

Closing Report

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Introduction

Thank you to Academic staff for their co-operation with the 2003 Publications Collection; and thank you to all the staff in the Schools and the staff in UNSW Research Services who put in many hours of hard work to complete this huge task.

Statistical Comments

For 2003 approximately 5,250 items were entered, of which 4,012 were entered as DEST Items.

#1 - Success Rate of Publications by Category

Category	Accepted	Duplicates	Revised	Total	Accepted%
A1	26	4	31	61	42.62
B	304	12	67	383	79.37
C1	2212	204	242	2658	83.22
E1	696	40	174	910	76.48
Total	3238	260	514	4012	80.71

As the table shows 80.71% of all items submitted in DEST categories were accepted, after verification, as DEST Items. 260 were deleted because they were items that had been entered more than once; and 514 items were revised to non-DEST categories either because the verification material ruled them out of a DEST category or because the verification material was inadequate to support the claim.

The lesson to be learnt from the first table is that academic staff may need to better acquaint themselves with DEST requirements for an A1. Textbooks and Commissioned or Government Reports are not accepted. The Cover Sheets have been modified to better help staff determine when an A1 claim is justified. It is also worth noting that many of the 514 items that were revised to non-DEST categories were genuine DEST items, but insufficient verification material was provided.

#2 - Comparison of 2003 DEST Publications to 2002

Cat	2002 Count	2003 Count	Increase %	2002 DEST Points	2003 DEST Points	Increase %
A1	41	26	-36.59	181.42	115.00	-36.61
B	265	304	14.72	212.52	235.49	10.81
C1	2091	2212	5.79	1458.55	1508.91	3.45
E1	526	696	32.32	455.38	572.76	25.78
Total	2923	3238	10.78	2307.87	2432.17	5.39

Table #2 shows the number of items in the collection increased by a healthy 10.78% while the DEST points increased by 5.39%. The smaller increase in points may be explained by any or all of the following:

- There are fewer A1 publications this year and they are worth 5 times more than other categories;
- The staff may be co-authoring more with external staff than previously;
- The quality control on the data entry may be reflected in the recording of a higher proportion of external authors than previously.

#3 - 2003 DEST Publications by Faculty

Faculty	Accepted	Duplicates	Revised	Total	Accepted %
Commerce	297	18	28	343	86.59
∇ COFA	2		3	5	40.00
Engineering	702	42	111	855	82.11
AGSM	42	1	0	43	97.67
∇ Academic Units	1		0	1	100.00
Law	116	3	17	136	85.29
Medicine	822	143	211	1176	69.90
Built Environment	56	1	11	68	82.35
Science	724	37	36	797	90.84
Arts	230	7	60	297	77.44
∇ Other Centres	14		8	22	63.64
ADFA	232	8	29	269	86.25
UNSW	3238	260	514	4012	80.71

Table #3 indicates that the rate of Acceptance of DEST items did not vary a great deal from Faculty to Faculty when small and unrepresentative entries marked ∇ are not included.

Positives

The most noticeable change in, and the most pleasing aspect of, the collection is the improvement in the quality of the verification material, but only for the publications that were collected and entered before the mad scramble at the end.

This shows that the process introduced in 2002 of providing each school with a regular email report listing each DEST Publication along with a Status comment has significantly improved people's understanding of what is required to substantiate an item entered into the DEST category.

However it was also very noticeable that the quality of the verification material declined significantly in the latter weeks of May as Schools who did not start earlier rushed to meet a deadline rather than doing a good job. This problem will be discussed in the next section of this report.

Problems

1. Lateness

#4 – DEST Data Entry by Month

Month	2002	2003
Before		289
Jan	33	158
Feb	408	353
Mar	683	760
Apr	1008	765
May	966	1470
Jun	114	196
Jul	26	21
Total	3238	4012

Table #4 shows the bulk of the data entry for 2002 Publications was done in April, in fact 66% of the collection was entered by 30th April. For 2003 only 58% had been entered by 30th April 2004.

Given that the most schools did not send their material until their data entry was finished, means that over 25% of the collection did not reach the UNSW Research Services until well after the closing date of 31st May 2004. What was the impact of the late finish by so many schools?

#5 – Acceptance by Month of Data Entry

Month	ACCEPTED	DELETE	REVISED	Total	ACCEPT %
Early	247	23	19	289	85.47
Jan	144	5	9	158	91.14
Feb	304	3	46	353	86.12
Mar*	564	48	148	760	74.21
Apr*	605	55	105	765	79.08
May	1239	87	144	1470	84.29
⊕ Jun	119	39	38	196	60.71
⊕⊕ Jul	16		5	21	76.19
Total	3238	260	514	4012	80.71

If the figures of one school (which did not follow the preferred process) are removed from March and April then the Success Rate of items entered for those months becomes 82.23% and 82.59%.

Table #5 show that for items entered in June the Acceptance Rate dropped to 60.71%. More detailed analysis shows that the Acceptance Rate of the items entered in the last two weeks of May was 77%. (⊕ one month after deadline, ⊕⊕ two months after deadline.)

The reason for this was twofold:

- Firstly it was evident that, due to the panic to meet the deadline, late items were not accompanied by the same quality of verification material. **Some items had no verification material at all.**
- Secondly for many of the late items there was not sufficient time for the quality control loop to work. Academic Staff were either unavailable or did not have time to follow up on requests for better proof of refereeing etc.

If all of the late items were entered earlier and accompanied by the same level of verification material then UNSW would have recorded 3360 DEST items instead of 3238 items. This would have been a 15% increase instead of a 10.78%. That may seem a modest increase but it translates **to \$160,000 in quantum money each year for the University** (based upon \$1,770 per point in 2003 and the approximation that on average one publication is worth 0.75 points).

In addition to the loss of income the lateness of many schools forced the UNSW Research Services to **employ extra resources** to process the large number of publications that were delivered close to or after the closing date.

Solution:

While the DEST closing date is uncompromising, the database is available *now* for 2004 publications. The UNSW Research Services office can accept claims for the entire 12 months of the year. Some Schools have already entered 2004 publications and sent them for verification.

There might be value in planning the entry to database and preparation of claims to fit into the School-working year. Perhaps Academic and Data Entry staff can plan together to organise this process:

- At times when it will not interfere with other activities
- As soon as a publication is received
- In batches at regular times during the year

It is evident that waiting until May 2005 is likely to result in panic and a poorer outcome. There is advantage in starting now or at some more suitable time, doing a better job and increasing the quality and return for the task! A steady rate of submissions will result in better deployment of UNSW Research Services procedures and the staff resourcing the publications collection.

2. Misunderstanding about “Refereed Journals”

There is a very common misunderstanding about the DEST requirements for “Refereed Journals”. All Journals, which describe themselves as “Refereed”, apply a refereeing process to the **articles** they publish. Not all Journals referee all other types of contributions. DEST notes this in its regulations (see 3.7 in the *Information and Collection Guide*). If a letter to the editor, case study, communication, editorial, book review etc has been refereed then additional proof may be required proof, such as including a statement from the Journal editor, a statement from the web, or correspondence concerning the refereeing.

Similarly, statements of refereeing for Conferences need to outline the **process** of refereeing to be acceptable to DEST. Inclusion in Abstracts, citations etc is not proof of refereeing.

Solution:

Cover Sheets have been revised for the A, B, C and E categories to give clear indication of the DEST requirements.

Data Entry Matters

The data entry quality control loop is, in general, working well very well. On a regular basis data entry staff receive an email listing any publications that have incorrect or incomplete information. The overwhelming majority of staff conscientiously corrects every error that is reported to them; and many people contact me directly to request a rerun of the report to ensure that the data for their school is correct.

However there is a very small number of staff who do not give these reports the same degree of attention, and in order to provide accurate information to schools UNSW Research Services staff have to spend significant time tidying up the data. Why is the accuracy important? Here are a few reasons:

- Almost all schools have stopped maintaining their own publications lists and use the data directly from the UNSW database to;
 - Provide staff publication lists for their web site;
 - Provide School publication lists for their annual reports
 - Provide comparative statistics showing their publication performance
 - Allocate funds to staff.
- The automated email system, designed to reduce the administrative task of the collection, requires accurate and complete information.
- The research strengths analyses and other analyses done on the data are more effective if the data is complete and accurate.
- In some cases DEST items cannot be approved without certain data being present; e.g. the correct list of authors, the name of the Publisher.

As a result I would encourage all data entry staff to remember that the following list, while not exhaustive, is the minimum level of quality that should be observed:

UNSW Research Services 2003 Publications Collection

- Enter the publication details as they appear on the publication. Using upper case may be easier, but it looks terrible in your schools annual report, or on the web site.
- Enter as much of the information that you have available.
- Enter all authors, and in the order they appear on the publication.
- If the default school for internal authors is wrong then correct it, and advise UNSW Research Services accordingly
- Record the author's affiliation (i.e. UNSW School or External Organisation as it appears on the publication, unless you have specific instructions to do otherwise)
- The software allows you to record the 'Order' number for each author. This is done for you by default, but if you change this numbering there MUST be an author with 'Order' = 1.
- There MUST be an author selected as the 'Primary Author', normally this will be the person who gave you the publication information. The 'Primary Author' code is used for email and reporting purposes only and does not reflect any greater importance for the author.
- Please attach an RFCD code wherever possible.
- Please add external authors once you are satisfied that there is no matching person on the database;
- If an Internal or Student author is not on the database, please advise UNSW Research Services and allow them to add the person to the database.

News

2003 Audit of Publications

DEST have advised us that they will not be proceeding with the external audit of the 2003 Publications Collection. Whilst we might all breathe a collective sigh of relief, it also means that we will almost certainly be audited for the 2004 publications.

New version of the data entry software

The long awaited Version 2.1 of the data entry software is due to be installed and tested in the first week of August. This version of the software should deliver two major improvements.

- The much disliked and redundant data entry of the linked AOU's (i.e. attaching Schools to the publication) has been automated based upon the information provided when authors are added.
- The reporting functionality has been significantly improved, giving you much better access to your own data.

The software has a completely different appearance and some further training sessions may be necessary. I will keep you posted about the upgrade.

Survey of our Customers

As part of our commitment to provided the best possible service to staff in the Faculties, Caroline and I will prepare a survey that will be sent to all customers of the publication collection. Please fill this in and return it to us, as it is a valuable means of assessing what we are doing and how better we can assist you.

Workshop for the Publications Collection

You will also be advised soon of our next seminar. We are keen to give feedback to our customers about the collection process and we also wish to give our customers every opportunity to meet us and to raise any issues, questions or ideas relating to the publication collection.

Conclusion

Minimal Use of Paper

In the interests of saving photocopying time and paper:

- If proof of refereeing is satisfied by one line in the Journal then highlight that line and leave it at that. If the refereeing statement is vague or absent, then further supporting material (such as the referees report) may be needed.
- If a chapter is six pages long then copy the whole chapter. If it is 50 pages long then copy enough of it to show that it is scholarly work.
- If the Introduction of a publication does little to demonstrate the DEST requirements then omit it and provide material that does demonstrate compliance with the DEST requirements.

Papers from the Same Conference

Paper and time can be saved when there are multiple papers from your school in the same conference. Bundle the papers together and indicate clearly that one set of verification material has been provided.

Preliminary Checks in each School

The last area that could make a major contribution to the time taken and resulting quality of the collection is for all schools to implement a preliminary check of the publications before they leave the School. I encourage all schools to do as some are already doing and appoint one member of Academic Staff to do the following:

- Encourage the completeness of the collection
- Determine if items entered in the DEST categories satisfy the requirement that they represent scholarly research as defined by DEST
- Check that the cover sheet is complete and accurate
- Check that the verification material is complete and accurate.

While some may consider this to be an unwanted burden, the reality is that the average number of DEST publications per school is less than 50 maximum for any school is 250). If this process is done on a regular basis, say quarterly, then most schools are checking 12 items per quarter.

Final Comment

Please keep in mind that while the Publication Collection is required by government regulation it does provide very substantial income to UNSW and very valuable information to the executive of UNSW, the executive of the Faculties and the Academic staff.

However the Publications Collection is not the reason that Faculties and Schools exist. It is an administrative task with which the UNSW Research Services office can assist. Our aim is to maximise the output, while keeping the process as simple as possible and interfering with the daily business of UNSW as little as possible. I welcome any input that helps to achieve this goal.