in the past.

Q. Does the Volume Holdings Form include both 1) purchased volumes and 2) volumes that were cataloged? Or does it include only purchased volumes?

A. Volume Holdings includes monographs that were purchased AND were cataloged plus all bound periodical volumes within the statistical year.

Electronic Resources Form

Q. After reviewing our figures for electronic files this year, I personally felt that the present form is not applicable to branch libraries. Many or most titles are bought library-wide, with separate non-EAL funding, or part of a larger package (with funding, purchasing, and cataloging often done through an Electronic Resources group and not the East Asian Library). We have not reported anything in this category this year therefore: the numbers which ONLY involve us and for which we actually keep statistics would be misleading.

A. I appreciate your comments on the situation of electronic resources that are purchased by library central electronic funds or funds outside of the E.A. library. They are hard to pin down in the current form. This was the first year to implement the new form, and we will certainly enhance the form to E.A. library needs.

Revised Electronic Resources Form (January 2002)

1. A 1.4 (computer files: all CD-ROMs) was added to the original proposed form.
2. 1.1 (one-time purchased CD-ROM) +1.2 (accompanied by serial titles) +1.3 (gifts) =1.4 (All CD-ROM counts including titles and number of CD-ROMs and the expenditures which only 1.1 carries)
3. 2.1 +2.2=2.3 (all the online accessed electronic resources: reference tools or full text) with title counts and expenditures
4. 1.1 + 2.3 = 3 (Grand Total electronic resources expenditures 1.1 + 2.3)

In 2.3 we only listed expenditures and not counts of titles, and not number of CD-ROMS, since the products are different. All the numbers entered were input in the new form and calculations were made for 1.4. The total expenditure remains the same. The only difference was the 1.4 that has the total CD-ROM number counts. A view display page should show viewer the above categories.

Technical Support Questions

Q. Which browser do you recommend to view the CEAL Statistics database?

A. The Internet Explorer 5 or above version is strongly recommend if you have a choice between Netscape and IE browsers.

Q. Why does the page freeze after some time and won't accept any input?

A. The application will time you out once the input is idle for 10 min. for security sake. You have to go back to the database and Sign-In again in order to continue your work. Make sure each form is completed and correct before you hit the submission button. You can input and edit until the deadline.

Q. I've input my data into the form. Some pages are listed as incomplete. I assume that is because I left some lines blank instead of inputting endless zeroes. Can you work with this?

A. 1. After each form input, you need to hit the "CONTINUE" button in order for the system to take your input. The system won't take your input result if you back step directly to the "Main Menu" without going through the "continue" process. After the "continue" button, you should be back to the "Main Menu" and continue on the rest of "Incomplete" forms, until all are filled and each form that indicates "Completed."

2. The system will not accept any N/A or text note in cells which are designed to be numeric values. If the statistics are Not Applicable for you, just leave them blank and the system will fill in "0" when you hit the "submit" button.

3. If you want to edit any form that was previously filled, remember you need to make sure all the "subtotal" and "total" (in bold) are all "BLANK" (empty with no input) in order for the system to recalculate the new sum.

Q. When I re-entered the form, the formula fields no longer worked correctly. I don't know if I did something else to make them not work, but I had to enter the sums manually.

A. Once you have submitted the form, the system calculated the "subtotal" and "total" and filled in the blanks. If you go back and edit the form and change the individual data, you have to "blank" out all previous "subtotal" and "total" where you entered new data and submit it again. If you don't "Blank out" the previous figures in "total" and "subtotal", the system will accept what was previously input in the cell. This was by DESIGN to accept only a "total" value that matches the above cells combined value.

In past years, several libraries filled in "total" cells and the "total" didn't match the cells. When I inquired about the case, the answer was that "1+1 does not always equal 2." For example, a library has one Chinese Librarian and one Japanese Librarian, but altogether, the personnel is 1.5 since one person didn't come until the later half of the year. In another case, some money was allocated but there were other expenses which were not included, so the actual money didn't equal to money total that came from the formula we supplied.

For this reason, we allow the input of desirable "total" and "subtotal" figures which do not necessarily match previous cells sum. In your case, you might not "Blank out" previous values, so the system kept those as forced input and didn't do a new calculation. So it looked like the system didn't calculate correctly but it actually was told to take whatever was in the "total" unless it was left blank for it to do automatic calculation.

Q. If I want to go back to look at my file which I have already entered, my password did not seem to work.

A. Once the input deadline is passed, you can not access the database anymore even with a correct password. The enter window time frame is closed. If your library is not listed on the pull-down list from the front page (choose library), you won't be able to enter or view the current 2001 form. Those libraries that are on the front page pull-down list are the ones that have missed the earlier deadline and have been given an extended deadline to complete their input.

After the enter and edit deadline is closed, the database will be open for all to view 2001 statistics which is included in the [View] "Previous Years Data" at top of the CEAL Statistics Database front page <www2.lib.ukans.edu/ceal>. The initial deadline was Dec. 28 and the view of 2001 statistics was planned for Jan. 1 2002. We actually did open the view of all tables. Since there were many requests to have an extended deadline, the "viewing of 2001 statistics" was closed while there were still half of the libraries entering their data. The "2001 view" will open for the public after the final deadline. You can not edit your file (edit/enter/view) after the deadline.

Q. Do you mean that we won't be able to look at our own file any more? I only made one printed copy before I left my office. I thought we could go back to our completed file and look at the results.

A. You can input/edit/view as many times as needed during the input/edit time frame. After the deadline, you can only view on the public pages that do not require a password. The public view will be available after the final deadline. If you have any figures that you want to know, I can let you know your input. If you need to make corrections, send me the new figures, I can correct it for you. Once the entire statistics view opens to the public, the database won't allow any changes, since this is the final version for JEAL printing.

Q. Once I have done the input, then we can't enter anymore, even with the password?

A. Your input/edit/view has to be done within the online form open time frame. Once the deadline is passed, the enter/input window is closed. Therefore even with your password, you can not access or edit data. However, your password allows you to enter your administrative files, to update your library information and change your password at any time.

Vickie Fu Doll (vdoll@ku.edu) Nov.-Jan. 2001