



Timberland Regional Library Impact Survey Themes May 2018

In February 2018, Timberland Regional Library (TRL) conducted a technology Impact Survey to understand how patrons use the Library's public technology services. Thanks very much to the 3,156 people who responded to the survey questions and provided over 1,000 additional comments and suggestions.

- 95% of the survey respondents had visited the library at least once in the last year.
- 69% accessed library resources through library public computers;
- 93% accessed library resources through the library's website from outside the library;
- 63% accessed library resources using a handheld device such as a cellphone, eReader or tablet.

For more information see several [Impact Survey reports](#) on the TRL website. TRL reviews the survey results for future planning.

Response to Survey Comments

The survey comments have been reviewed and several themes emerged which are addressed below.

Technology

Internet/Wi-Fi - There were comments about slow Internet and Wi-Fi speed in the libraries. TRL has expanded Wi-Fi coverage in some of our busier locations and replaced all the wireless equipment with improved technology in the last 2 years. Internet speeds have been increased at some branches to provide equitable service across the district. Additional changes scheduled for 2018 should also improve Internet service throughout the district. We also recently implemented security settings within our wireless infrastructure that helps prevent wireless devices from

viewing or interfering with other wireless on the network. We will also evaluate the possibility of offering secure wireless networks for patrons.

Free Wi-Fi is available at all libraries from 6:00 am to midnight seven days/week. Although occasionally patrons may need Internet access between midnight and 6:00 am, it has been determined that it could be a safety issue if people and cars congregate in library parking lots during those hours. Wi-Fi is intended to be a service primarily for inside the library. In many libraries the Wi-Fi signal extends outside the building, although there is no intent to extend the signal to all areas of library parking lots.

Library Catalog and website - Comments about simplifying or improving the library catalog and website were received. The library catalog system vendor provides updates to the system several times a year and TRL welcomes suggestions for specific improvements to the library catalog or website by phone, email or chat to the Ask A Librarian service. The vendor we use will be implementing a mobile-friendly catalog view as well as improved searching within the next year. The old library catalog was disabled in late 2017 due to administration overhead and security concerns. The TRL website will be redesigned in mid-2018 and provide a more intuitive and mobile-friendly experience for patrons.

Mobile App - TRL will be launching a new mobile app for iOS and Android devices in mid-2018. The previous app (LibraryNow) is no longer compatible with our system and we do not recommend using it.

More computers, longer computer sessions – TRL must balance the space needed for computers, shelving for the library collection, and tables and chairs for reading, studying, collaborating, relaxing and for using the Wi-Fi with personal devices. However, in 2017, TRL replaced the PC and print management system it uses and patrons can now use the computer continuously if others are not waiting for a spot or have an advance reservation. Additionally, we have converted several reference database/catalog-only computer stations to additional Internet computers in branches throughout the district. We have also started making Chromebooks available as an alternative for Internet access in some branches.

Library Collections

Library Collections

The TRL Collection Services Department reviews the materials budget (money allocated to buy physical and digital items for circulation) on a yearly basis to

address the needs of all our communities, evaluating the balance between books and downloadable items. In 2018, we had a slight increase in our collection budget. We are investigating options for using this money either to provide a cost-sustainable streaming service or to implement trials of new some new formats such as Playaways and Blu-ray DVDs. We are also keenly aware of the digital divide in the TRL district for our communities without reliable, fast internet service or to personal devices for accessing our eBooks and eAudiobooks. Many patrons commented on the importance of the print and physical collections in addition to the electronic collection. To that end, we strive to maintain a good balance between our print and physical materials and our electronic collections, ensuring broad access for all of TRL across formats.

While the requests to bring back hoopla and Freegal were high (50 comments), comments asking for more physical books (90 comments), films (21 comments), audiobooks (39 comments), and eBooks (79 comments) dominated the feedback (over 200 comments total).

Digital Collections

- **Hoopla/Freegal:** The loss of Hoopla and Freegal is directly related to the budget cut in 2017. Hoopla continues to have a cost per use model that had become unsustainable as use increases. Each checkout cost between \$0.99 - \$2.99, which had allowed the simultaneous use of titles and no waiting. Neighboring library systems have discontinued use of hoopla and Freegal for these reasons.

We have continued conversations with the Hoopla/Freegal vendor and they have not changed their pricing model so it is still prohibitively expensive a service for a small group of users. We are now investigating other streaming content vendors (Kanopy, Recorded Books) as a possible supplement to our collection.

- **More ebooks:** We are maintaining the 2017 budget for purchasing eBooks and downloadable audio in OverDrive to continue to offset some of the loss of hoopla. Spending for circulating digital items make up 15% of the overall budget to purchase materials.

Access to High Demand Items faster

- **More, faster:** Respondents want more new physical books in their preferred genres or subject areas, along with more DVDs and audiobooks. New items continue to be purchased, though with the budget reduction, the total numbers of physical book copies that will be purchased of a particular title has been capped at 50.

In response to the materials budget reduction in 2017, our holds ratio moved from 1 copy per 5 holds to 1 copy per 10 holds. This year, while we employ a 1 copy per 10 hold threshold, we are now using a more flexible model that allows us to respond to demand while still managing our budget. For bestsellers, that might mean we purchase copies at the 1 copy per 5 holds ratio. We feel the pain of the high hold waits as well.

Opportunities for further exploration:

- **Foreign language materials:** Define foreign language material needs and clearly document what we are collecting in those areas.
- **Findability in library catalog:** Work with IT and our vendor, Sirsi Dynix, to continue to improve our library catalog.
- **Improve speed of new materials out to branches:** This year, we are expanding the automation of our acquisitions, cataloging, and processing services with our library vendors as well as streamlining internal workflows and processes where possible. In doing this, new materials out to branches should take 20 days or less.
- **Discuss a baseline acceptable hold time for items and improve communication about wait times from staff to patrons.** For example, if we order 1 copy for every 10 holds, we are saying it is acceptable to hold for a patron to wait a maximum of 30 weeks.
- **Continue Working with Communications:** Build on and work closely with Communications and web team to rotate collection ads on website, push out notices via various social media sites, etc.

Library Buildings

More/Different Open Hours

Many respondents asked for more or different open hours in their local libraries. Some wanted earlier hours; some wanted later hours; some asked for Sunday or Monday hours. As a result of this survey and ongoing conversations with our communities, our libraries participated in a patron usage survey for two weeks in April. We will be reviewing that survey information as well as other data points such as door counts, check in and check out data, as well as community data such as bus routes to ensure our open hours are as beneficial to our communities as possible. Any changes to the open hours would be achieved through schedule adjustments for the staff to be as budget neutral as possible.

Safety at the Libraries

Several respondents mentioned their concern for safety at the library. Over the past several years, TRL has established thorough protocols for addressing disruptive or illegal behaviors, up to and including trespassing patrons that are violating our Disruptive Patron Behavior Policy. Staff receive extensive training to ensure that our users have pleasant and safe visits to our libraries.

Awareness of all Library Services

The Impact Survey comments reveal that many library users are unaware of the wide range of library services available. To increase public understanding, recognition and use of library services, TRL has made the following efforts to close the information gap:

- Throughout the year, TRL's Library Director, Library Managers and other staff members present to community groups, schools and local governments about library services. These presentations engage audience members in discussions of common needs such as job search skills and homework support.
- Hundreds of information packets are mailed to business and community leaders, public officials, real estate offices and public service agencies to enhance awareness of library services. If you would like a packet, please call 360-943-5001 or email comments@trl.org.
- The 2017 Annual Report, released in February, focused heavily on library services and partnerships with community organizations to better reach and serve the public's needs.