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**Information and documentation —
Performance indicators for national
libraries**

*Information et documentation — Indicateurs de performance des
bibliothèques nationales*



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Foreword

ISO (the International Organization for Standardization) is a worldwide federation of national standards bodies (ISO member bodies). The work of preparing International Standards is normally carried out through ISO technical committees. Each member body interested in a subject for which a technical committee has been established has the right to be represented on that committee. International organizations, governmental and non-governmental, in liaison with ISO, also take part in the work. ISO collaborates closely with the International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC) on all matters of electrotechnical standardization.

International Standards are drafted in accordance with the rules given in the ISO/IEC Directives, Part 2.

The main task of technical committees is to prepare International Standards. Draft International Standards adopted by the technical committees are circulated to the member bodies for voting. Publication as an International Standard requires approval by at least 75 % of the member bodies casting a vote.

In exceptional circumstances, when a technical committee has collected data of a different kind from that which is normally published as an International Standard ("state of the art", for example), it may decide by a simple majority vote of its participating members to publish a Technical Report. A Technical Report is entirely informative in nature and does not have to be reviewed until the data it provides are considered to be no longer valid or useful.

Attention is drawn to the possibility that some of the elements of this document may be the subject of patent rights. ISO shall not be held responsible for identifying any or all such patent rights.

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Introduction

This Technical Report is concerned with the evaluation of the performance of national libraries.

For several years, national libraries have felt the need to get consensus on a common list of relevant performance indicators for assessing the quality and performance of their services. Several groups, e.g. within the IFLA Section of National Libraries and CENL (Conference of European National Libraries), have tried to assess the present use of performance measurement in national libraries and discussed possible performance indicators, preferably using performance indicators in existing handbooks and standards.

The second edition of ISO 11620 (see Reference [5] in the Bibliography) establishes a list of performance indicators for libraries that include performance indicators for electronic library services. ISO 11620 aims at comprising performance indicators for all types of libraries, but does not cover all tasks and services of every type of library. This Technical Report establishes the list of performance indicators that are relevant to the special tasks and services of national libraries.

National libraries have important tasks that differ from those of other libraries, such as the collection and preservation of the national documentary heritage, the publication of a national bibliography and a leading role in international cooperation. Therefore, it is important that performance indicators for national libraries consider topics such as

- the coverage of the national imprint (print and electronic),
- the speed and comprehensiveness of the national bibliography,
- the effort for preserving the national documentary heritage, and
- the international engagement of the library.

National libraries are unique institutions in their countries, and their data are not easily comparable. The main problems for measuring performance in national libraries are the following.

- a) National libraries can have several functions (e.g. university and national library, parliamentary and national library).
- b) There can be more than one national library in one country.
- c) National libraries have no specified clientele or primary user group like public or university libraries. Therefore, output data cannot be set in comparison to “members of the population”.
- d) Mission, tasks and functions of national libraries can differ between countries.

This Technical Report selects performance indicators from ISO 11620 that are appropriate to the tasks of national libraries or can be adapted to such tasks. Additionally, it presents new performance indicators that have been used or tested by a national library and that cover the topics not considered in ISO 11620.

This Technical Report provides standardized terminology and definitions for data to be used in the performance indicators. Furthermore, this Technical Report contains concise descriptions of the performance indicators, of the collection and the analysis of data needed, and of examples where the performance indicators have been used.

Annex B describes all efforts of assessing the quality and performance of an institution by starting with the statement of the general mission and tasks established for their national library.

Some national libraries have started creating collections based on national elements found on the Internet. As it is too early to describe performance indicators for this activity, a short overview of methods and quality issues is given in Annex C.

Texts in this Technical Report are partly based on ISO 11620.

Throughout this Technical Report, the names of performance indicators are printed with the first letter of significant words capitalized, e.g. Percentage of the Collection in Stable Condition. This helps to distinguish these names from supporting text.

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Information and documentation — Performance indicators for national libraries

1 Scope

This Technical Report establishes the performance indicators for national libraries. It is also applicable to libraries with regional tasks and without a defined population to be served, as many of their evaluation problems correspond to those of national libraries.

The performance indicators are of special interest for comparison over time within the same library. Comparisons between libraries are possible, if differences in the tasks and constituencies of the libraries are taken into account.

This Technical Report does not include performance indicators for evaluating the outcomes or impact of library services either on individuals, on the communities that libraries serve, or on society at this time. Since this is an evolving area of performance measurement for libraries, such performance indicators can be added at a later date.

This Technical Report is not intended to exclude the use of any performance indicators which have not been specified herein.

2 Terms and definitions

For the purposes of this document, the following terms and definitions apply.

2.1

accessibility

ease of reaching and using a service or facility

[ISO 11620:2008, definition 2.1]

2.2

active user

registered user who has visited or made use of library facilities or services during the reporting period

NOTE This can include the use of electronic library services within or outside the library.

[ISO 2789:2006, definition 3.3.2]

2.3

book

non-serial printed document in codex form

[ISO 2789:2006, definition 3.2.5]