How Do I Count This? – Questions From Participants and Post-Webinar Surveys

(Additional guidance will be posted late 2021/early 2022 on [ISL’s annual report page](https://www.in.gov/library/services-for-libraries/ldoresources/annual-report/) along with the info for the 2021 report.)

**A note on Self-Directed Activities and Social Media Engagements**

Neither self-directed activities/passive programs nor social media engagement meet the IMLS definition of a program and should not be counted as such.

IMLS’s narrow definition of programming was originally created to track shared community events; expanding that definition would make “apples to apples” comparisons from year to year impossible. While both IMLS and ISL are aware of (and applaud!) libraries’ creative self-directed offerings and their use of social media to interact with patrons, there is not currently a place on the annual report to record them. That said, your library is welcome to track those statistics for its own purposes.

**SOCIAL MEDIA**

**For "Love your Library" week, a staff member created a music video which we posted on our website and Facebook. Is this a program?**

This would be considered a social media engagement and not a program.

**We’ve had a few have contests or art shows where we host the decorated pumpkins/art/etc. We post photographs of entries to a Facebook album. There is a 24-hour window for patrons to vote on their favorites. Can we count this as one program with participants who provided pumpkins/art?**

This would be a sort of self-directed programming and not a program.

**If our library has a blog, how would we count the number of people who read a blog post?**

We currently do not track the number of social media/blog posts and engagement.

**SELF-DIRECTED ACTIVITIES/PASSIVE PROGRAMS**

**We do a lot of passive programming – especially during a time when the pandemic makes in-person programming difficult. How do we count it?**

Aside from “Take and Make” activities, self-directed activities are not recorded on the annual report.

**Are Take and Makes supposed to be counted in their own category? Does that go into effect next year or is that happening now?**

We ask two questions on Take and Makes. The required question: do you offer them, yes or no? The optional question: how many did you give away during the year? While hardly comprehensive, the Make and Take questions do offer a glimpse into the use of self-directed activities in libraries.

**Do we have to break down passive programming into age groups?**

Because we are not passive programming numbers on the report currently, no age breakdown is necessary.

**Please explain how we should count passive activities (1 take and make kit = 1 participant even if we don't know if they watched the video?) What if video counts are higher than kits delivered?**

Count the number of kits taken on Take and Make as a measure of participants.

**VIRTUAL PROGRAMS**

**Most of our Zoom programs are for preschools where we have *actual* student and teacher counts. If we count only devices, our participant numbers will take a huge hit. Can we count actual participants instead of “participant devices” if we have those figures?**

This is a new instruction on the national level – which means we have to report out participant devices if we want consistency across the states. However, ISL has created an optional question about the number of actual participants.

**Do I need to take role call at online programs?**

Beginning in 2022, the number of actual participants is optional. You are only required to count the number of participant devices.

**If I have a Facebook LIVE program and then leave it up in the archives a few days, how do I count it? Just once with the LIVE attendees? Or 1 LIVE program and their attendees as well as one virtual recorded with number of views since the video stays up for a bit?**

You would record it as one synchronous (live) virtual program and count those attendees in as live programming participants. You would also count it as one asynchronous (recorded) program and count the page views as asynchronous participation.

**Is asynchronous programming required to be audiovisual, or do passive programming or take and makes count as asynchronous?**

There must be some sort of audiovisual component; passive programming does not count as asynchronous.

**Some platforms will require you to gather the future seven-day those stats exactly seven-days after the video is posted.**

Different platforms can be trickier than others when it comes to pulling stats. To make collecting these numbers a bit easier, I’ll be linking to a detailed guide on pulling stats from each platform over on the Annual Report site. Do your best. If you miss some, try to give us a reasonable estimate based on similar program views.

**MISCELLANY**

**For years we have split out our audience for each program - how many kids, adults, teens attended each unique program. It seems we do not need to do that. We need to get a total head count of the audience for a general, adult, teen, children's program, correct? Label the program and count heads?**

Correct! When answering age-group questions about attendance, ALL people at the program should be counted towards that program’s TARGET AUDIENCE.

**Example**: 5 adults, 5 preschoolers, and 2 elementary aged kids attend a preschool storytime. Under “Preschool Program” you’d say 12 people attended. You would NOT need to separate those attendees out by age group.

**We're doing a podcast. How would we count that?**

Starting 2021, we’ve updated our programming instructions to include podcasts as asynchronous programS. Records downloads/streams as your asynchronous participant count.