ACRL*Metrics*
SIMPLIFING
DATA MANAGEMENT

The Annual ACRL Survey and IPEDS
The Butler University Libraries Story

Interview conducted with Josh Petrusa, Associate Dean for Collections & Digital Services

One Step, Two Surveys

Josh Petrusa, Associate Dean for Collections & Digital Services, Butler University Libraries, serves on the ACRL Statistics Committee, so he was aware that the functionality existed to complete the ACRL Academic Library Trends and Statistics Survey (ACRL survey) and upload data into the IPEDS survey. But this was the first year he took advantage of the capability to complete two surveys in basically one step (2015 data).

"The process of gathering and reporting statistics can be cumbersome and complex," he says. "Everyone responsible for reporting statistics knows that the directions on the forms aren't always clear and gathering the data for different surveys involves a lot of back and forth with colleagues. Responding to the ACRL and IPEDS surveys separately involved working with different systems to match data points."

Petrusa says the integration between the ACRL and the IPEDS surveys is "ridiculously simple" because the mapping of data fields has been done by Counting Opinions. "Basically you enter data in the ACRL survey, say 'yes, you'd like a .txt file to upload into IPEDS,' click and follow the instructions for uploading. What I got from ACRL and Counting Opinions was a very clear and seamless process for getting data into IPEDS. No complexity, no duplicate work—I logged into IPEDS, was validated, uploaded the file, and I was done."

Getting these two surveys to work together benefits individual institutions in three key ways, says Petrusa:

- "First, you save time in entering data.
- Second, because the field mapping has been done by Counting Opinions, you don't need to interpret the IPEDS survey forms.
- And third, the way the integration is managed is easy and straightforward, requiring very little thought on the part of the user to make it work."

But there's another benefit as well. "Institutions are required to complete the federal IPEDS survey, but we are not required to complete the ACRL survey," says Petrusa. "The two surveys gather different data and in many ways the ACRL survey is more meaningful to our day-to-day operations. Now that these two surveys are integrated—and responding to the ACRL survey makes it easier to respond to IPEDS—hopefully even more institutions will support the academic library community by reporting their statistics and employ ACRLMetrics – the tool that helps us benchmark and understand trends."

To sum up, Petrusa says this is how the integration between the ACRL survey and IPEDS works for filing IPEDS data: "Download. Click. Upload. Done. Awesome."

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