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Business Service Management

ORDER BOOK CONTROL SERVICE

MONTHLY SERVICE REVIEW BOOK: January 2001

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0. DOCUMENT CONTROL

0.1 VERSION HISTORY

Version	Dated	Change Details
Draft 1	2/06/2000	Initial draft to agree content. This document contained dummy data.
July01	13/07/2000	To inform Service Management Meeting
August01	21/08/2000	To inform Service Management Meeting
September01	22/09/2000	To inform Service Management Meeting
October01	18/10/2000	To inform Service Management Meeting
December01	18/12/2000	To inform Service Management Meeting
January01	27/01/2001	To inform Service Management Meeting. Format changes made
February01	21/02/2001	To inform Service Management Meeting.

0.2 DISTRIBUTION LIST

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Philip Jeary	Head of Development	Post Office Network
Mike Airey		DSS
Colin Pow		DSS

0.3 DOCUMENT AND CHANGE CONTROL

The BSM Change Control Team is responsible for maintaining and changing all the documentation created in Business Service Management. For further information on the existing documentation or procedures please contact the BSM Change Control Manager.

0.4 GLOSSARY

BSM	Business Service Management - a dedicated function within the Post Office Network Unit that supports the automated (Horizon enabled) platform.
DSS	Department of Social Security
ICL Pathway	ICL Pathway - supplier of the Horizon platform to Post Office Network
OBCS	Order Book Control service

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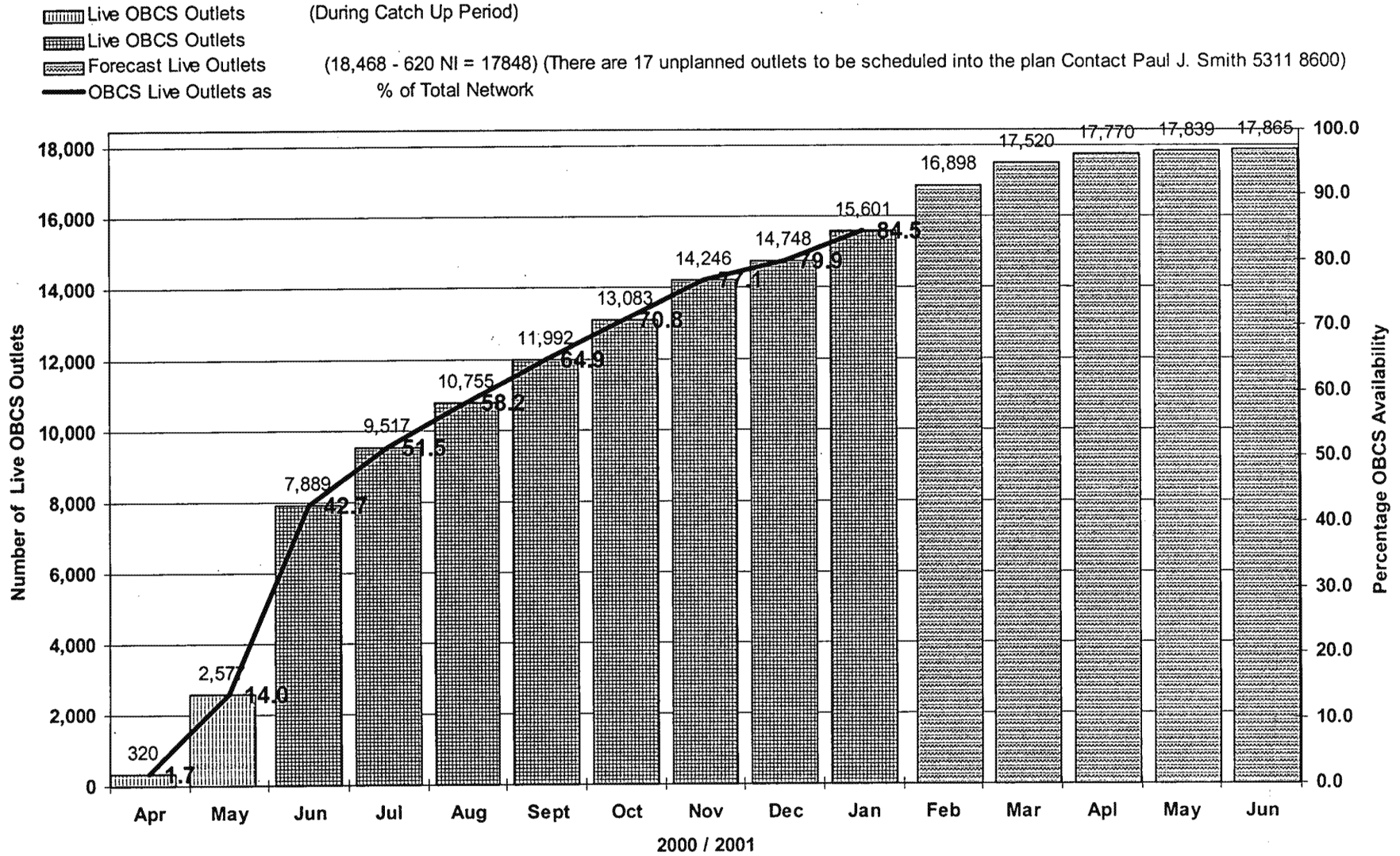
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1. OBCS ROLL OUT & AVAILABILITY	

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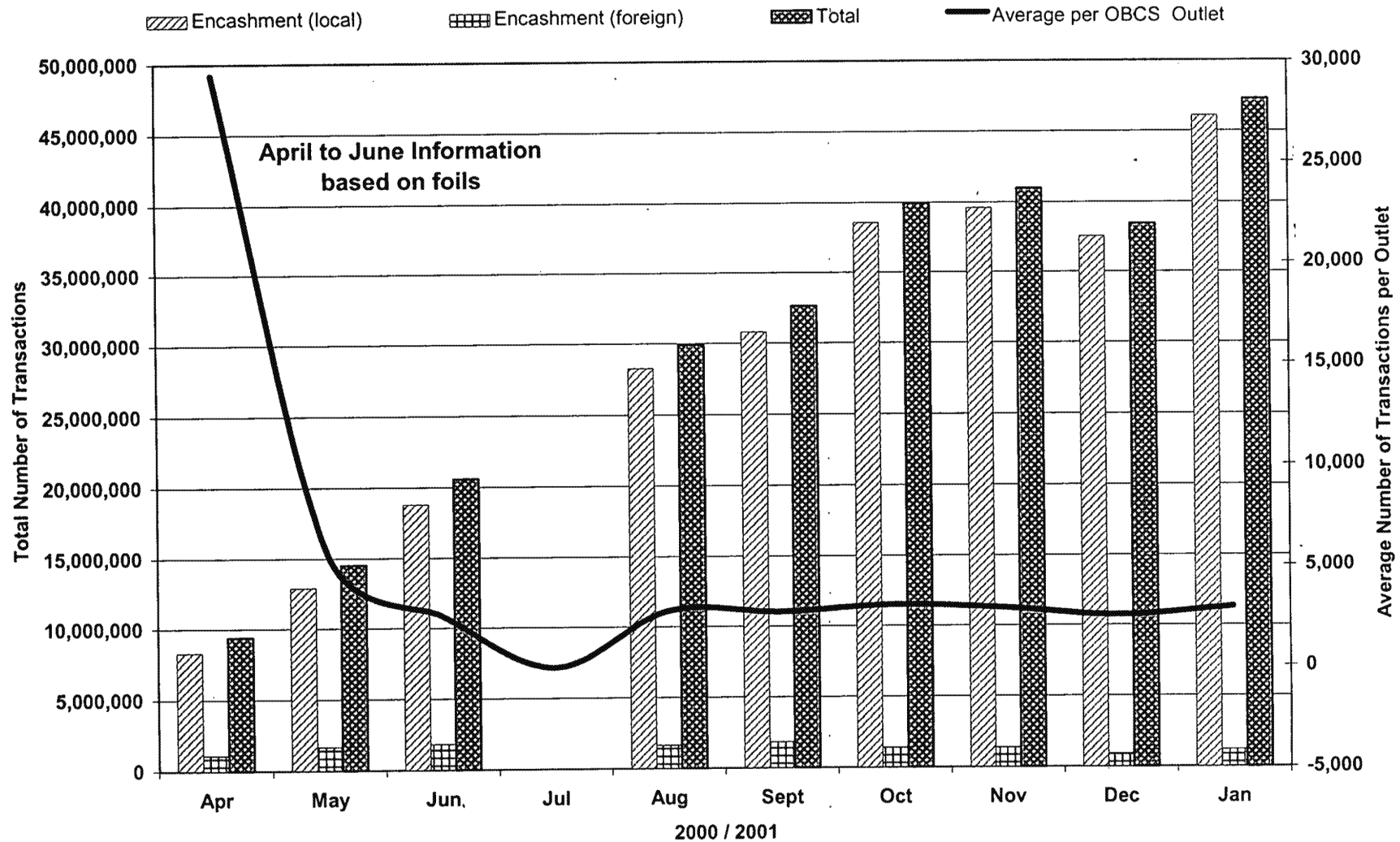


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2. TRANSACTIONS

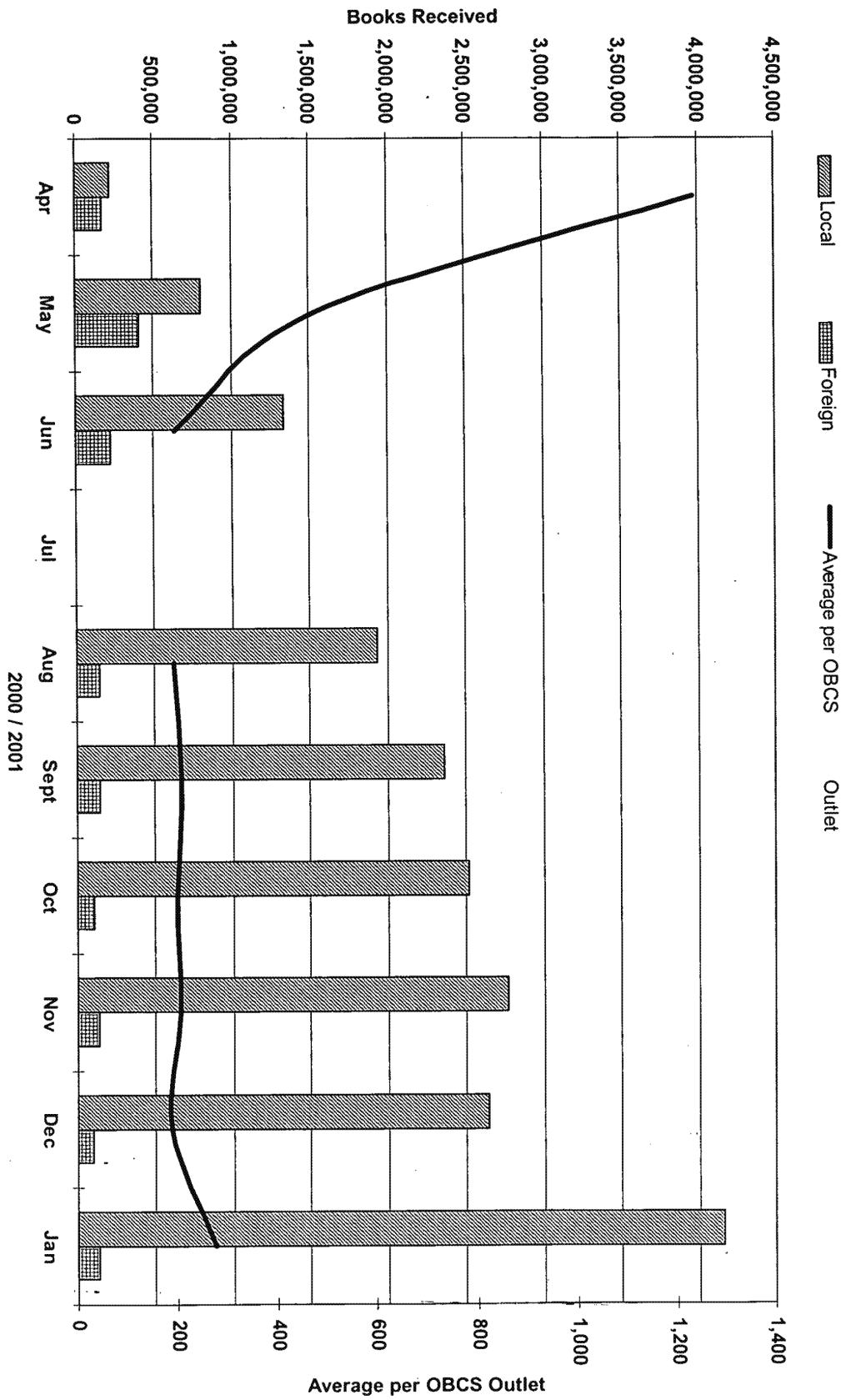
2.1 PAYMENT VOLUMES



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2.2 BOOK RECEIPTS

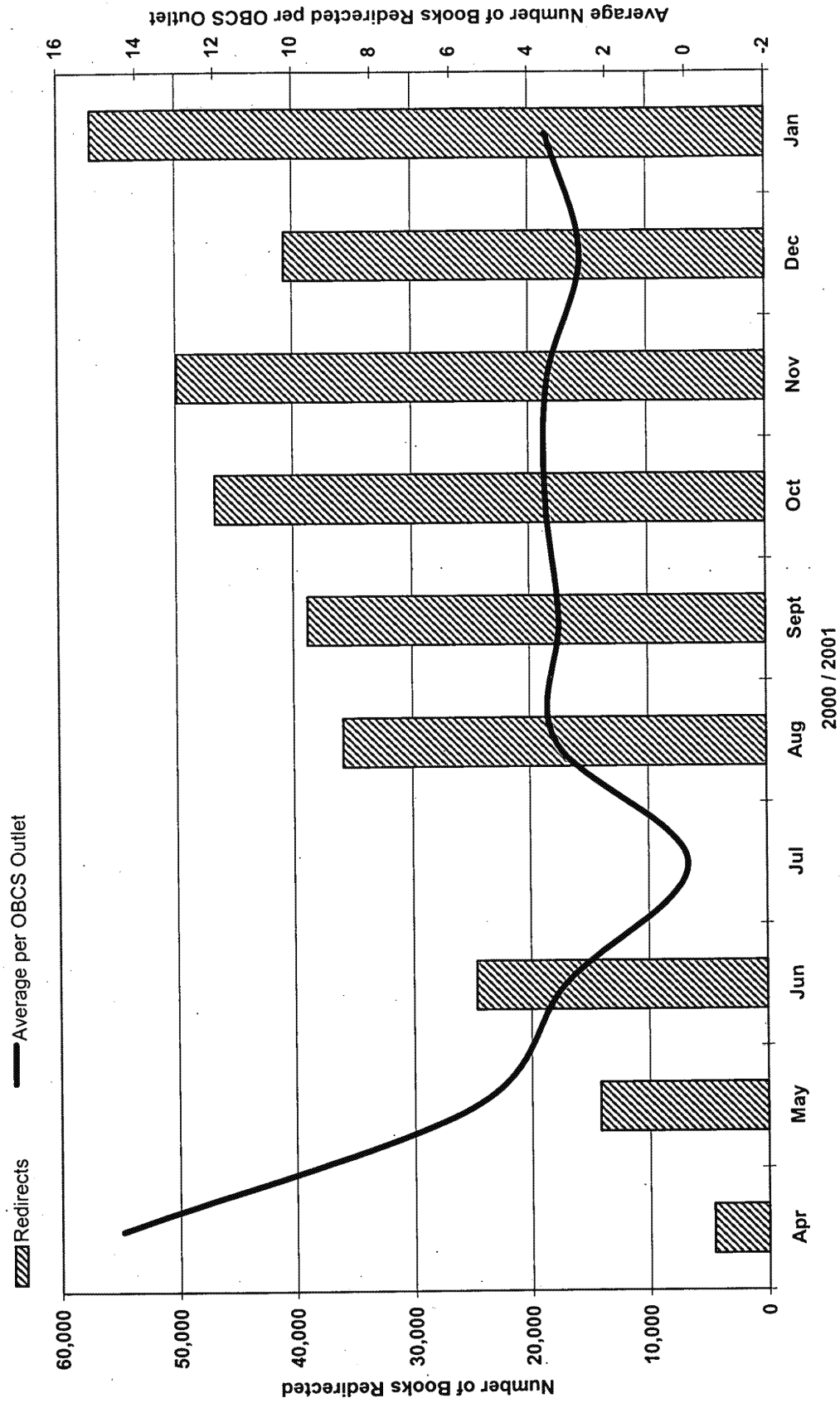
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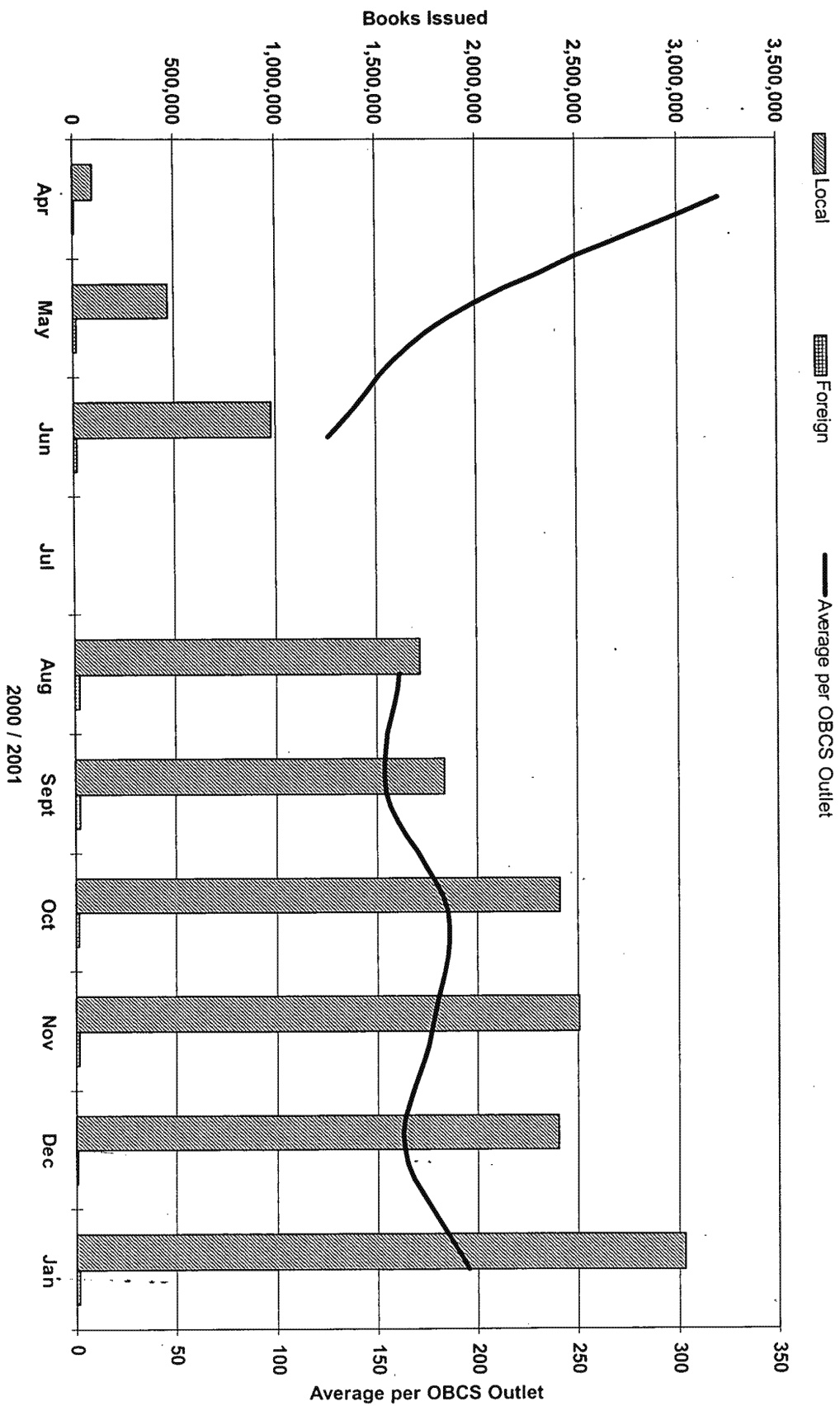
2.3 BOOKS REDIRECTED



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2.4 BOOKS ISSUED

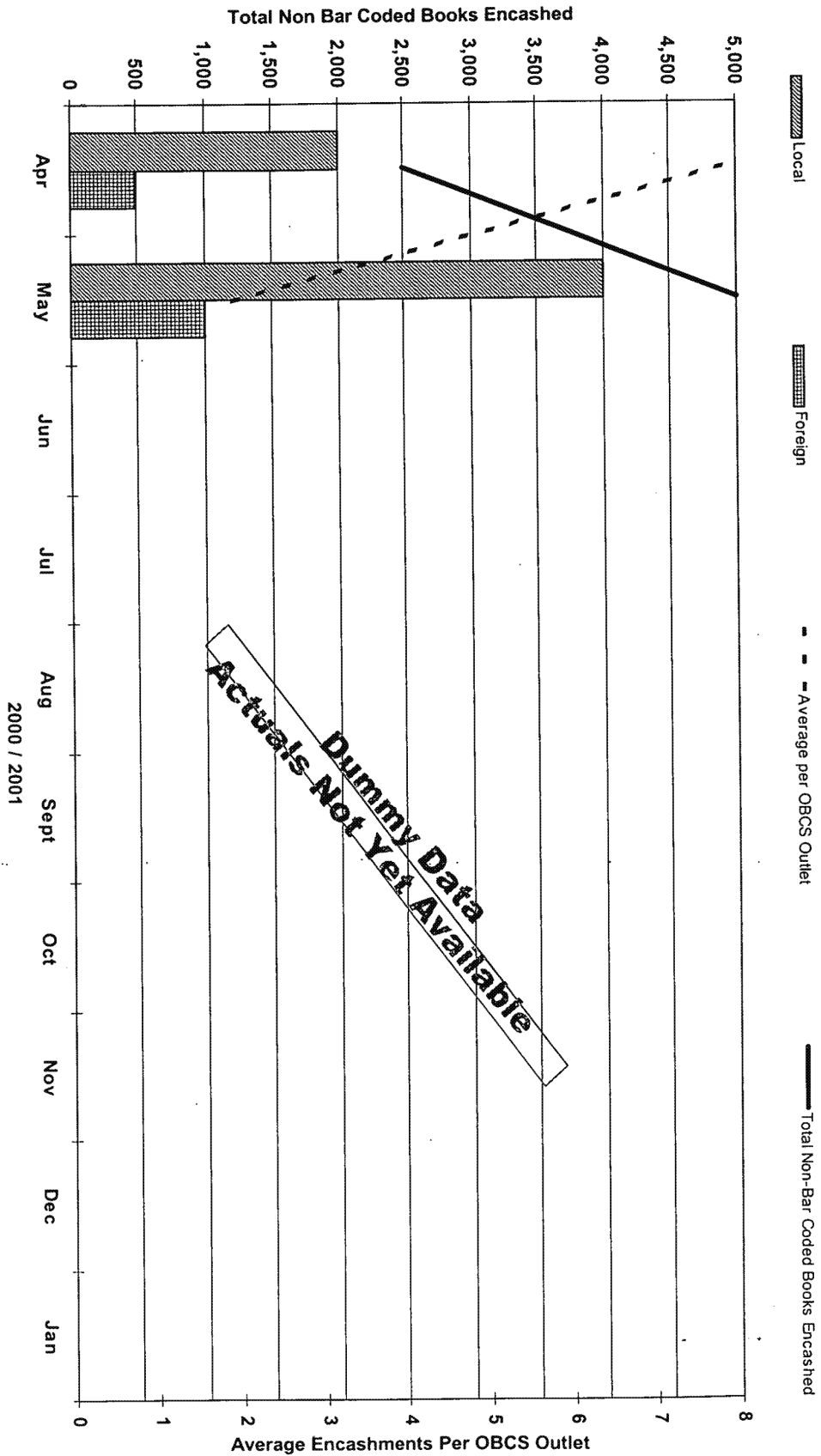
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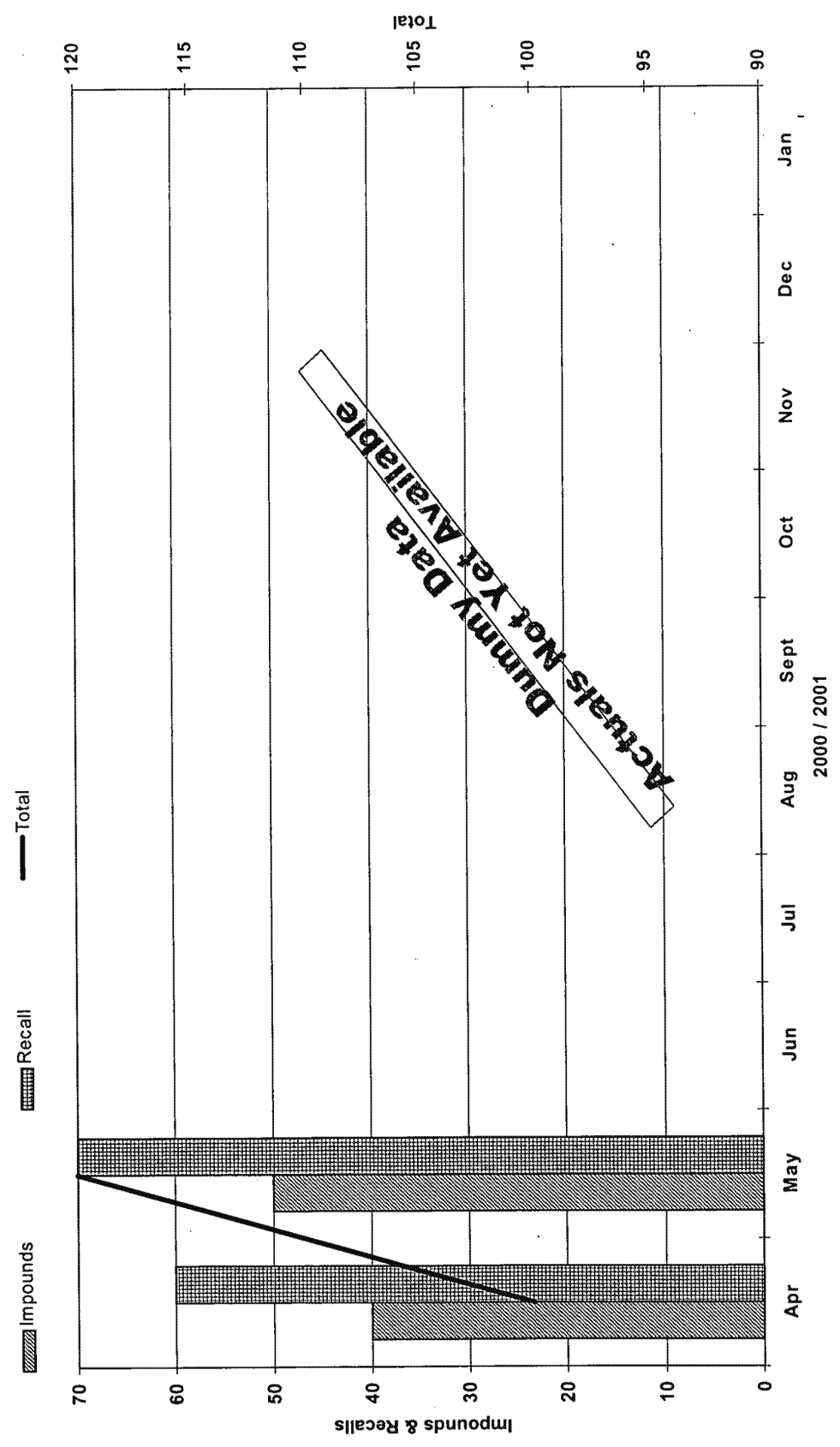
2.5 NON BARCODED BOOKS ENCASHED



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2.6 IMPOUNDS/RECALLS

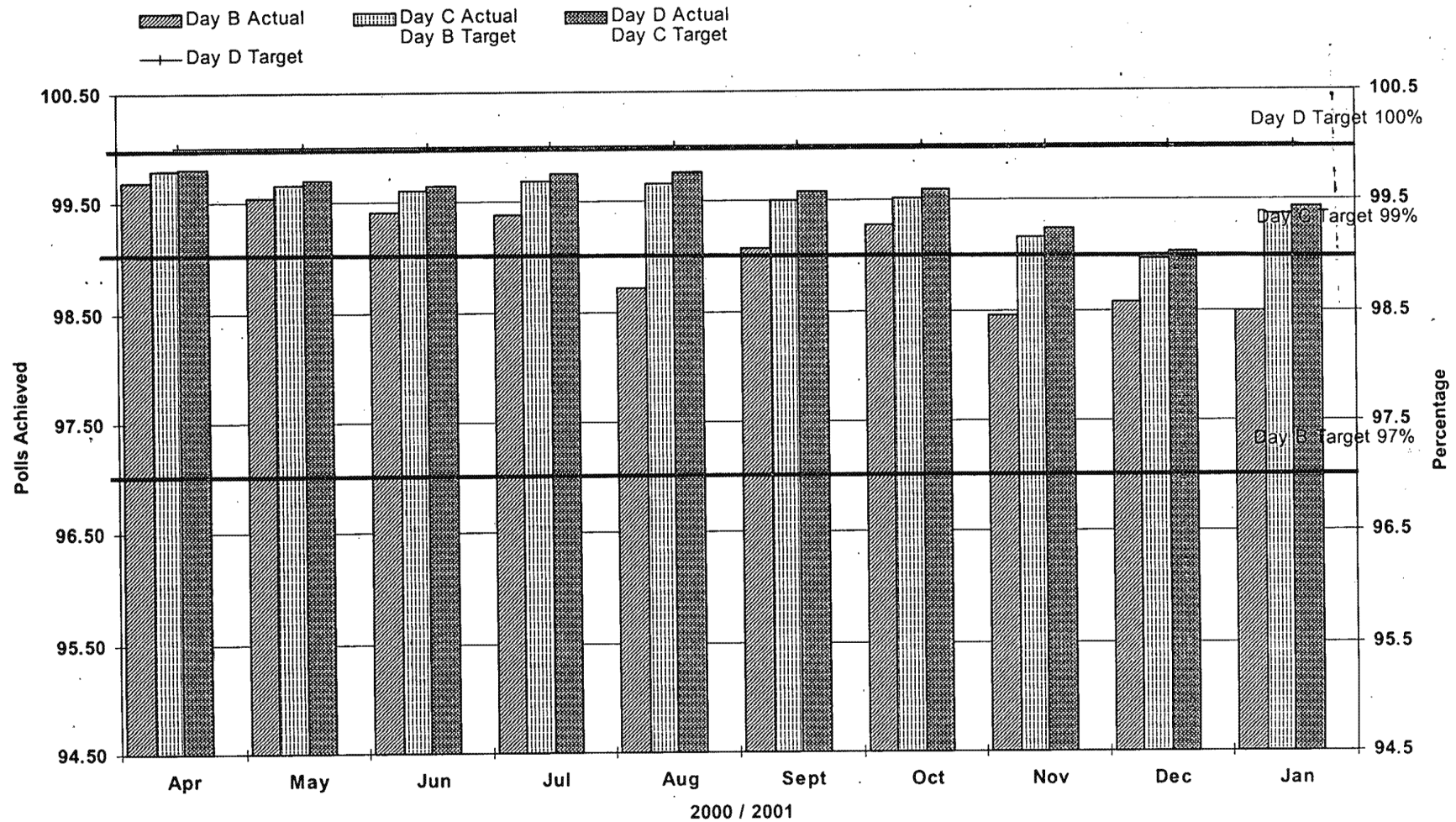


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3. SERVICE DELIVERY

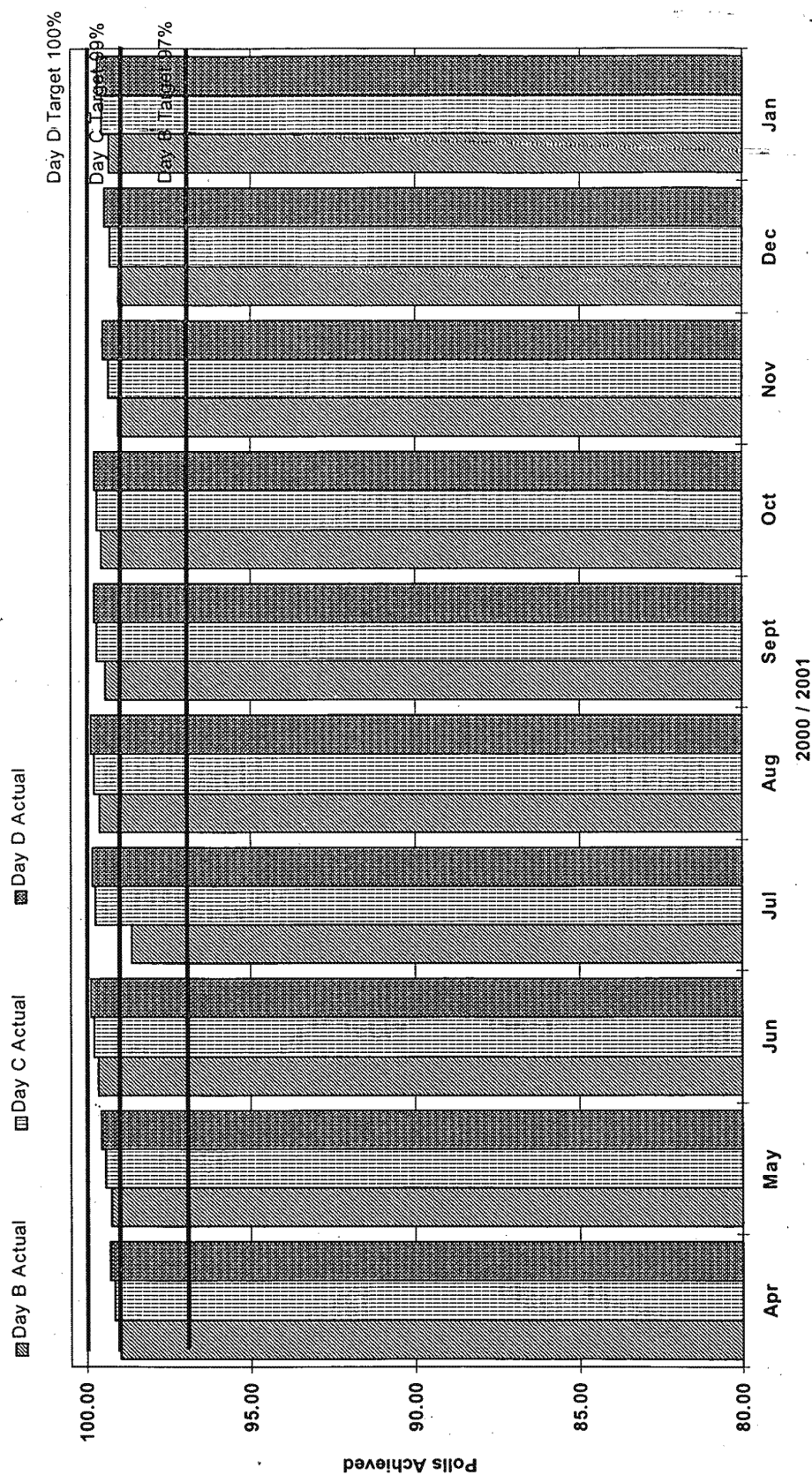
3.1 OBCS STOP LIST



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3.2 OBSC FILE DELIVERY

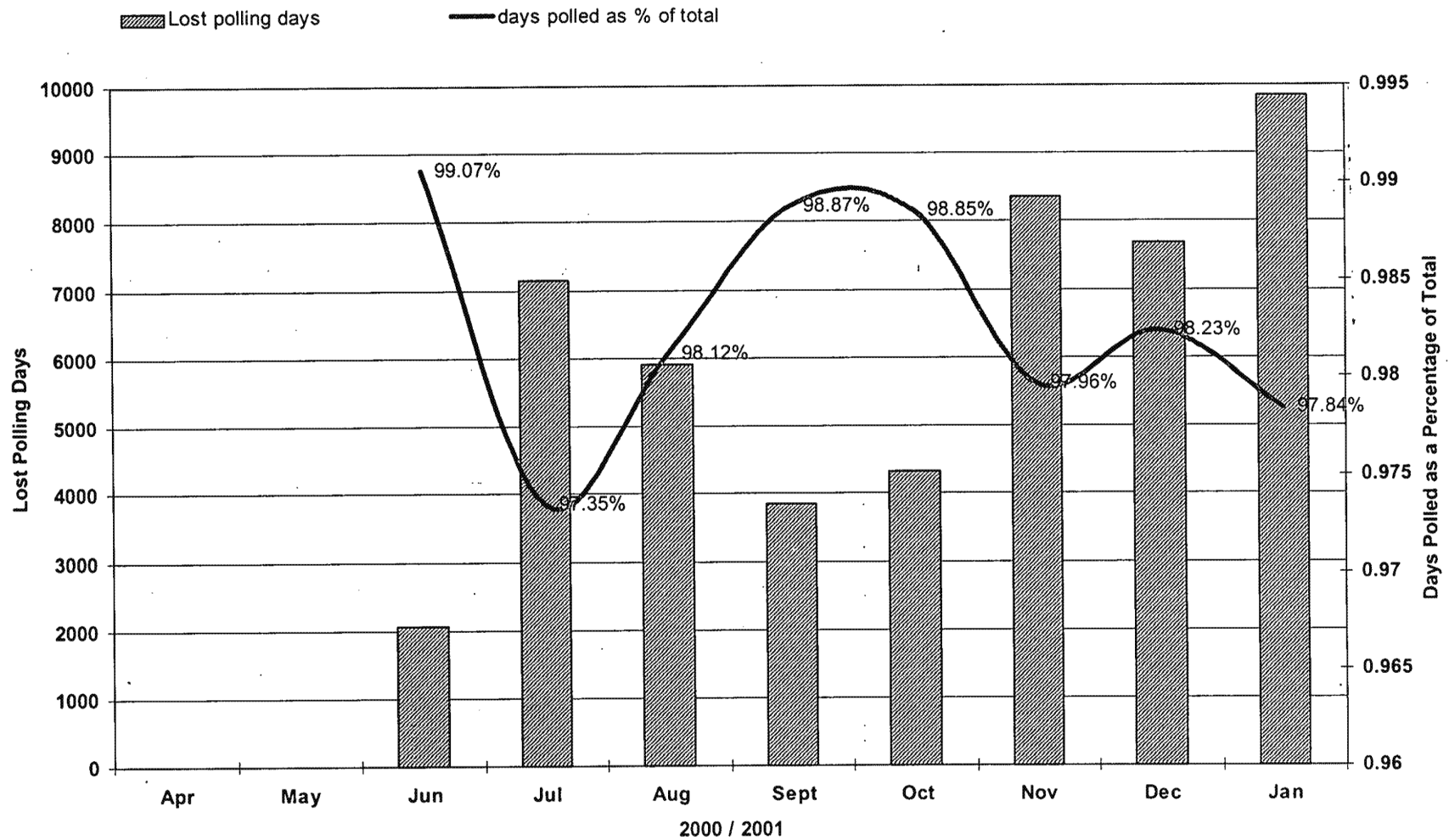


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4. FALLBACK

4.1 NON POLLED OUTLETS

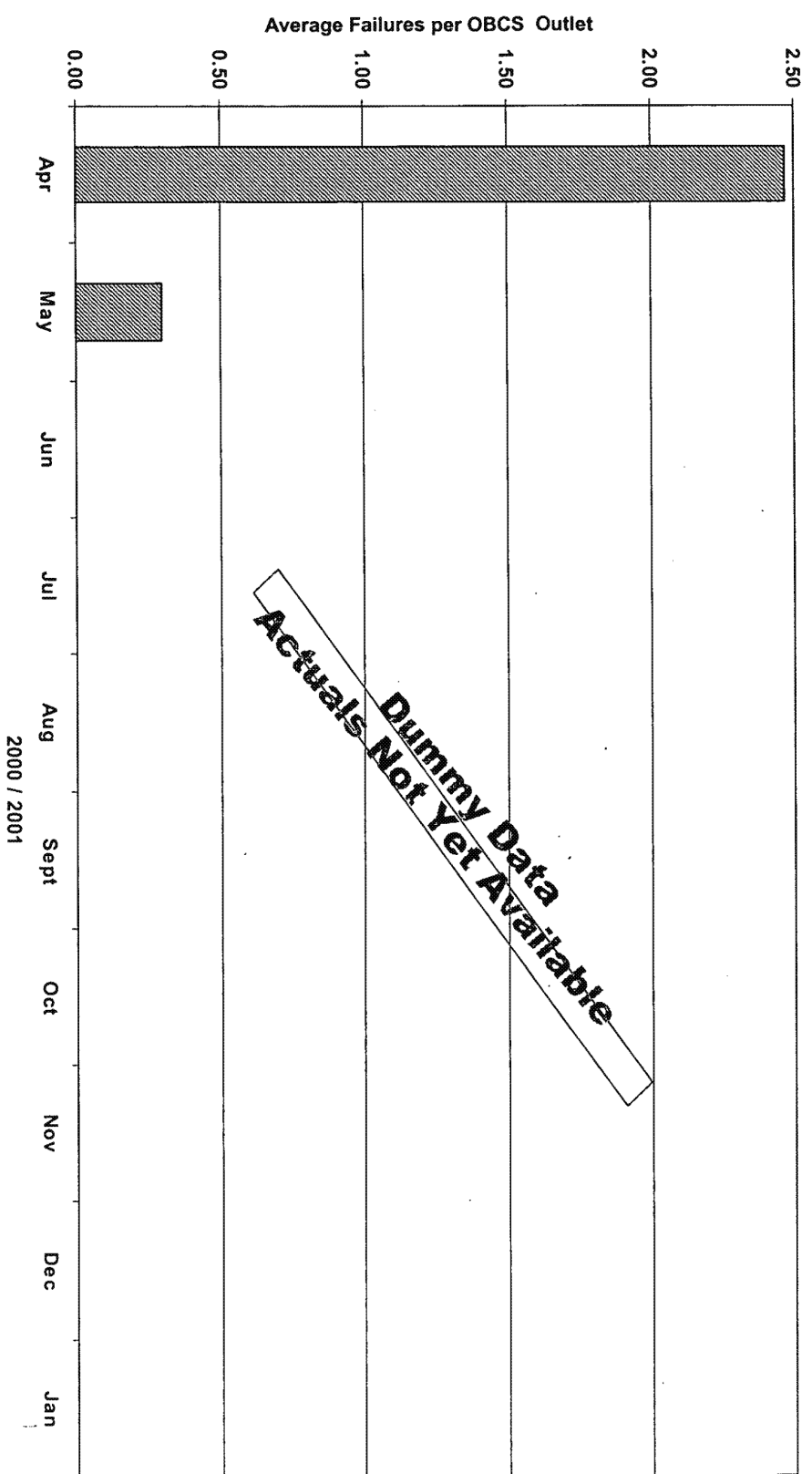


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4.2 OVERALL HARDWARE FAILURES

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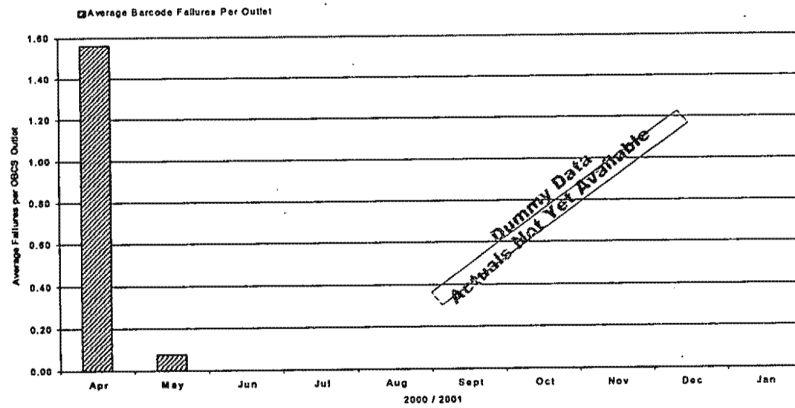
▣ Average Failures Per OBCS Outlet



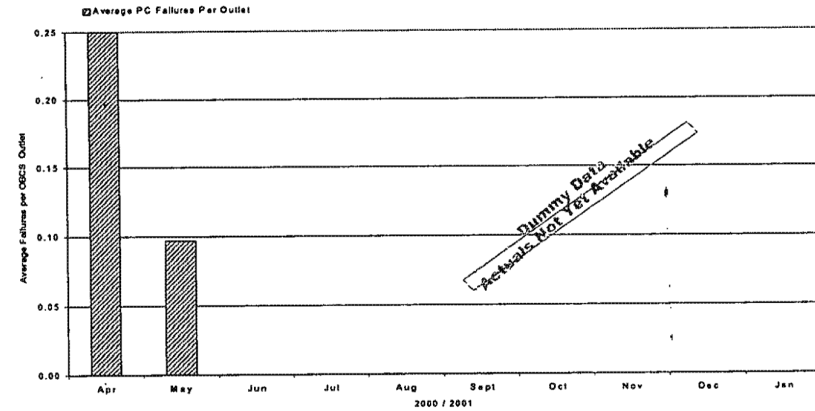
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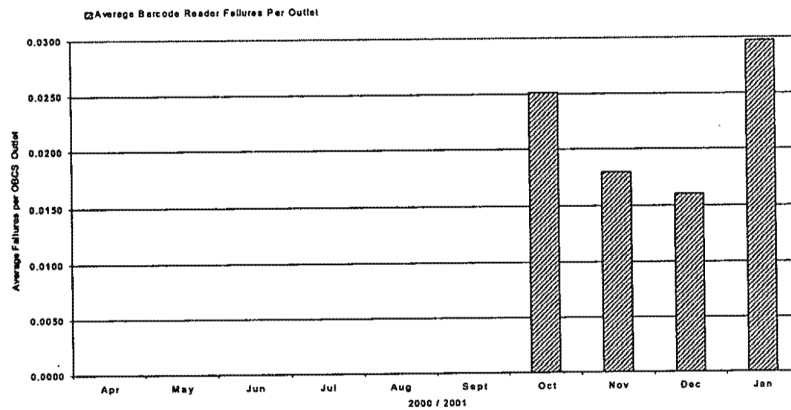
4.2.1 Barcode Failures



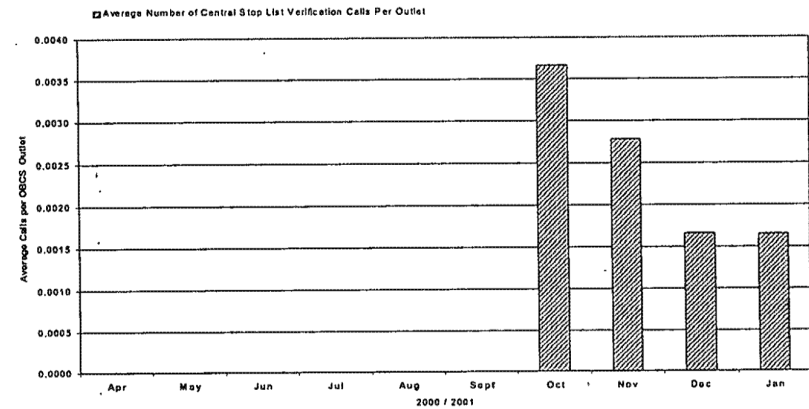
4.2.3 PC Failures



4.2.2 Barcode Reader failures



4.2.4 Central Stop List Verifications



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5. EXCEPTION REPORTS

This section will be used to present the information as required in Schedule 16. It is anticipated that this will be in tabular form detailing outlets whose transactions are less than 20% of the previous week with reasons where known. Shown below is a draft for how this information could be presented when the information is available.

Outlet	Variation In Encashment transactions compared to previous week (%)	Week variation occurred(w/c)	OBCS Transactions in Week	OBCS Transactions in Previous Week	System/Part System downtime information	Any other information / explanation

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6. OUTSTANDING PROBLEMS

6.1 NON-POLLING OF OUTLETS

The development of the rectification plans continues to be progressed within ICL Pathway and are subject to contractual discussions with Post Office Counters.

The satellite solution ICL Pathway developed to harvest "marooned" transactions from offices where communication links cannot be re-established within appropriate timescales has been tested at 12 sites during February. This testing was aimed at establishing a view on the likely success of obtaining a satellite connection across the Post Office Network and whilst the final results have yet to be provided, initial indication is that connections were successfully made at most of the sites involved. Further discussions need to be held to review operational and legal impacts.

It has been agreed that the next release to outlets is also due to include a diagnostic and warning system to alert postmasters when a counter position is not communicating with the gateway terminal which leads to an outlet not being polled at the end of the day. This will enable the potential non polling incident to be rectified or identified to ICL Pathway enabling diagnostics and solution processes to start earlier.

6.2 NETWORK FAILURE MESSAGE

This problem relates to Horizon 'timing out' when foreign transactions are being completed. It has been confirmed that a fix is included in the next release to outlets by ICL Pathway. The release is currently scheduled to commence on 24 March with roll-out completed by 7 April. This release will implement 'real time message ports' to carry information in real time.

6.3 DSS DUPLICATE TRANSACTIONS

DSS reports are showing higher than expected transactions volumes which could be caused by duplicate transactions. Further investigations have taken place and potential causes of the problem have been identified.

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On Horizon there has always been an 'admin' message which is in addition to the messages which relate to actual encashments. Whenever a new book was issued the 'admin' message was written to the message store on Horizon immediately, and the rest of the messages a short time later when the encashment functions were performed.

A change in the processing means the 'admin' messages and the other messages are accumulated while the customer is being served, these are then written to the message store on completion of the transaction. The impact of this change is that it is more likely the 'admin' message and the later message(s) are delivered within the same one hundredth of a second, hence the rise in occurrences of duplicate transactions.

Further discussions are taking place between ICL Pathway and EDS to identify potential solutions. A potential solution is for the DSS to refine the search criteria on their reports to identify the 'admin' messages and eliminate them. If the validation is extended to include the foil count identifier and the value field, this would allow the false duplicates, which are really 'admin' messages to go through while trapping any real duplicates which arrive.

6.4 NON CONFORMANCE IN OUTLETS

This problem has been identified based on transaction information supplied by the DSS which suggests a degree of non-conformance to OBCS procedures at the outlet level.

A Counter News article aimed at reducing the non-conformance areas will be published in Week 49, 22-28 February. The article highlights the correct procedures for encashing books on Horizon. It stresses Horizon must always be used when making benefit encashments, unless there is system failure, and manual checks must be completed as well.

A working group has been set up to complete further root cause analysis on apparent OBCS non-conformance in outlets. The group will meet for the first time week commencing 5 March to investigate the levels of Non-barcoded transactions. The group will be led by BSM, but involve different representatives from across Post Office Network. The results of this group will be fed back through this Service Review Process.

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6.5 QUALITY OF BARCODES ON ORDER BOOKS

The DSS state the usual rate of unreadable barcodes on order books is 0.03%. During the peak of the problem this rose to 0.19%, and was last counted at 0.09%. EDS requested IBM look into the equipment used to print order books and we are awaiting a response as to their findings.

The impact at both the Network Business Support Centre and Horizon System Helpdesk has declined over recent weeks. There has been a steady decline in call volumes and has been constant at around 40 calls per week during February, from a peak of 146 calls on the 22nd of January.

Explanations and assurances against future recurrence continue to be sought from the DSS.

6.6 EDS ACCEPTANCE OF OBCS TRANSACTIONS FILES

The monitoring of EDS memory space introduced as a result of this original problem has recently highlighted the file store memory at EDS has been nearing capacity. As a result additional file store memory has been available from 16 February, and we are informed this should be sufficient to accept the largest transaction files ICL Pathway can send.

This problem will now be closed.

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7. MANAGEMENT SUMMARY

7.1 COMMENTS ON PREVIOUS SECTIONS OF THE REPORT

Section		Comments
1.0	OBCS Availability	Roll-out at the end of January was completed to 84.5% of the network.
2.0	Transaction Data	<p>Transaction information for December and January has been gathered from ICL Pathway and used within this report. This information is for the following areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Book Issue• Book Redirect• Book Receipt• Pay Benefit <p>ICL Pathway are continuing with attempts to retrieve transaction data against the above criteria, based on scans, for April to July. This should be available by the end of February, early March.</p> <p>Benefit Payment</p> <p>The graph for Benefit Payment shows total volumes continuing to rise overall in line with roll-out. December total volumes rose overall, although not in line with previous months increases, whereas January total volumes grew proportionally more than previous months. This trend was mirrored for the average transactions per outlet during the same period. This indicates a dip in payment during December, with a corresponding increase in January. This could be attributable to December being a 4 week month and January being a 5 week month. Additionally, in December double payments would have been made for the Christmas period (resulting in 1 scan, as opposed to 2 scans).</p>

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Section		Comments
	<u>Transaction Data continued</u>	<p>Book Receipts, Issues and Re-directs</p> <p>The trend shown in payment volumes can be seen in the graphs for Book Issues, Book Receipts and Book Redirects transactions for the same period. Each of these transactions show volumes increasing in December but at a slower rate compared to previous months, with January increasing slightly more than the trend during August to November. Book Receipts and Book Issues also show the same trend for average numbers of transactions per outlet over the same period.</p> <p>Average Book Receipts per outlet for August to November were 202. The December average was lower at 186 book receipts per outlet, and January's was higher with an average of 275 book receipts per outlet. Average Book Issues per outlet for August to November was 170. December's average Book Issues per outlet decreased to 164, and January's increased to an average of 195 per outlet. The December decrease is attributable to the holiday period. Whilst the increase against trend in January is likely to be attributable to replacement order books being distributed by the DSS due to the faulty barcode problem.</p> <p>Work with OP TIP on producing the above information in the form of a regular down load continues to progress. There has been an unrelated issue on OPTIP which has delayed the user acceptance testing of the data download, although test packs of information are ready and it is hoped the test environment will be available to commence testing late February.</p> <p>Assuming this is successful it is hoped that data will be available to BSM from the beginning of March.</p>

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Section		Comments
	System Service	January Performance Summary
3.1	OBCS Stops List Data Stop List Delivery Day D	99.44% delivered by Day D
3.2	OBCS File Delivery Delivery Day D	99.72% delivered by Day D <u>Cause and Action</u> <i>For information: Calculation of RDMC Reference Data, APS Reference Data and OBCS Stop List Delivery SLAs uses the 'Non Polled' outlet report to identify when an outlet has failed to return an 'End of Day' (EOD) marker to the Data Centre. If this is the case, the outlet is assumed to have not received a delivery of OBCS Stop List information (delivered daily to selected outlets)</i> <i>Whilst CSR+ has introduced an acknowledgement agent to verify receipt of data at counter positions further development work needs to be done on ICL Pathway's data warehouse to allow the automation of this calculation.</i> Where SLA conformance has not been achieved this is directly attributable to the 'Non-Polling' of outlets where transactions are not harvested from the counters and delivered to BA within the required timescales. (see update on non-polling in section 6 of this report)
4.1	Polling of Outlets	There has been a 0.39% decrease in days polled as a % of total days available, although the overall % of days polled remains high at 97.84%. Whilst rectification plans are being drawn up for agreement with PON, we recognise the need for ICL Pathway to maintain day to day management of the non-polling situation and hence we will be seeking assurances to this end.

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Section	Comments
4.2 - 4.6	<p>Fallback data</p> <p>The two graphs for Barcode reader Faults and Central Stoplist Verification calls now contain actual data based on an initial search of call logs from the Horizon System Helpdesk. The graphs show information for the period from October 2000 to January 2001.</p> <p>There is no clear trend identifiable for Barcode Reader faults. Whereas, the graph for Central Stoplist Verification calls clearly illustrates a steady decline in the average number of calls per outlet made to the Helpdesk although all the numbers are very small (eg Jan verification calls = 0.002 calls per outlet i.e. 25 calls in total).</p> <p>Central Verification occurs in the following instances when the Horizon system is not available for use in an outlet:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• PON Staff and Agents are suspicious about the encashment• the combined value of foils presented exceeds £200• more than one foreign order book is presented for encashment <p>Additionally Horizon prompts the user to call the HSH for verification of foreign encashments exceeding £200 when it is unable to communicate with the central stop list (i.e. "ISDN failure").</p> <p>Note further work is being carried out to refine the search criteria used on the HSH call logs to enable more accurate reporting about OBCS.</p> <p>The OP TiP OBCS data download will produce this information on an on-going basis, and will also include information on the levels of barcode failures. - obcs manual</p>
5.0	<p>Exception Report</p> <p>When the TiP information is being received successfully in BSM it will be manipulated to produce this report. Development work within BSM is underway to analyse the information once it is received and should be completed ready for when the download commences.</p>

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7.2 CSR+ UPDATE

CSR+ roll-out was completed on 31 January 2001. All automated outlets are now on CSR+ and any newly migrated outlets will go straight onto CSR+ software.

7.3 M1 DATA WAREHOUSE UPGRADE

An upgrade on the ICL Pathway data warehouse went ahead as scheduled during the weekend 24-25/02/01. Following agreement with the DSS this necessitated files being sent earlier than normal.

There are no other known impacts on the DSS arising from this upgrade.