# REPORT

**Title:** LIBRARY SPACES CUSTOMER SURVEY REPORT

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**Date:** 11 April 2012

## Introduction

As one of the 21st Century Library Spaces Internship projects, a survey of EPL customers was conducted to gain feedback from customers about library spaces. Surveys allow for the collection of both quantitative and qualitative data and provided the opportunity for a large volume of customers to share their opinions in their own words. The survey was conducted during the period of 9 January to 5 February 2012 both online and in print at all 17 branches of EPL.

In exploring how customers currently use and how they would like to use EPL's spaces in the future, the 21st Century Library Spaces Internship is guided by four questions:
1. What are customers doing in EPL's spaces?
2. How would customers like to be using EPL's spaces?
3. What are current and future trends in library spaces and customer activities?
4. How could EPL's spaces best meet the needs of EPL's customers?

The surveys were used to address the first two questions as it collected information on:
- Demographics
- Activities
- What customers want EPL spaces for
- What customer needs are and are not being met

Questions included in the survey were based on similar research projects[1] and themes that emerged from the seating sweeps project. Findings from the survey will be used as part of the triangulation of findings for the 21st Century Library Spaces Internship and fulfill Objective 1 of the Open Spaces component of EPL's Business Plan: "We understand how customers use our spaces and do something about it."

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[1] See References.

**Spread the words.**

## Method

The survey was conducted for four weeks during the period of 9 January to 5 February 2012 both online (seep Appendix A) and in print (see Appendix B). In total, 3550 copies of the print survey were distributed to all 17 branches of EPL. Staff at each branch was asked to promote, distribute, and collect surveys completed by customers. Print surveys were then forwarded to the 21$^{st}$ Century Library Spaces Interns to be entered into the online version of the survey on SurveyMonkey.

The online version of the survey was available on the main page of EPL's website. During the first and last week of the survey, it was also available through the slider on the main page of the website. Marketing promoted the survey on Facebook and Twitter three times during the four week run at the beginning of the survey, the midpoint, and prior to the final weekend. A link to the survey was also included in the customer newsletter.

The survey included both multiple choice closed-ended questions and long answer open-ended questions that allowed for the collection of both quantitative and qualitative data. The long answer responses also allowed the customers to express their thoughts and opinions in their own words. Both the online and print surveys included a question to recruit respondents for interviews. Customers that completed the survey in print were given a separate card to complete (see Appendix C).

In total 1517 usable online and print surveys were completed. Responses to quantitative questions were analyzed using SurveyMonkey's analytic functions. Long answer responses were exported from SurveyMonkey to Microsoft Excel and then analyzed using thematic coding.

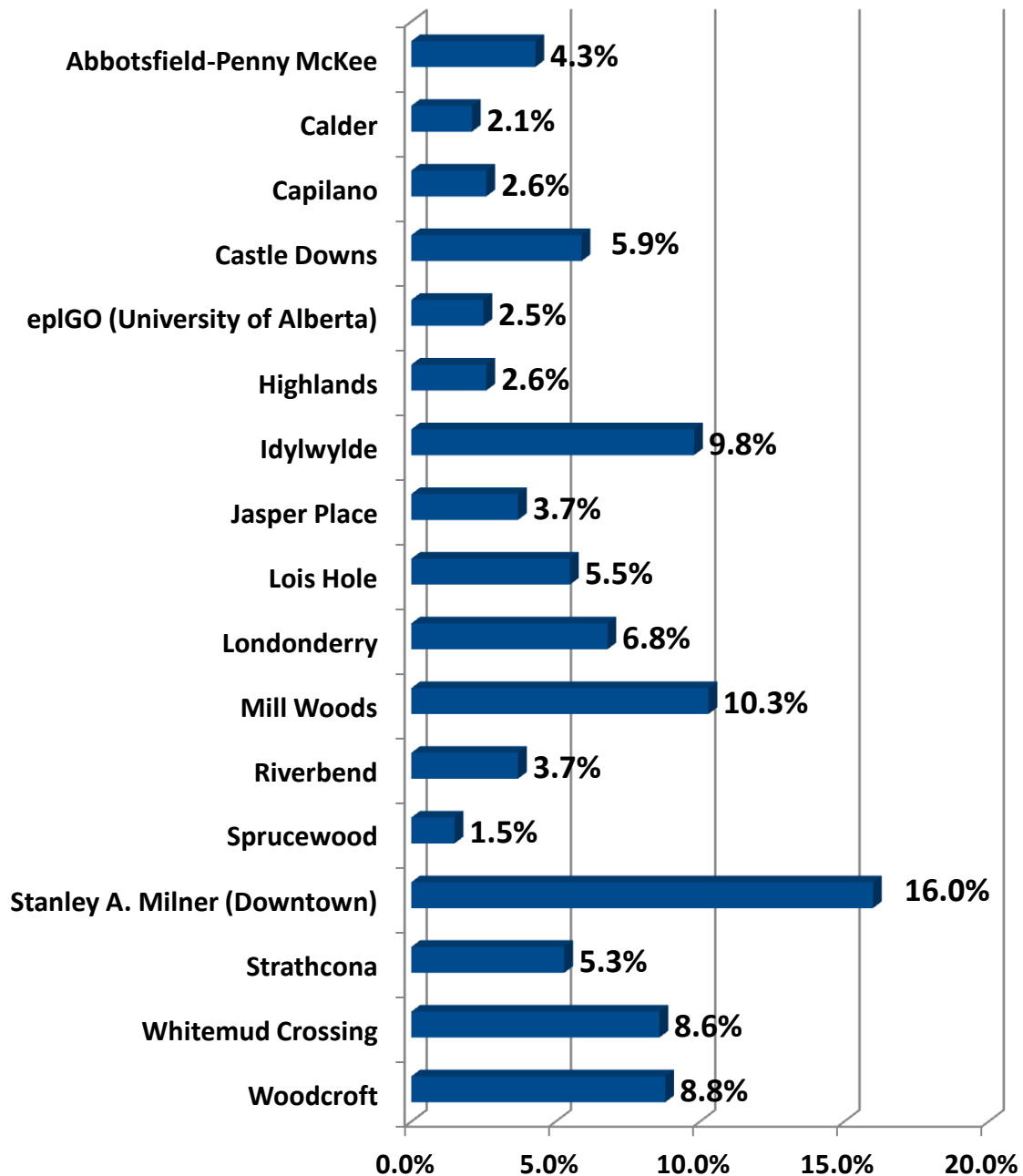## Findings - Multiple Choice Responses

Ten multiple choice questions were included in the survey to allow customers to self-report on how frequently and for how long they visit the library, in what activities they typically engage, the relative importance of these activities, whether they come to the library in groups, the typical size of their group (if applicable), and the importance of group space to them. In the online version of the survey, the customer was required to select which branch they visited most often, in order to place their responses, particularly their long answers, in context. Print surveys that did not have a branch selected were discarded as unusable. All other questions were optional. Two additional questions were included to capture the basic demographics of gender and age. The multiple choice questions were designed to overlap with data collected during seating sweeps to triangulate data, allowing the interns to compare the unobtrusive and self-reported data for confirmation of findings.

Summaries of responses include both the online and print formats. The total number of respondents for each question is stated as n=#.

## Branch

When asked which branch they visited most often, respondents were divided as follows.

**Chart 1. Branch Distribution** (n=1517)

| Branch | Percentage |
|--------|-----------|
| Abbotsfield-Penny McKee | 4.3% |
| Calder | 2.1% |
| Capilano | 2.6% |
| Castle Downs | 5.9% |
| eplGO (University of Alberta) | 2.5% |
| Highlands | 2.6% |
| Idylwylde | 9.8% |
| Jasper Place | 3.7% |
| Lois Hole | 5.5% |
| Londonderry | 6.8% |
| Mill Woods | 10.3% |
| Riverbend | 3.7% |
| Sprucewood | 1.5% |
| Stanley A. Milner (Downtown) | 16.0% |
| Strathcona | 5.3% |
| Whitemud Crossing | 8.6% |
| Woodcroft | 8.8% |

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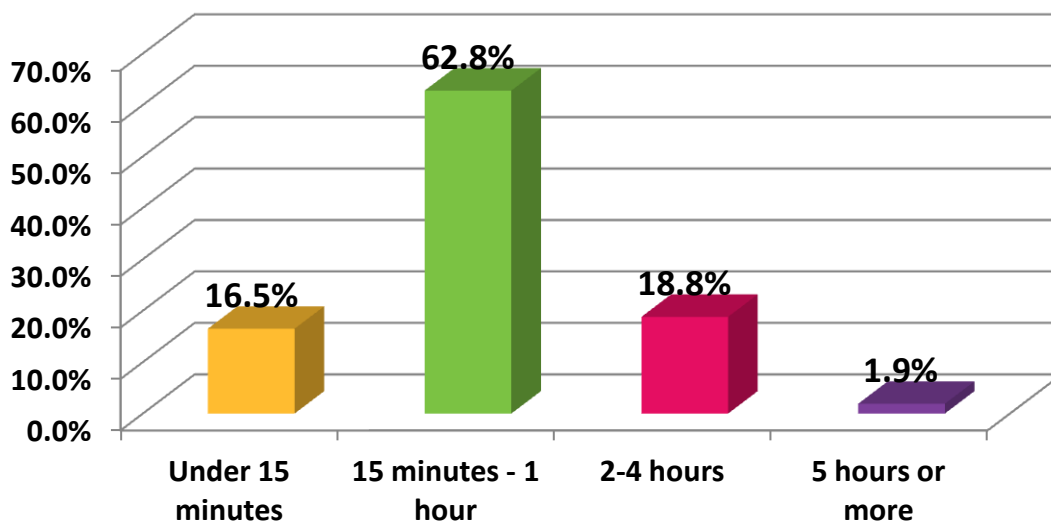**Spread the words.**

## Frequency and Length of Visit

Respondents were asked how often they typically visit the library and the typical length of their visit.

**Chart 2. Frequency of Visit** (n=1476)
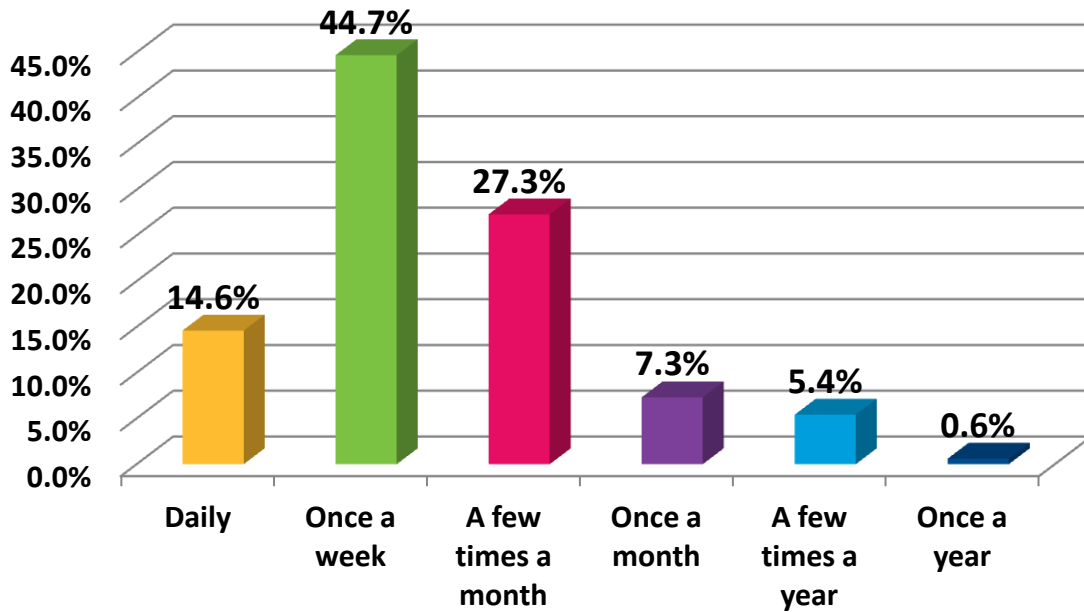


Overall, 86.6% (1278/1476) of respondents visit a library branch multiple times in a month.
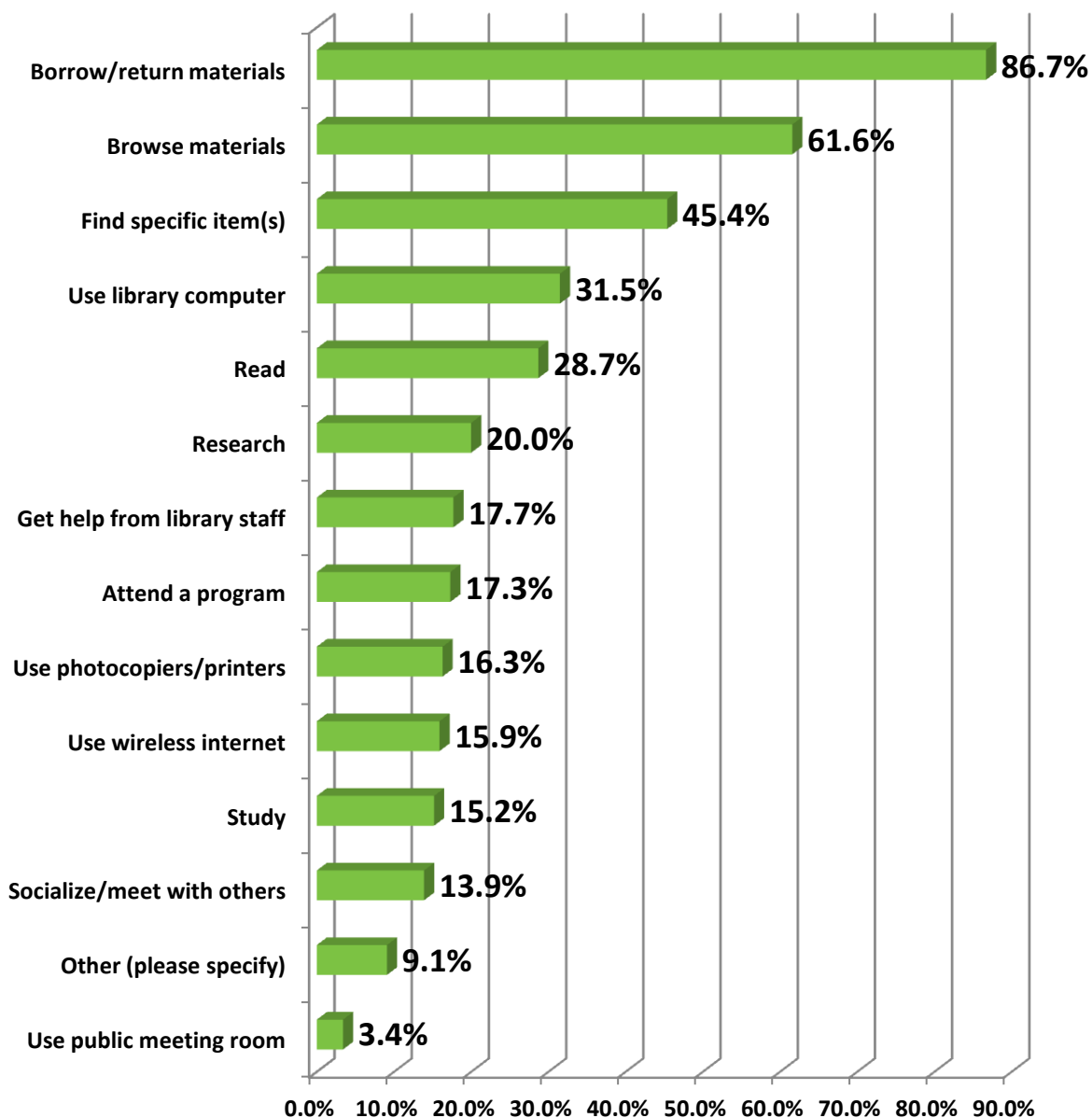
**Chart 3. Length of Visit** (n=1466)



While respondents may visit multiple times in a month, 79.3% (1163/1466) of them are in the library for an hour or less.

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## Activities

Customers were asked for what reasons they typically visited the library and were presented with a list of potential activities. The list of activities was largely based on the activities recorded during the seating sweeps project. Customers were permitted to select as many activities as they desired[2], however, they were then asked to rank the top three most important reasons they visit the library.
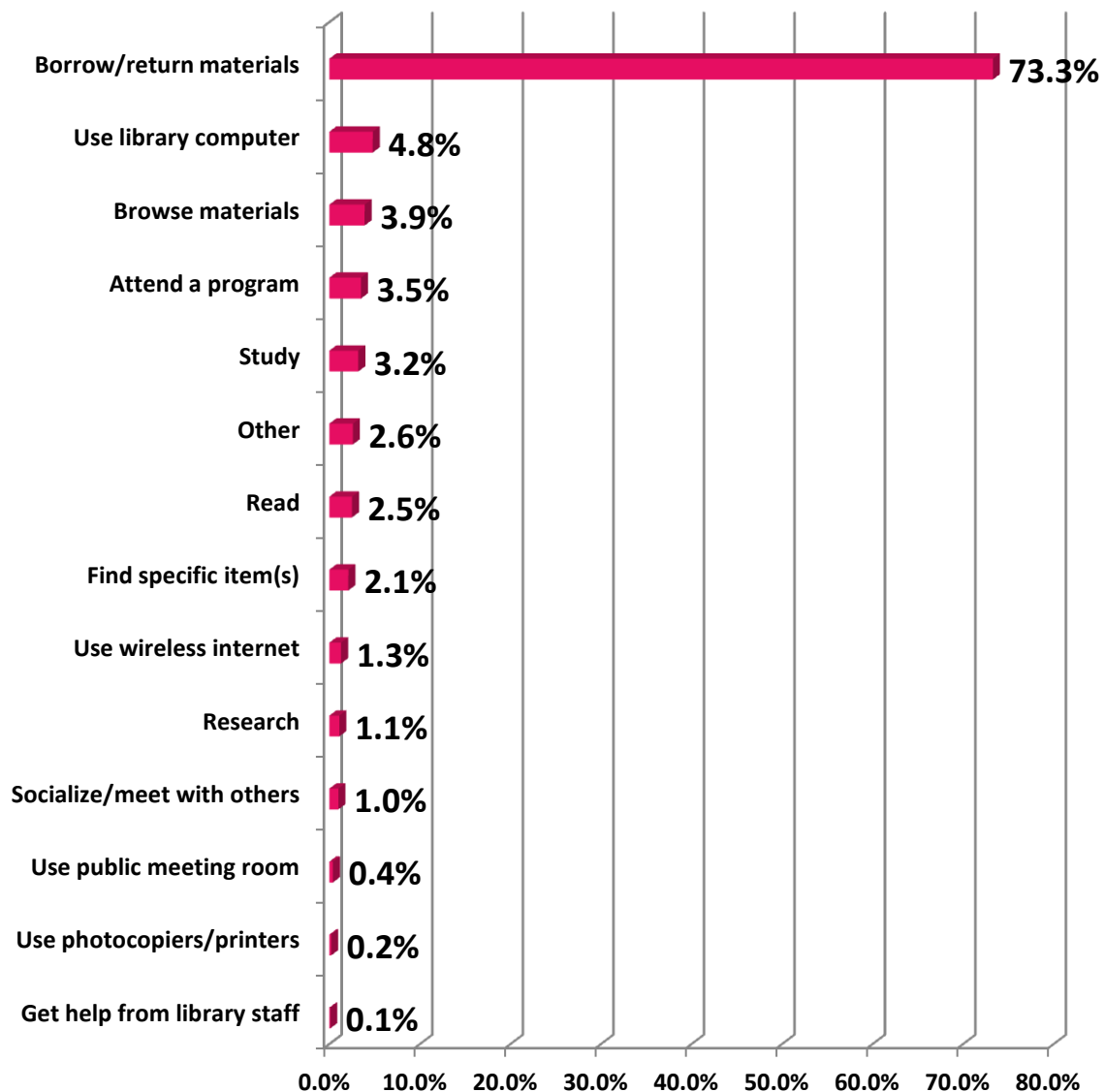
**Chart 4. Reasons Customers Visit** (n=1466)

| Reason | Percentage |
|---|---|
| Borrow/return materials | 86.7% |
| Browse materials | 61.6% |
| Find specific item(s) | 45.4% |
| Use library computer | 31.5% |
| Read | 28.7% |
| Research | 20.0% |
| Get help from library staff | 17.7% |
| Attend a program | 17.3% |
| Use photocopiers/printers | 16.3% |
| Use wireless internet | 15.9% |
| Study | 15.2% |
| Socialize/meet with others | 13.9% |
| Other (please specify) | 9.1% |
| Use public meeting room | 3.4% |

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[2] The ability to select multiple options results in percentages that total more than 100%.

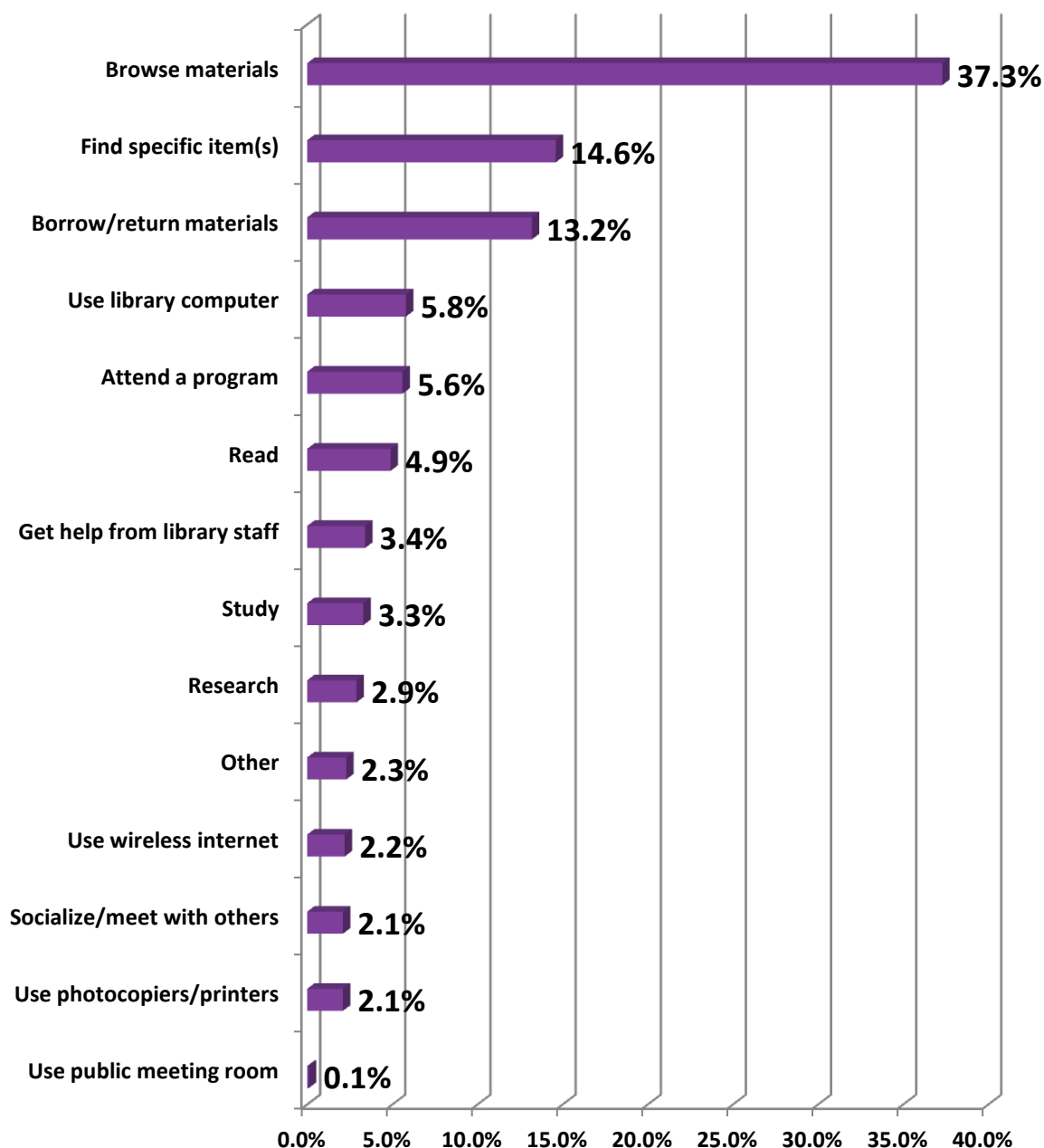epl EDMONTON PUBLIC LIBRARY

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Activities surrounding collections were the most frequently cited with borrowing, browsing, and finding materials, appearing as the three most frequently selected options. However, it should be noted that the next most commonly selected activity after these three was using a library computer. Activities listed under "Other" were quite diverse. Some activities customers put under this category include: bring children, read newspapers, pick up holds, and play cards.

**Chart 5. First Most Important Reason** (n=1046)

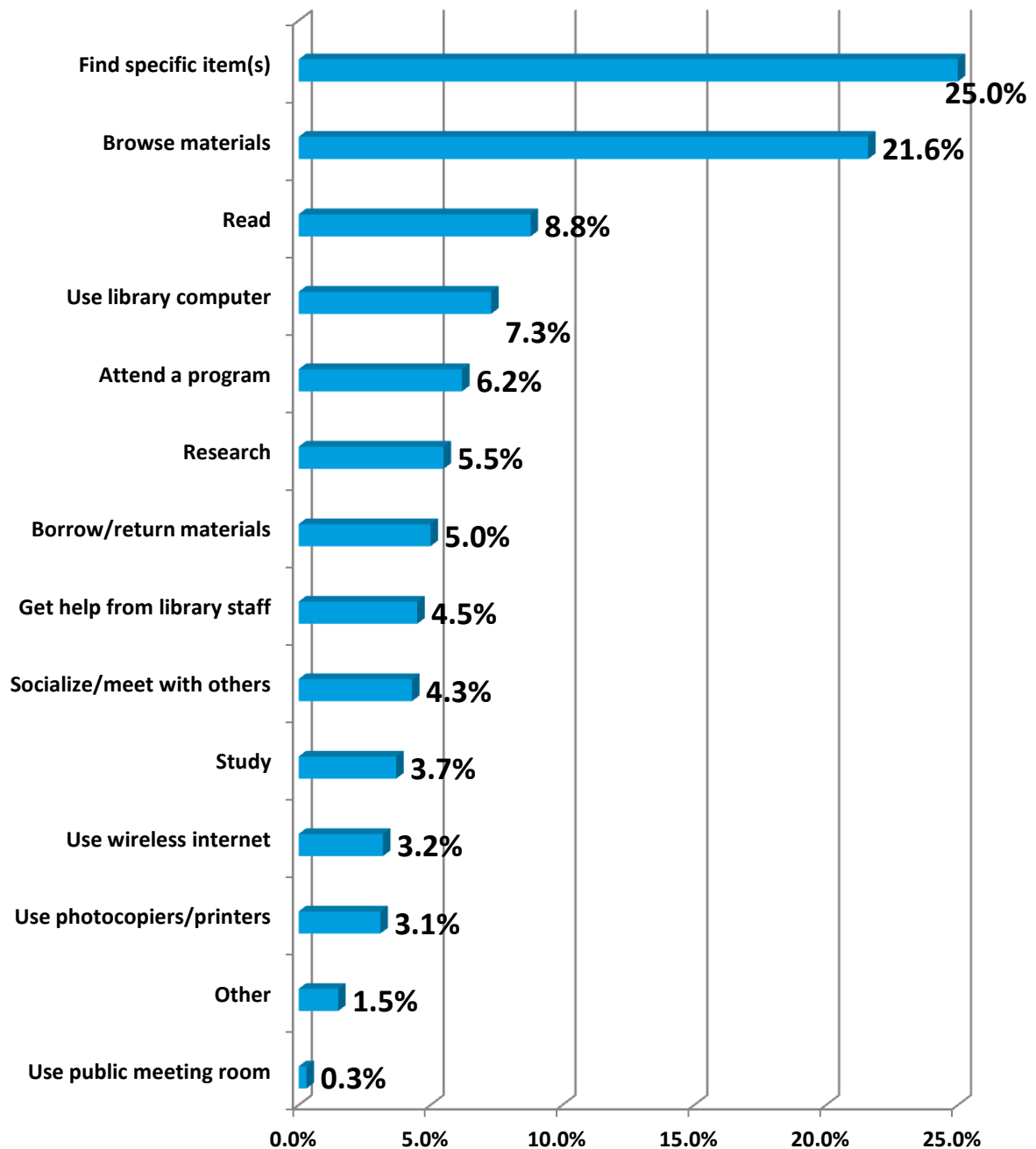| Activity | Percentage |
|---|---|
| Borrow/return materials | 73.3% |
| Use library computer | 4.8% |
| Browse materials | 3.9% |
| Attend a program | 3.5% |
| Study | 3.2% |
| Other | 2.6% |
| Read | 2.5% |
| Find specific item(s) | 2.1% |
| Use wireless internet | 1.3% |
| Research | 1.1% |
| Socialize/meet with others | 1.0% |
| Use public meeting room | 0.4% |
| Use photocopiers/printers | 0.2% |
| Get help from library staff | 0.1% |

Unsurprisingly, given the strong emphasis on collections based activities in the overall selection of reasons for coming to the library, borrowing and/or returning materials was overwhelmingly selected as the most important reason customers come to the library. However, it is interesting to note that using a library computer is the second most commonly selected activity rather than browsing or finding.

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**Chart 6. Second Most Important Reason** (n=1034)



| Reason | Percentage |
|---|---|
| Browse materials | 37.3% |
| Find specific item(s) | 14.6% |
| Borrow/return materials | 13.2% |
| Use library computer | 5.8% |
| Attend a program | 5.6% |
| Read | 4.9% |
| Get help from library staff | 3.4% |
| Study | 3.3% |
| Research | 2.9% |
| Other | 2.3% |
| Use wireless internet | 2.2% |
| Socialize/meet with others | 2.1% |
| Use photocopiers/printers | 2.1% |
| Use public meeting room | 0.1% |

The activity ranked as second most important had a more diverse spread in activities selected. Browsing was selected most frequently with finding and borrowing the next two highest, which is to be expected given that these three activities were selected most frequently overall. Again, it should be noted that using a library computer was the next most frequently selected activity after the three mentioned above. Interestingly, the percentage of customers who selected attending a program was very close to the percentage that selected using a library computer.

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**Chart 7. Third Most Important Reason** (n=963)



| Reason | Percentage |
|---|---|
| Find specific item(s) | 25.0% |
| Browse materials | 21.6% |
| Read | 8.8% |
| Use library computer | 7.3% |
| Attend a program | 6.2% |
| Research | 5.5% |
| Borrow/return materials | 5.0% |
| Get help from library staff | 4.5% |
| Socialize/meet with others | 4.3% |
| Study | 3.7% |
| Use wireless internet | 3.2% |
| Use photocopiers/printers | 3.1% |
| Other | 1.5% |
| Use public meeting room | 0.3% |

As with the second most important reason, the percentage spread of responses to the third most important reason is quite wide. While finding and browsing are the two most frequently selected options as is to be expected, reading was surprisingly the third highest percentage.

## Groups

Three questions were included to explore the use of the library by groups, as this was a substantial theme to come out of the seating sweeps report. The questions captured whether the customer came to the library alone or with others, if they came with others, how many other people were in the group, and the importance to all respondents of space for groups to meet and/or socialize.

**Figure 1. Alone or With Others** (n=1458)
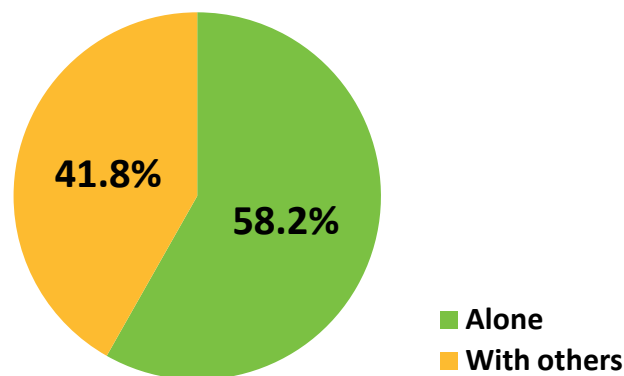


- **Alone**
- **With others**

The split of individuals that come to the library alone versus those that come with others is very close to the percentages found during the seating sweeps report where 40.7% of customers were observed in groups and 59.3% of customers were not.

Respondents that stated they came to the library with others were then asked to select how many other people usually came to the library with them.

**Chart 8. Number of Other People that Come with Respondent** (n=602)



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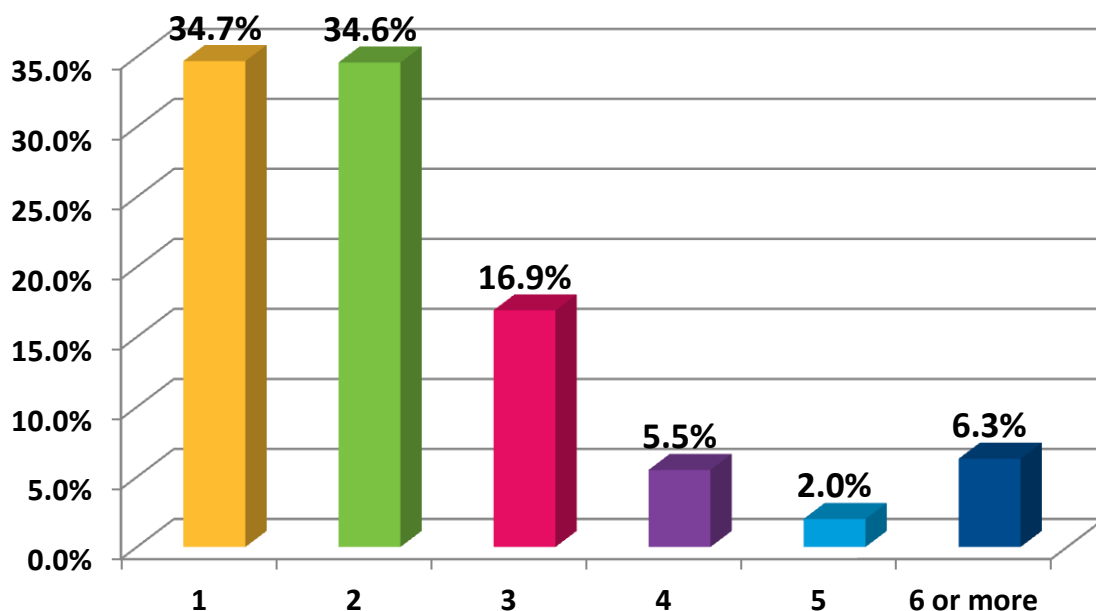
Comparing this data to the group sizes observed during seating sweeps, the very similar percentages for the first two data points (equivalent to groups of two and three) seem slightly irregular as there was a 20% difference between these two groups in the sweeps data. However, the intern hypothesizes that respondents may have misinterpreted the question resulting in respondents selecting the total number of people in their group rather than the number of other people that come to the library with them. Regardless of possible misinterpretation, it should be noted that 86.2% (519/602) of respondents to this question come to the library in groups of four or less.

All respondents, whether they came alone or with others, were asked about the importance of space in the library for groups to meet, socialize, and/or work.

**Chart 9. Importance of Group Space (n=1423)**
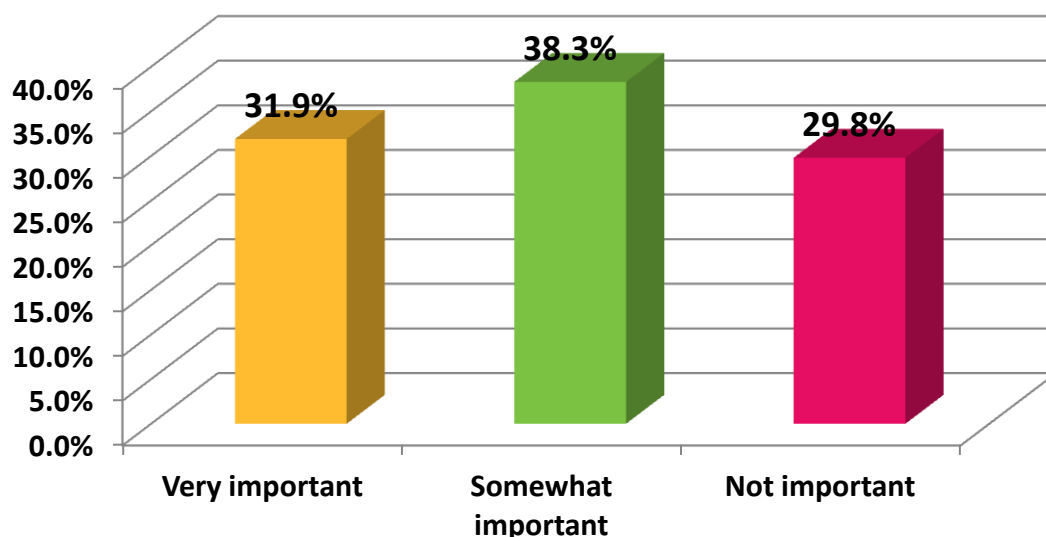


While the difference between the three options is less than 10%, it should be noted that ultimately 70.2% (999/1423) of respondents feel that group space is very or somewhat important.

Of the individuals that selected they came to the library with others, the breakdown of activities for which they typically come to the library does not differ greatly from the overall responses. However, attending a program (26.2%; 160/610) and socialize/meet with others (21.3%; 130/610) are higher within this subgroup. Given that these activities are typically done with others, this is not particularly surprising.

Similarly, when ranking activities, the responses for those who come to the library with others do not differ greatly from the overall responses. There is one exception for activities ranked as most important however. While borrowing is still overwhelmingly the most selected activity for this question (74.1%; 281/379), for respondents that come to the

library with others, attending a program, rather than using a library a computer, is the second highest percentage for this question (7.1%; 27/379).

While the activities do not differ greatly for individuals that come to the library with others, the importance of group space is quite different as would be expected for this subset.

**Chart 10. Importance of Group Space for Individuals that Come with Others** (n=596)
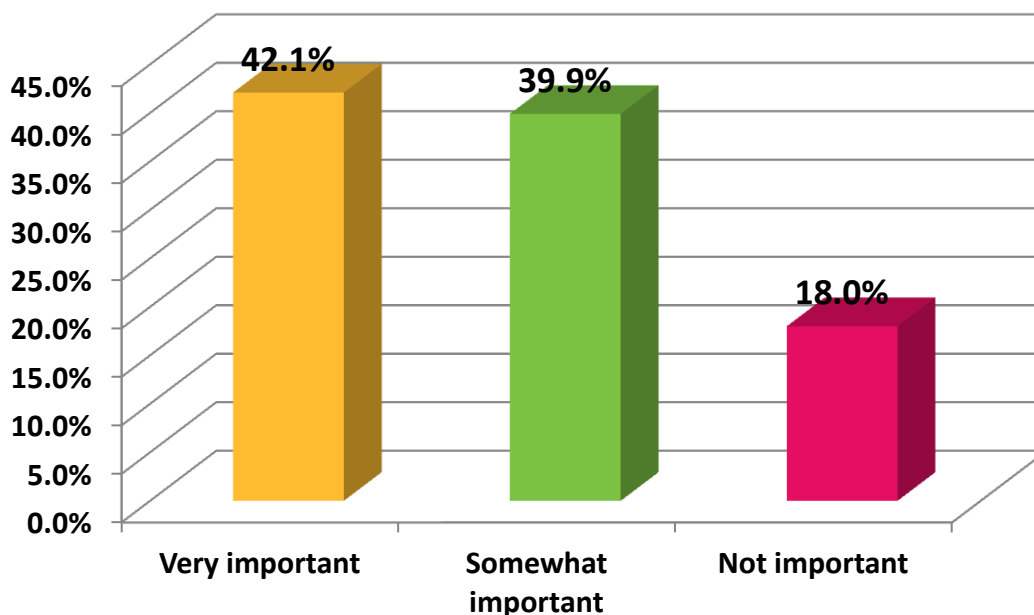


## Demographics

Basic demographics for gender and age were collected from all respondents. The age categories matched with those created for the seating sweeps, however due to EPL policy minors were not included in the survey and any surveys from respondents that wrote in their age as being below 18 were excluded.

**Figure 2. Gender** (n=1351)



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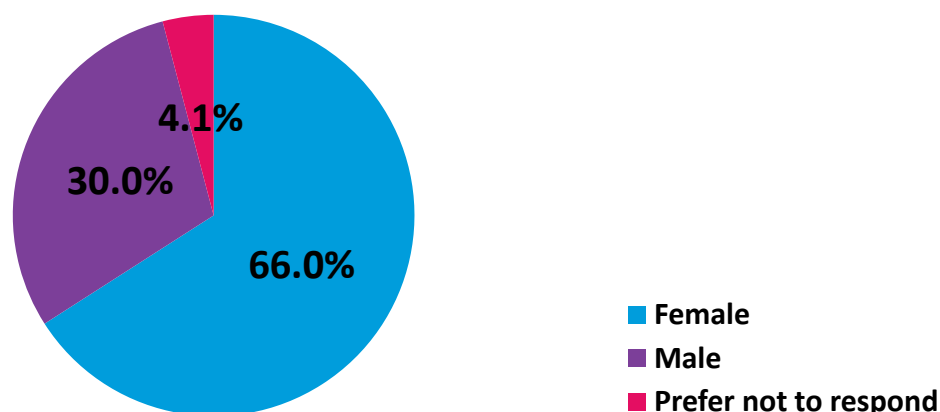
While seating sweeps data found that more males were present in the library at 53.9% and females at 46.1%, the majority of the respondents to the survey were female. This is to be expected as "[g]ender has [...] been found to play a significant role in survey response, with women responding in greater proportions than men" (Porter and Whitcomb 133).

Looking at the responses of women to the multiple choice questions, the responses do not vary greatly which is unsurprising given that they make up the larger group of respondents. However, it is worth noting that when ranking the most important reason they come to the library, after the 78.0% (515/660) of female customers that selected borrowing, the next activity to be chosen most frequently was a tie between attending a program and browsing at 4.4% (29/660), rather than using a library computer.
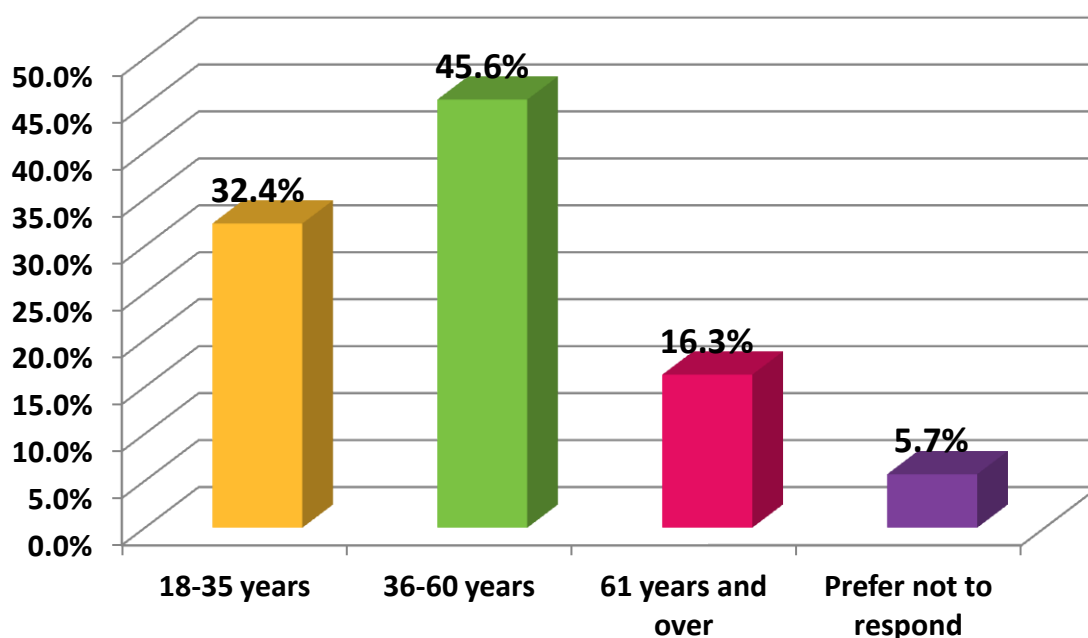
The responses from men to the multiple choice questions, are largely very similar to the responses overall. It should be noted that in selecting the activities for which they come to the library, after borrowing, browsing, and finding, using a library computer was one of the higher percentage choices. However, the responses from men about the importance of group space were quite different from the overall responses.

**Chart 11. Importance of Group Space for Males (n=394)**
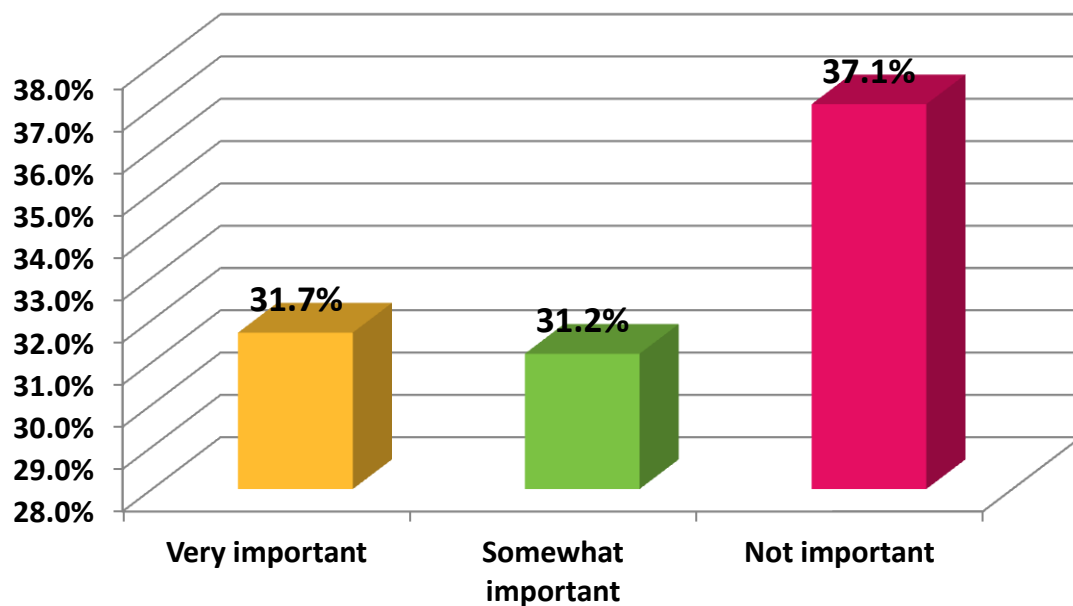


While the highest percentage of men selected that group space was not important to them, it should be noted that the combined value of men that selected very or somewhat important was 62.9% (248/394).

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**Chart 12. Age** (n=1383)



Although minors were not included in the survey, the dispersal of respondents in the various age categories is very similar to the same categories in the seating sweeps.

Exploring responses to the multiple choice questions for the different age groups reveal some interesting differences from the overall responses.

For 18-35 year olds, the activities for which they come to the library do not differ greatly from the overall response. However, it is interesting to note that when ranking the most important reason for visiting the library, after borrowing (67.8%; 221/326) the next most frequently selected activity was studying (6.7%; 22/326).

The most interesting variances from the overall data for the 18-35 year olds were in relation to groups and group space.

**Figure 3. Alone or With Others for 18-35 Year Olds** (n=446)
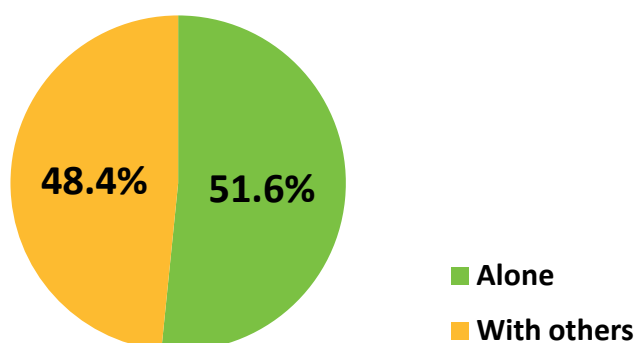


■ Alone
■ With others

The relatively even split within this age group of individuals that come alone or with others becomes even more fascinating when we look at the responses about the importance of group space.

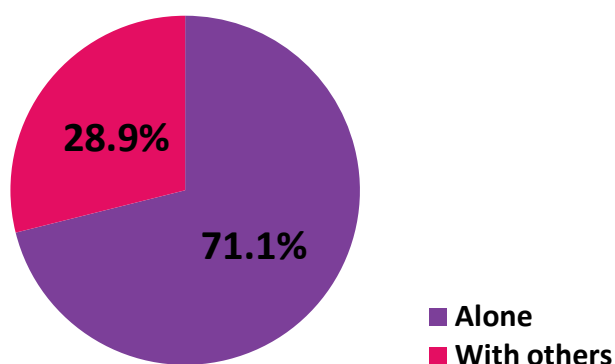**Chart 13. Importance of Group Space for 18-35 Year Olds** (n=439)
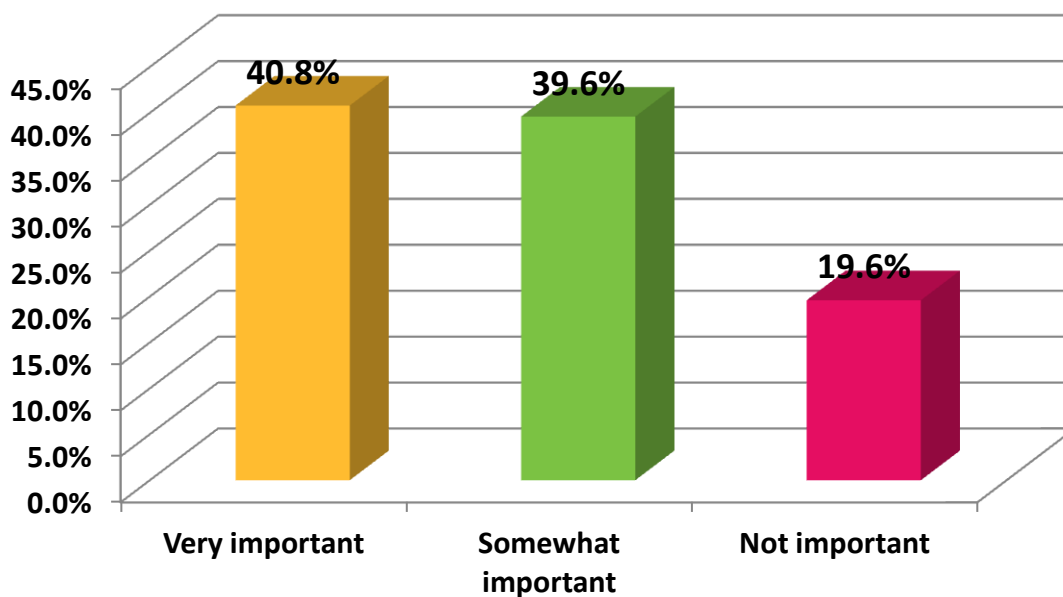


That very important just edges out somewhat important as the most frequently selected response for this age group indicates that this group has higher need and/or willingness to accept the library as a social space.

Unsurprisingly, given the fact that they are the largest age group within the respondents, the responses of 36-60 year olds to the multiple choice questions have almost no variations from the overall responses.

For respondents 61 years and over, the most intriguing variations from the general responses to the multiple choice questions are to the questions on groups.

**Figure 4. Alone or With Others for 61+ Year Olds** (n=225)

With such a large majority of respondents within this age group that come to the library alone, the responses to the question on the importance of group space is not unexpected.

**Chart 14. Importance of Group Space for 61+ Year Olds (n=439)**
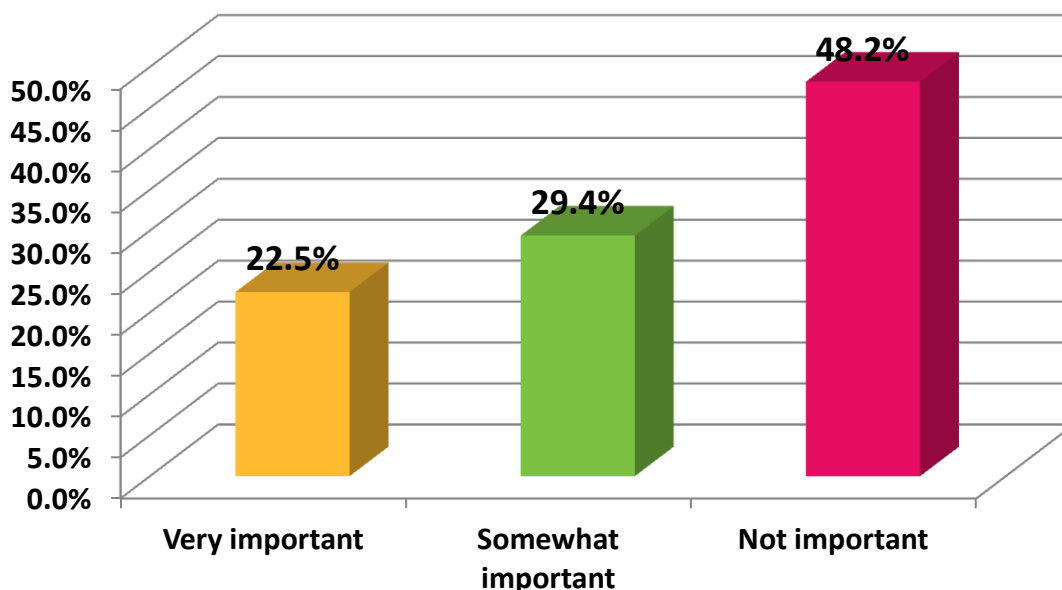


It is interesting to note that not only is not important the most frequently selected option, but that the combined total of very and somewhat important are not the larger majority of responses. Instead, it is a relatively even split. This lack of emphasis on the importance of group space may be the result of a more traditional view of library spaces, a view which is mentioned several times in long answer responses.

## Findings - Long Answer Responses

Five long answer questions were included in the survey to allow customers to share their opinions about library spaces in their own words and give them the opportunity to address topics that were not covered in the closed-ended questions. These five questions were:

- What is your favourite location or place in the library? Why do you like it? (n=1224)
- What is your least favourite location or place in the library? Why do you dislike it? (n=1032)
- If you could change one thing about the library's space, what would it be and why? (n=1019)
- Please describe how EPL could make the library a more inspiring space for you. (n=886)
- Additional comments or suggestions about library space (n=464)

In total, 4625 long answer responses were collected to the five questions. These responses were analyzed in Microsoft Excel using thematic coding.

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## Overarching Themes

In analyzing the responses to the long answer questions, twenty-two themes were identified and used in the coding of the results. Where necessary, more than one theme was assigned to a response. n values listed next to each theme indicate the total number of responses that addressed this theme for all five questions. In total, 106 responses remained uncoded due to their extremely unique nature, their lack of specificity, or their lack of clarity.

## Collections (n=902)

Responses were coded as being about collections if they mentioned a specific format (books, CDs, DVDs, games, toys), a collections area (e.g. newspapers, magazines, fiction, etc.), shelves, or an activity that implies interacting with the collection (e.g. reading). For the question on favourite space in the library, 437 (35.7%) responses mentioned collections. Of the responses about collections, comments often mentioned a specific area as being a favourite (non-fiction, fantasy, DVDs, etc.), while some respondents made comments that shelves or wherever collections of any type were present was their favourite space. As one respondent stated:

> **"[My favourite space is] In the bookshelves. I love books and libraries and for me it feels like I'm in the magical library in a story or that there's infinite adventures for me to choose." (Lois Hole)**

15.1%[3] (66/437) of responses about collections mentioned reading in association with their favourite space and 14.6% (64/437) of responses mentioned browsing. 10.8% (47/437)of responses about collections, mentioned the holds area as being their favourite space. Several of these respondents made comments like the following:

> **"The holds section, as it helps me get in and out quickly. While I like to browse the books occasionally, I typically don't have a lot of time to come in to the library to do so. Being able to browse online and place holds on books is something I really enjoy." (Londonderry)**

87 (8.4%) responses to the question on least favourite space included comments about collections. 12.6% (11/87) of these responses listed specific collections (children's books, magazines, etc.) as the customers' least favourite space because they did not use that collection. 10.3% (9/87) of responses to this question disliked a collection space because the selection was poor. Another 17.2% (15/87) disliked collection spaces where the organization was unclear or finding material was difficult. This complaint was more common for CD and DVD collections, but did also apply to print collections. 16.1% (14/87)

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[3] Subthemes within each theme may overlap, resulting in percentages that may total more than 100%.

of responses that mentioned collections disliked the current space where the collection was located as opposed to the collection itself. Relatedly, 17.2% (15/87) of responses expressed a dislike for certain collections areas due to their lack of accessibility (see Accessibility section).

When asked what one thing they would change about the library space, 147 (14.4%) respondents mentioned collections. 38.1% (56/147) of these were requests for more collections, sometimes a specific genre or format, but often respondents just wrote that they wanted more books. These responses frequently overlapped with the 24.5% (36/147) of respondents that wanted more space for collections. However, in some cases, respondents requested more space for a collection to make it easier to browse. The final major suggestion made in regards to collections was to improve the organization, which appeared in 28.6% (42/147) of responses about collections. As mentioned above, improved organization appeared more often in association with CD and DVD collections, although print collections were not exempt. While some respondents simply requested improved organization, others made more specific suggestions such as alphabetical or genre organization.

180 (20.3%) responses mentioned collections when discussing how to make the library a more inspiring space. 47.8% (86/180) of these responses stated that expanding collections either generally, in a specific subject area, or a specific format, would make the library a more inspiring space. 17.2% (31/180) of respondents that discussed collections mentioned more or improved displays of collections would make the library a more inspiring space. Respondents frequently mentioned staff suggestions as being highly valued in these displays.

51 (11.0%) additional comments mentioned collections. Unsurprisingly, 41.2% (21/51) of these responses were requests for more collections. Several respondents explain this emphasis on collections rather than space similarly to the following comment:

**"I like visiting a beautiful library space, but I prefer having access to as wide a variety of resources as possible. I certainly encourage the library board and the city to invest in beautiful civic spaces, but not at the expense of a good public library collection (which EPL currently has). EPL is a great library and I very much appreciate having access to all the great resources it has." (Stanley A. Milner)**

### Noise Levels (n=646)

Comments about noise levels were very common often with an emphasis on quiet being an ideal goal. 195 (15.9%) responses to the question about the customer's favourite place in the library included comments about noise levels. All of these comments mention quiet as a factor in a specific area being their favourite. 11.8% (23/195) of responses state "Anywhere that's quiet" as being their favourite place in the library. 32.8% (64/195) of

customers mention valuing quiet places as a good space to read, study, work, or write. Quietness is associated with nooks, corners, carrels, or comfortable furniture in 28.2% (55/195) of responses. In the case of comments that mention study or work, tables (often with access to a plug-in) or computers are also included in addition to quiet. 3 customers indicated they had no favourite place as they are unable to find a quiet space in the library.

In answer to the question about their least favourite space, 170 customers mentioned noise levels in their response. While 9.4% (16/170) of responses state that anywhere noisy in the library is their least favourite space, many individuals listed the children's area (22.4%; 38/170) or the computer area (26.5%; 45/170) as their least favourite space due to the noise associated with these areas. Additionally, several responses mention the teen area or anywhere teens are present as a least favourite place for some customers. This is particularly pronounced at Stanley A. Milner where 33.3% of comments (14/42) about noise involve teens and/or the teen area. When talking about noise levels, several responses complain about cell phone usage or individuals using profanity. Some comments refer to the library as a historically quiet space such as in the following comment:

**"I also find nowadays that libraries are far noisier than they used to be. Any social, group study spots should be removed from other areas. People browsing or studying would probably appreciate the quiet, the traditional reverence of the library." (Idylwylde)**

However, other customers are cognizant and accepting of the changes occurring in library spaces:

**"[My least favourite space is] Amid the youngsters. However, I also believe that the library is evolving perfectly to embrace new technology and that means the library is a much more open, loud public space. And it improves literacy for so many new immigrants who come with their children. So I can put up with the extra noise." (Castle Downs)**

For customers that provided reasons as to why they dislike noisy areas, being unable to concentrate on work, study, or reading were the most common. Other individuals simply state that it is disruptive to the atmosphere that they would expect from a library space.

Of the responses addressing the question of what customers would change about the library space, 119 (11.7%) mention noise levels. 40.3% (48/119) of these comments ask for a designated quiet space or more quiet space. 11.8% (14/119) of customers want enclosed quiet or silent spaces while another 4.2% (5/119) suggest having enclosed spaces for groups and/or individuals wanting to talk or socialize. Similarly, customers also suggest enclosing specific areas that tend to be noisy, specifically children's areas (9.2%; 11/119) or

computer areas (4.2%; 5/119). 7.6% (9/119) of responses suggest expanding library space so that distances between quiet and noisier areas can be increased. Again reading and study are the tasks often associated with these quiet zones. Additionally, whatever space solution the customer suggests for providing quiet spaces, 5.8% (7/119) also suggest using signage (e.g. no talking, no cell phones) to maintain the desired noise level. Another 5.0% (6/119) of customers also request staff enforce the noise level by speaking with or ejecting noisy customers.

108 (12.2%) responses to the question about inspiring spaces mentioned noise levels. The majority of these comments make similar or identical suggestions to those made for the question about what customers would change about the library space. However, 8.3% (9/108) of the responses to this question suggest playing "soft" music in the library or, in 2 cases, the A/V section of the library. Suggested genres for this music are usually classical or jazz, although nature sounds were also suggested.

Similarly, the 63 (13.6%) responses to the additional comments question that address noise levels, make comments that are very similar to those described above with many requests for quiet or enforcing a no noise policy. A few customers simply request a balance in the noise levels at the library:

**"I don't suggest we return to the times when any kind of sound or interaction was disallowed in a library, but it seems the EPL pendulum has swung the other way, and now encourages almost a playground atmosphere.  I would like to have a library that also continues to provide a place for those who need a quiet, safe place for concentration and study." (Mill Woods)**

### Non-responses (n=619)
Answers to the long answer questions were categorized as non-responses when phrases such as N/A, none, nothing, I don't know, etc. were used.

For the question on favourite space, there were 38 non-responses, 3.1% of all responses to this question. It should be noted, that a non-response does not necessarily indicate a dislike of library spaces in general. Several respondents explicitly stated they did not spend enough time in the library to have a favourite space. Responses could be interpreted as neutral or indications that the respondent uses the library but does not actively use the space.

In answer to the least favourite space question there were 321 non-responses, 31.1% of all responses to this question. Similar to non-responses for the question on favourite space, these responses cannot be interpreted as satisfaction with the library space (see Satisfaction section). As in the previous question, some respondents indicated they had no least favourite space as they do not spend enough time in the library.

129 (non-responses were given for the question about one thing the customer would change about library space, 12.7% of the total number of responses for this question. The question on making spaces more inspiring generated 80 non-responses, 9.0% of all responses for the question. Some of these non-responses appeared to be the result of confusion about the question. One respondent stated:

**"'Inspiring?' I get inspired by random things. Was this just some buzzword question cooked up? Inspire what? Story ideas to write about? Books to read?" (Woodcroft)**

Finally, 51 non-responses were made for the additional comments section, making up 11.0% of the total responses for the question.

### Furniture (n=572)

279 (22.8%) responses to the question on favourite place in the library mentioned furniture. Of these comments, 19.7% (55/279) simply stated sitting or reading areas were their favourite place in the library. 43.4% (121/279) of responses indicated comfortable seating (usually chairs or couches) as being a favourite place in the library. Many of these comments associated reading, browsing materials before checking out, and studying as activities done in this type of furniture. Comments about sitting/reading areas and comfortable furniture also often indicated natural light as being a factor in these spaces being a favourite place (see Lighting section) such as in the comment below:

**"I like the area close to the windows, near the fireplace, in the comfy chairs. I can feel comfortable and set myself up with my work and/or reading without feeling like I'm being watched, and yet in a space where my presence is accepted and I can see out." (Idylwylde)**

13.6% (38/279) of respondents favoured carrels or desks, usually for reading or studying. 24.0% (67/279) of comments mentioned tables as being a factor in a space being a favourite. Several responses mention the ability to be able to "spread out" as a positive aspect of this furniture type. Many respondents viewed tables as places to work quietly as an individual or as space to study and/or work in a group. A few responses mentioned both uses.

Only 56 (5.4%) responses mentioned furniture in association with the customer's least favourite place. Of these, 42.9% (24/56) of comments were complaints about lack of seating in a specific area, such as in the stacks, or complaints about insufficient seating in reading areas. An additional 7.1% (4/56) disliked the lack of tables or desks. 17.9% (10/56) of customers disliked areas near tables or clusters of chairs due to the noise associated

with the groups that use these spaces. Finally, 12.5% (7/56) of responses disliked uncomfortable seating or "cramped" work spaces (usually carrels).

When making suggestions about one thing they would change about library space, 140 (13.7%) customer responses addressed furniture. 27.1% (38/140) of comments requested more or a bigger seating/reading area.  Similarly, another 27.1% (38/140) expressed a desire for more comfortable seating. Several of these comments explicitly requested comfortable seating in quiet areas. 30.7% (43/140) of comments asked for more workspaces, particularly more private workspaces such as carrels or smaller tables. However, there were also suggestions for tables for group work.

In the 80 (9.0%) responses that mention furniture when discussing how the library could be a more inspiring space, the same three subthemes appear as those for what customers would change about library space. 40.0% (32/80) of the comments wanted more seating and/or reading areas. 32.5% (26/80) wanted more comfortable seating and 17.5% (14/80) found more workspaces (e.g. tables or carrels) desirable. In many cases, customers also expressed a desire for quiet with these seating and workspaces. Only 17 (3.7%) of the additional comments mentioned furniture, the majority of which express appreciation of or desire for comfortable seating and/or workspaces.

### Technology (n=534)

For the question on favourite spaces, 172 (14.1%) responses mentioned technology. 74.4% (128/172) of these comments mentioned computers as being the major reason for a space being a favourite. It should be noted that customers did not differentiate between catalogue stations, computer workstations, and/or early literacy stations. 7.6% (13/172) of responses mentioned access to plug-ins in association with their favourite space. These responses also overlapped frequently with the 9.3% (16/172) of respondents that preferred spaces where they could use a laptop. 4.7% (8/172) mentioned areas with Wi-Fi as their favourite space. 8.7% (15/172) of respondents stated self-checkouts were their favourite space in the library, often describing them as convenient.

138 (13.3%) responses to the question on least favourite space indicated technology was a factor in their dislike. 5.8% (8/138) of these responses simply stated computers were their least favourite space. 27.5% (38/138) of responses indicated respondents disliked the computer areas due to the noise associated with them. As one respondent stated:

### "Put a cone of silence around the library computers." (Mill Woods)

21.7% (30/138) of responses said that other computer users were the reason the customer disliked the space. 21.0% (29/138) disliked computer areas due to the lack of space around computer stations and/or the lack of privacy. 3.6% (5/138) of respondents expressed a dislike of areas that did not have convenient and/or any plug-ins. Another 3.6% (5/138) felt there were insufficient self-checkouts.

Of things customers would change about library space, 133 (13.1%) responses discussed technology. 20.3% (27/133) of respondents wanted more computers. Again, please note that computers include catalogue stations, computer workstations, and early literacy computers. 27.8% (37/133) of responses suggested moving computers. Some of these respondents wanted computers relocated to a different area in the library, some wanted all the computers located in one central location, and others wanted computers spread out through the library. These responses overlapped with comments made by staff during the Site Inventory. 6.0% (8/133) wanted more space around each workstation in order to increase privacy when using computers. 2.2% (3/133) of responses mentioned increasing computer time. Other suggestions related to technology included 12.0% (16/133) of responses which wanted more or better access to plug-ins (often in association with furniture) and 5.3% (7/133) of responses which requested more self-checkouts.

When suggesting how to make the library a more inspiring space, 60 (6.8%) responses discussed technology. Of these responses, 11.7% (7/60) suggested more computers and 11.7% (7/60) suggested more computer/internet time. 10.0% (6/60) wanted more or better access to plug-ins. In line with current trends in library spaces, 10.0% (6/60) of responses suggested including viewing, listening, and/or gaming spaces in the library. The 30 (6.4%) additional comments about technology predominantly expressed appreciation for the technological services the library provides with a particular emphasis on EPL's website. Other responses in this category made suggestions for changes similar to those outlined above.

### Satisfaction (n=461)

Answers were coded as being expressions of satisfaction when respondents expressed positive opinions about the library as a whole. While many responses to all five questions were positive, a response was only coded as satisfaction if it was positive but generic (e.g. "I love the library"). 32 responses to the question on favourite space expressed general satisfaction, making up 2.6% of the total responses to this question. These responses were all variations on the concept that the customer liked all areas of the library with no specific favourite space.

55 responses to the question about least favourite space expressed satisfaction, 5.3% of the total responses. With the exception of two responses which had minor complaints but then expressed general satisfaction, all of these comments stated the customer had no least favourite space and instead liked the whole library.

When asked what they would change about the library, 79 responses (7.8% of total responses for this question) were generally satisfied with the library and for the most part desired no changes. 10.1% (8/79) of these responses mentioned one thing they would like to see changed but were otherwise satisfied with library spaces.

153 responses to the question on making spaces more inspiring expressed satisfaction, 17.3% of the total responses to this question. Many responses were similar to the following one:

**"I am completely happy with the library and have been for 35 years." (Highlands)**

Of the additional comments, 142 were statements of satisfaction, 30.6% of the total responses to this question.

### Space (n=412)

Responses were coded as being about space when respondents referred to the size of the library space and/or used certain descriptors such as "open," "cramped," "nook," and similar phrases when describing a specific area within the library or the library as a whole. It was also assigned to comments that mentioned enclosed spaces. 45 (3.7%) responses to the question on favourite space were coded as being about space. Of these responses, 51.1% (23/45) preferred areas that were open while 20.0% (9/45) preferred smaller areas like corners or nooks. A further 11.1% (5/45) preferred enclosed spaces such as meeting or study rooms. 11.1% (5/45) of responses (all from eplGO and Highlands) indicated that they had not particular favourite space as the library was so small.

50 (4.8%) responses to the question on least favourite space were coded as being about space. The majority of these responses were complaints about insufficient space, 64.0% (32/50) of them referring to specific areas and 24.0% (12/50) referring to the library space as a whole.

190 (18.6%) responses to the question about things the customer would change were about space. The overwhelming majority of these responses want to expand library space, with 53.2% (101/190) wanting to expand the entire library and 27.4% (52/190) that want to expand specific areas such as reading, study, teen, and children's spaces. Similarly, of the 90 (10.2%) responses to the more inspiring question about space, 41.1% (37/90) of the responses would expand the library space. As one respondent commented:

**"An increase in the amount of space - to make it feel more roomy. This would allow more space for computer areas, for tables, for comfy chairs, etc. This would also increase the distance between quieter study areas and the noisier social areas (both of which are important)." (Londonderry)**

Intriguingly, 34.4% (31/90) of respondents requested more nooks or enclosed spaces to make the library more inspiring. The 37 (8.0%) additional comments about space discuss

topics similar to those outlined above, with a majority of the comments requesting an expansion in library space.

### Other People (n=375)

Responses were coded as being about other people not only when respondents referred to other individuals but also when phrases such as "busy," "crowded," or "empty" were used.

When discussing their favourite place in the library, 56 (4.6%) responses from customers indicated that other people were a factor. Of these responses 25.0% (14/56) of individuals appreciate areas where they can be alone and 66.1% (37/56) of individuals want to see and/or interact with other people. In the former group of responses 28.6% (4/14) specified areas that usually have no other people in them while 71.4% (10/14) mentioned areas that are not crowded or have low traffic. Another facet of these responses is a preference for areas where it is easy to have a considerable amount of space between the respondent and other library users. In the latter group, however, 27.0% (10/37) of responses mentioned spaces where customers could see and hear other people but not necessarily interact with them as a favourite space. The remaining 72.9% (27/37) of respondents in this group preferred spaces where they could socialize, meet, and/or study with other customers.

167 (16.2%) responses indicated that other people were a factor in an area being their least favourite place. Other people are particularly an issue at Stanley A. Milner as 62 responses (33% of total responses from Stanley A. Milner about least favourite space) to this question included comments on this topic, although comments from other branches, while fewer, were very similar. However, only Stanley A. Milner and Strathcona had comments from customers about disliking the front entrance due to people that spend time in that area. The theme of other people frequently overlaps with the theme on noise levels with complaints about loudness, swearing, and cell phone use. 38.2% (64/167) of comments mention disliking crowded areas, particularly areas around computers and self-checkouts (see Technology section) with 53.1% (34/64) and 12.5% (8/64) of comments regarding crowding being about these areas respectively. 27.5% (46/167) of comments indicate that any areas where teens, homeless, or other individuals perceived to be threatening are found are customers' least favourite place in the library. Some of these complaints appear to come from the conflict in customers' perceptions of what is appropriate usage of the library space, such as the comment that states:

**"Any area that is being used for purposes that were not intended for the space... visiting, chatting, sleeping, warming up, people mistreating facilities... feet up on study desks, using library computers for game playing or social media." (Stanley A. Milner)**

89 (8.7%) comments about things customers would change about the library involve other people. Many suggestions are very similar to those for noise levels which include moving areas or increasing space in order to decrease the noise, crowding, and/or current levels of

traffic. 18.0% (16/89) of responses request an increase in space intended for groups. As one customer commented:

**"I would want it to be larger just so that there's more space to do different things. For example, right now there are tables at the back but it's in a quiet space. If the library was larger, it would be possible for certain areas to be moderately louder without disturbing other people. One of the things I like about the library is that it can serve as a meeting place. When I was younger especially, I would meet up with friends who live nearby in the library. It has always been nice to have the library around since it's a free public space with a welcoming atmosphere and a shelter from the cold." (Riverbend)**

Another suggestion that appeared in 12.4% (11/89) of responses, mostly for Stanley A. Milner but at other branches as well, was staff and/or security discouraging "undesirable" individuals from using the library space.

In the 43 (4.9%) responses that mention other people for the more inspiring question and the 20 (4.3%) responses to the additional comments section, the comments are all very similar to those outlined for the things to change question. A few comments in these sections outline the potential for libraries as public community spaces to allow for connections between individuals, but far more request that certain user groups (e.g. teens, homeless) be prevented from using library space. An example of the former type of comment is:

**"The library's potential as a social space is huge! It could be a central meeting space for community hearings, fund-raisers for various groups with a literacy or knowledge transfer focus, or a place where community members could get information on large societal events." (Woodcroft)**

An extreme example of the latter is:

**"Get the homeless and drug kids out of library." (Stanley A. Milner)**

### Children's Areas (n=372)

213 (17.4%) responses indicated that the children's area of the library was the customer's favourite place. Many comments simply stated "Children's area" or a variation thereof. For responses that expanded on the response, positive comments were often made about the collections in these spaces, both books and toys, (25.8%; 55/213) and computers (9.9%;

21/213). Comments from Idylwylde, Jasper Place, Lois Hole, Stanley A. Milner, Strathcona, and Woodcroft also mentioned the fish tank as being an attractive aspect of this area. 6.1% (13/213) of responses from all branches also praised the social aspect of this area of the library that allowed the customer's child(ren) to interact with other children. 5.2% (11/213) of comments also expressed a desire for or appreciation of adult-sized furniture in the children's area for several different reasons including browsing materials while children utilize the space, reading to children, interacting with other parents, and nursing. These responses overlap with comments made by staff during the Site Inventory. Interestingly, 3 responses stated that the children's area was the respondent's favourite place although they did not actually use it. In these cases, the customers simply appreciated the aesthetic aspects of these areas of the library. As one of the comments stated:

**"I like the children's section even though I don't actually go in there, but it is inviting, spacious, nice lighting- If I was a child I would like being in that space" (Riverbend).**

Of the 53 (5.1%) responses that stated the children's area was their least favourite place in the library, 52.8% (28/53) indicated that this was due to the noise levels associated with this area (see Noise Levels section). Other reasons for disliking the area were that it was not a space that the customer uses (3.8%; 2/53), the lack of adult seating (3.8%; 2/53), or a general lack of space in this area (9.4%; 5/53). 2 responses to this question were actually positive comments about the children's area.

In answer to the question about what the customer would change about the library's spaces, 69 (6.8%) responses mentioned the children's areas. Changes customers want to see in this area include expanding the space (36.2%; 25/69), increasing the collections available (both books and toys) (8.7%; 6/69), and having or increasing the number of adult-sized furniture in the children's area (particularly comfortable seating like couches) (7.2%; 5/69). 23.1% (16/69) of responses suggested the children's area be enclosed for a few different reasons. The first reason is to decrease the noise in the library (see Noise Levels section). The second is to prevent young children from getting away from parents. The third reason is related to the second as some individuals express the desire for the area to be enclosed so that the customer can browse the adult collections (or engage in other activities) while ensuring that their child(ren) are safe in the children's area.

28 (3.2%) responses on how to make the library a more inspiring space include comments about children's areas. The majority of the suggestions are similar to those made for the things customers would change about library space. Interestingly, there were 2 comments requesting the library provide space or collections for parents inside the children's area.

Of the additional comments, only 9 (1.9%) are related to children's areas. A few of these comments express satisfaction with the children's areas and the rest repeat suggestions made for changing the space or making the space more inspiring.

**Facilities (n=316)**

The category of facilities encompassed quite a diverse range of comments about EPL spaces. Responses coded for facilities discussed topics such as building location, café-type spaces, cleanliness, doors/entryways, floors and walls, item returns (internal and external), library hours, temperature, and/or washrooms.

Only 6 (0.5%) responses to the favourite space question mentioned facilities. 2 of these were about washrooms (Idylwylde and Stanley A. Milner), 1 was about elevator and escalator access at Stanley A. Milner, 1 was about the Second Cup at Stanley A. Milner, 1 about the bulletin board at Strathcona, and 1 about the outdoor return at Whitemud Crossing.

98 (9.5%) responses to the least favourite space question were coded for facilities, 64.3% (63/98) of which mentioned washrooms. 35.0% (22/63) of those comments were specifically about washrooms at Stanley A. Milner. Often linked with washrooms, was dissatisfaction with cleanliness in the library with 35.7% (35/98) of responses mentioning it. Unsurprisingly, 28.4% (27/95) of responses to the question on things to change about library spaces were also about washrooms.

In looking at responses to the questions on things to change about the library, how to make the library more inspiring, and additional comments, similar subthemes recur multiple times. While numbers are smaller for these subthemes when each question is considered individually, considering the responses to these three questions as a single set makes it clear how substantive these themes are.

In total, 212 (8.9%) responses involved facilities for these three questions. 15.1% (32/212) of responses discussed library hours, with all requesting extended hours. Many responses gave specific opening and closing times respondents would prefer, with earlier opening, later closing, and longer hours on weekends. 12.7% (27/212) of responses expressed customers' desire for a café-type space or provision of food within the library. 5.2% (11/212) of responses requested improved or more item returns both inside library branches as well as external drop-offs to use outside library hours. Interestingly, one respondent that discussed library facilities made the following comment about the question on inspiring spaces:

**"I don't need the library to be an 'inspiring' space. I need it to be an attractive space that serves the various needs of the community. You've got public spaces, computers, children's areas, books, etc. All the components are there, it just needs to look nice and modern instead of drab." (Castle Downs)**

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Spread the words.

### Lighting (n=190)

Responses that explicitly mentioned lighting as well as those that referred to windows in their comments were coded as being about lighting.

Overwhelmingly, responses to all 5 questions put a high priority on windows and natural lighting. 74 (6.0%) responses to the question about a customer's favourite place in the library mentioned lighting and only 2 of those responses expressed appreciation for darker areas of the library. Predictably, given the preference for brighter spaces, all 17 (1.6%) responses to the question on least favourite space mention darker areas of the library or spaces without windows. 8 of these comments complain about the lack of lighting in the basement of Strathcona. 40 (3.9%) comments about things customers would change about the library and 43 (4.9%) comments about making the library a more inspiring space involve lighting with the majority of suggestions asking for more windows/natural light or better lighting in general. For example:

**"I would love it if there were more quiet reading nooks, more study rooms, and lots and lots of natural light." (Woodcroft)**

Similarly, the 8 (1.7%) additional comments about lighting express an appreciation or desire for more windows/natural light.

### Staff (n=165)

Comments about staff were overwhelmingly positive. 37 (3.0%) responses to the question on favourite space mentioned areas where staff were found or just staff specifically. All of these responses were positive with many respondents describing staff as kind, friendly, and/or helpful. The number of responses to the question about least favourite space and a thing to change about the library were very small (9 (0.9%) and 10 (1.0%) respectively). It is interesting to note that for things to change 3 comments were about expanding space for staff at eplGO and 3 were requests for the return of the service desk on the 2nd floor of Stanley A. Milner. The majority of the 37 (4.1%) responses to the question about making the library a more inspiring space and the 72 (15.5%) additional comments about staff were also positive. The few suggestions for change were for staff to actively enforce noise levels or expressing misgivings about staff being out on the floor. However, the majority of responses expressed sentiments like the following response to the question about inspiring spaces:

**"It's the staff - their eagerness to assist and incredible breadth of knowledge - that makes the library such a positive and inviting space." (Woodcroft)**

### Programming (n=157)

Responses were coded as being about programming if they mentioned either program space or programs of some kind. 36 (2.9%) responses to the question on favourite spaces

mentioned either programs or program spaces. 2 (0.2%) responses mentioned programming in association with their least favourite space. 8 (0.8%) comments on things to change about the library mentioned programming, with requests for either more programs, programs on a specific topic, or more program space.

Programming was mentioned most frequently as a factor in making the library a more inspiring space, with 89 (10.0%) responses on this topic. The majority of these responses suggest having more programs or offering programs at different times. Of these responses, 30.3% (27/89) mention adult programming and 27.0% (24/89) mention children's programming.

**"Apart from providing a quiet, secluded space for serious study, I appreciate a library that provides cultural stimulation as well. The Whitemud Library does provide some live classical music recitals, but more would be appreciated - along with more talks and author readings. But these should be advertised outside the library as well - e.g. as free listings in Vue Weekly magazine and, especially, as free announcements on local CBC and CKUA radio." (Whitemud Crossing)**

The 22 (4.7%) additional comments that mention programming likewise either express a desire for more programs or an appreciation of programs currently being offered.

### Accessibility (n=134)

In response to the question on favourite space, 10 (0.8%) responses included comments about accessibility. The majority of these responses favoured the branch as a whole as an easy place to which to get. 64 (6.2%) responses to the question least favourite space mentioned poor accessibility as a factor. 29.7% (19/64) of these responses were dissatisfied with the amount of space between shelving units, mentioning that it was awkward if there were two or more people in an aisle. Some respondents also mentioned these areas were difficult to navigate with a stroller or wheelchair. 15.6% (10/64) of responses disliked collections on the bottom shelf (particularly holds) which made them harder to access. As one respondent noted:

**"I place holds on a regular basis and feel there could be improvement in this area. Sometimes my items are on a bottom shelf which is very difficult to access. The slips of paper inserted in the books sometimes fall out. This is a very frustrating area of the library." (Riverbend)**

25.0% (16/64) of respondents were displeased with building accessibility, particularly ramp and door access but also washroom access, not just for individuals with disabilities but also small children.

When discussing what they would change about library space, 46 (4.5%) responses mentioned accessibility. 39.1% (18/46) of these responses suggested increasing space between shelving units to increase accessibility, and a further 10.9% (5/46) wanted to change collections kept on the bottom shelf. A further 6 (0.7%) responses to the question on inspiring spaces and 8 (1.7%) additional comments mentioned accessibility, discussing many of the same issues outlined for the previous questions.

### Features (n=101)

59 (4.8%) responses to the question on favourite space mentioned features. These positive comments came exclusively from Abbottsfield (5.1%; 3/59), Idylwylde (44.1%; 26/59), Lois Hole (16.9%; 10/59), Stanley A. Milner (3.4%; 2/59), Strathcona (16.9%; 10/59), and Whitemud Crossing (13.6%; 8/59). Of these responses, 74.6 (44/59) were about fireplaces and 28.8% (17/59) were about fish tanks. Many responses were similar to the following:

**"I like reading by the fireplace. It makes me feel like I am in a cabin somewhere." (Idylwylde)**

Only 5 (0.5%) responses to the question on least favourite space mentioned features. 1 was a complaint about the perceived cost of the fireplace, the remaining 4 indicating that there was insufficient space around features.

Features were mentioned in 15 (1.5%) responses to the question about changes to the space. Just less than half of these comments requested changes to the space around a feature by either having more space around them or providing more seating near the feature. The remaining comments were requests for a fireplace or fish tank (or more fish tanks) and suggestions for other types of features (usually a water feature like a waterfall).

14 (1.6%) responses mentioned features as a way to make the space more inspiring. Requests were relatively evenly split for a fish tank (or more fish tanks), a fireplace, or a water feature. 8 (1.7%) additional comments mention features and are nearly split in half in expressing appreciation or a desire for a fireplace and/or fish tank.

### Branch (n=75)

33 (2.7%) respondents to the question on favourite space and 22 (2.1%) respondents to the question on least favourite space, interpreted the question at a branch level rather than answering the question with areas within the branch they selected as the one visited most often. Additionally, responses were coded as being about branches when the respondent discussed a branch other than the one they selected as their main branch, although they were also coded for additional themes mentioned in their response, where applicable. 5

(0.5%) responses to things the customer would change about the library, 3 (0.3%) responses to the inspiring spaces question, and 12 (2.6%) additional comments were all coded as being about other branches.

## Outdoors (n=74)

Comments were coded as being about the outdoors when they either referred to views outside of windows or to spaces outside the library building. Of the 11 (0.9%) responses to the favourite spaces question, all of them indicate that the views outside are a factor in a space being their favourite place.

When discussing their least favourite space, 36 (3.5%) responses mentioned the outdoors, the majority of these responses being about Stanley A. Milner (63.9%; 23/36). All of the comments for Stanley A. Milner about the outdoors are about the area outside the main entrance. 78.2% (18/23) of these responses cite the people in this area as the reason for its being their least favourite space, often in association with perceived safety (see Safety section). As one respondent stated:

**"The main entrance - too many people smoking, spitting, swearing and generally loitering around the entrance doors (outside). I realize though that there is a major bus stop just a few feet away so not much can be done.  It would be nice if the city moved the bus stop away from the library though.  Unless it's during the day, I get nervous about going to the library downtown." (Stanley A. Milner)**

Reasons for disliking external spaces at other branches included insufficient or awkward parking areas, lack of outdoor seating, and no bike racks.

Of the 14 (1.4%) comments addressing the external space as the thing customers would change, 64.3% (9/14) suggest more parking and 21.4% (3/14) request an outdoor patio area. The 9 (1.0%) responses to the inspiring spaces question and the 4 (0.9%) additional comments about the outdoors discuss many of the same topics as outlined for the previous questions.

## Artwork (n=73)

Artwork was predominantly a theme in the response to the question on inspiring spaces. Only 3 (0.2%) responses to the question about favourite space, 7 (0.7%) suggestions about things to change, and 5 (1.1%) additional comments mentioned artwork, with all comments being positive and in favour of more artwork in the library. 58 (6.5%) responses to the inspiring spaces question mentioned artwork (which encompasses photographs, posters, statuary, paintings, and general references to art). 15.5% (9/58) of these responses indicated the high importance of local art(ists) being used in library spaces. One respondent made a fascinating suggestion that blended art and technology:

*"Perhaps the library could consult with the new gallery regarding the display of public art in the various branches. Flat panels are becoming affordable enough, that individual panels, or media walls could display paintings, photos, drawings, film, etc. Even if we can't have access to the originals, they can still be appreciated on a high resolution screen. Degas, to Ansel Adams to ...?" (Lois Hole)*

### Safety (n=68)

Responses were coded as being about safety when they explicitly referred to a space being safe or unsafe or mentioned security, as well as more oblique statements describing spaces as isolated. No responses to the question on favourite space mentioned safety. 33 (3.2%) responses to the question on least favourite space were about safety. Of these responses, 66.7% (22/33) were about Stanley A. Milner. 40.9% (9/22) of respondents dislike the main entrance at Stanley A. Milner due to perceived lack of safety and 18.2% (4/22) of respondents dislike the washrooms for the same reason. 40.9% (9/22) of Stanley A. Milner's respondents feel that areas where certain types of library customers (usually homeless and/or teens) are present are unsafe. For respondents from other branches that mentioned safety in association with their least favourite space, the majority of comments refer to spaces near the back of libraries or in basements (for applicable branches) that are often described as isolated and/or unsafe.

13 (1.3%) responses to the things to change about library space were about safety and all but one were about Stanley A. Milner. 75.0% (9/12) of the suggestions for Stanley A. Milner are for increased security through the use of security guards and/or security cameras. However, the majority of these comments come from respondents that have more restrictive ideas as to who are appropriate library users, such as the following comment:

*"Most important would be to keep the facilities used for studying, research, and reading... When non-serious persons flock into the library area to socialize, warm up, or just use the washroom facilities, the library becomes an area where one doesn't feel safe. If I don't feel safe, I don't frequent the location." (Stanley A. Milner)*

The 13 (1.5%) responses to the more inspiring spaces that focus on safety are all from Stanley A. Milner and are very similar to the responses for the previous question. Similarly, the 9 (1.9%) additional comments, all but 2 of which are about Stanley A. Milner are also similar to those outlined above.

### Signage and Wayfinding (n=58)

While 58 (1.3%) respondents mentioned signage and/or wayfinding in their responses to the five long answer responses, there were no dominant subthemes within this category.

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Instead responses were incredibly diverse discussing everything from item labeling, no noise signage, signage indicating where to form lines for service desks or self-checkouts, LRT signage, the lack of branch floor plans available, and exterior signage, among other topics. The number of responses about signage and wayfinding for each question are as follows: 1 (0.1%) for favourite space, 5 (0.5%) for least favourite space, 16 (1.6%) for things to change, 16 (1.8%) for more inspiring, and 4 (0.9%) additional comments.

### Colour (n=50)

All customer comments about space and colour refer to wall colouring. All comments regarding colour refer positively towards warm and/or bright colours, with very little variation. 3 (0.2%) responses to the question on favourite space mention colour and 2 (0.2%) comments mention it for least favourite space. 9 (0.9%) comments about changing library space suggest changing colours in library spaces. 35 (4.0%) responses to the question on inspiring spaces mention colour, all of which suggest brighter and more colour being used in the library space. Only 1 (0.2%) additional comment mentioned colour. An example of the typical comment for this theme would be:

**"Add more warm vibrant colours to the living space." (Abbottsfield)**

### Plants (n=24)

All comments about plants expressed an appreciation for plants currently in the library or a desire for more plants in the library, with only one respondent mentioning silk plants. 1 (0.1%) respondent mentioned plants for the favourite space question, 4 (0.4%) mentioned them as one of the things they would change, 15 (1.7%) responses talked about plants for inspiring spaces, and 4 (0.9%) additional comments were about plants. An example of a comment for this theme includes:

**"Make it feel more alive through the use of green walls, water features, and more natural light." (Stanley A. Milner)**

### Hackerspaces (n=5)

A very small theme that was not included as one of the twenty-two coding themes but that was surprising and pleasant to see, were the five respondents who expressed a desire for a hackerspace in the library. This developing trend in library spaces was mentioned in responses to the question on things to change (1), making the library more inspiring (3), and additional comments (1). The comments are as follows:

**"Programs that encourage people to learn from and teach each other. Kind of a hacker-space mentality." (eplGO)**

**"It would be great if libraries had space available for use as a kind of maker-space with equipment such as 3D printers that could facilitate collaborative learning and project creation. A place for**

people to exchange knowledge and come together to create something." (epIGO)

"If there were Hacker spaces where people could create and explore art, science, and technology I think that would be wonderful!" (Highlands)

"It would be really neat if the EPL had some hackerspaces." (Whitemud Crossing)

"At this time I really only use the library to borrow books, but if there were spaces dedicated as a kind of maker/hacker-space where people could come together to create and work on projects I would be much more likely to spend time at the library." (epIGO)

## Limitations

As a research method, surveys have a few limitations. First, is the potential for the misinterpretation of questions. Although every effort was made to keep the language and phrasing of the survey simple and comprehensible, there were several responses where it was obvious that the customer misinterpreted the question. Second, are cases where respondents did not follow instructions. This was particularly a problem for the print survey where customers selected more than one option for a question that only allowed for a single response rendering the customer's response for that question unusable. Third, and finally, is the fact that surveys require customers to self-report which may not always be reliable.

## Acknowledgements

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## Appendices

### Appendix A: Survey – Online Version

**EPL Library Spaces Survey**

Exit this survey

At Edmonton Public Library (EPL) we strive to create open, safe and inspiring spaces. In an effort to better understand how you, our customer, use our spaces, we ask that you please complete this survey. It will take approximately 5-10 minutes and your responses will be completely anonymous. Thank you for your participation.

Next

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## EPL Library Spaces Survey

Exit this survey

**\* Which branch of EPL do you visit most often?**

○ Abbotsfield-Penny McKee

○ Calder

○ Capilano

○ Castle Downs

○ eplGO (University of Alberta)

○ Highlands

○ Idylwylde

○ Jasper Place

○ Lois Hole

○ Londonderry

○ Mill Woods

○ Riverbend

○ Sprucewood

○ Stanley A. Milner (Downtown)

○ Strathcona

○ Whitemud Crossing

○ Woodcroft

Prev    Next

**EPL Library Spaces Survey**

Exit this survey

Please answer all remaining questions with the branch you visit most often in mind.

Prev    Next

**EPL Library Spaces Survey**

Exit this survey

**On average, how often do you visit the library?**

○ Daily

○ Once a week

○ A few times a month

○ Once a month

○ A few times a year

○ Once a year

**How long is your typical visit to the library?**

○ Under 15 minutes

○ 15 minutes - 1 hour

○ 2-4 hours

○ 5 hours or more

Prev    Next

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**EPL Library Spaces Survey**

Exit this survey

**For what reasons do you usually visit the library? (Please check all that apply)**

- ☐ Attend a program
- ☐ Borrow/return materials
- ☐ Browse materials
- ☐ Find specific item(s)
- ☐ Get help from library staff
- ☐ Read
- ☐ Research
- ☐ Socialize/meet with others
- ☐ Study
- ☐ Use library computer
- ☐ Use photocopiers/printers
- ☐ Use public meeting room
- ☐ Use wireless internet
- ☐ Other (please specify)

[                                        ]

Prev    Next

**EPL Library Spaces Survey**

Exit this survey

**Please select the 1st most important reason you visit the library:**

[                    ▼]

Prev    Next

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**EPL Library Spaces Survey**                    Exit this survey

Please specify:

[                                        ]

[████████                    ]

Prev    Next

**EPL Library Spaces Survey**                    Exit this survey

Please select the 2nd most important reason you visit the library:

[                          ▼]

[██████████                ]

Prev    Next

**EPL Library Spaces Survey**                    Exit this survey

Please specify:

[                                        ]

[███████████               ]

Prev    Next

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**EPL Library Spaces Survey**

Exit this survey

Please select the 3rd most important reason you visit the library:

[ ▼ ]

Prev    Next

**EPL Library Spaces Survey**

Exit this survey

**Please specify:**

[                    ]

Prev    Next

**EPL Library Spaces Survey**

Exit this survey

**Do you usually come to the library alone or with others?**

○ Alone

○ With others

Prev    Next

**EPL Library Spaces Survey**

**How many other people usually come to the library with you?**

○ 1

○ 2

○ 3

○ 4

○ 5

○ 6 or more

Prev    Next

**EPL Library Spaces Survey**

**How important is it to you to have spaces in the library for groups to meet, socialize and/or work together?**

○ Very important

○ Somewhat important

○ Not important

Prev    Next

**EPL Library Spaces Survey**

Exit this survey

What is your favourite location or place in the library? Why do you like it?

What is your least favourite location or place in the library? Why do you dislike it?

Prev     Next

**EPL Library Spaces Survey**

If you could change one thing about the library's space, what would it be and why?

Please describe how EPL could make the library a more inspiring space for you.

Prev     Next

**EPL Library Spaces Survey**

Exit this survey

Additional comments or suggestions about library space:

Prev     Next

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## EPL Library Spaces Survey

Exit this survey

**Gender:**

◯ Female

◯ Male

◯ Prefer not to respond

**Age:**

◯ 18-35 years

◯ 36-60 years

◯ 61 years and over

◯ Prefer not to respond

Prev      Next

## EPL Library Spaces Survey

Exit this survey

**Would you be willing to participate in a 30-45 minute interview to further discuss your views on EPL's library spaces?**

◯ Yes

◯ No

Prev      Next

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## EPL Library Spaces Survey

Exit this survey

Please complete the following form and we will contact you to set up an interview as soon as possible. Personal information is collected under the authority of the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, Section 33c and will be used to administer the EPL library spaces interview.

First name:

Last name:

Phone number:

Preferred branch location for interview:

Preferred time for interview (morning, afternoon or evening):

Prev    Done

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**Appendix B: Survey – Print Version**

# LIBRARY SPACES SURVEY

At Edmonton Public Library (EPL) we strive to create open, safe and inspiring spaces. In an effort to better understand how you, our customer, use our spaces, we ask that you please complete this survey. It will take approximately 5-10 minutes to complete and your responses will be completely anonymous. Thank you for your participation.

## Which branch of EPL do you visit most often? (Please check only one)

| | |
|---|---|
| ___ Abbottsfield-Penny McKee | ___ Londonderry |
| ___ Calder | ___ Mill Woods |
| ___ Capilano | ___ Riverbend |
| ___ Castle Downs | ___ Sprucewood |
| ___ eplGO (University of Alberta) | ___ Stanley A. Milner (Downtown) |
| ___ Highlands | ___ Strathcona |
| ___ Idylwylde | ___ Whitemud Crossing |
| ___ Jasper Place | ___ Woodcroft |
| ___ Lois Hole | |

## Please answer all remaining questions with the branch you visit most often in mind.

### On average, how often do you visit the library? (Please check only one)

| | |
|---|---|
| ___ Daily | ___ Once a month |
| ___ Once a week | ___ A few times a year |
| ___ A few times a month | ___ Once a year |

### How long is your typical visit to the library? (Please check only one)

| | |
|---|---|
| ___ Under 15 minutes | ___ 2-4 hours |
| ___ 15 minutes - 1 hour | ___ 5 hours or more |

### For what reasons do you usually visit the library? (Please check all that apply)

| | |
|---|---|
| ___ Attend a program | ___ Study |
| ___ Borrow/return materials | ___ Use library computer |
| ___ Browse materials | ___ Use photocopiers/printers |
| ___ Find specific item(s) | ___ Use public meeting room |
| ___ Get help from library staff | ___ Use wireless internet |
| ___ Read | ___ Other: Please specify |
| ___ Research | _____ |
| ___ Socialize/meet with others | |

Of the above reasons, please place a number (1, 2, 3) next to the top three most important reasons you visit the library.

**Do you usually come to the library alone or with others?**

___ Alone (Please skip next question)     ___With others

**How many other people usually come to the library with you? (Please check only one)**

___ 1                ___ 3                ___ 5
___ 2                ___ 4                ___ 6 or more

**How important is it to you to have spaces in the library for groups to meet, socialize, and/or work together? (Please check only one)**

___ Very important          ___ Somewhat important          ___Not important

**What is your favourite location or place in the library? Why do you like it?**

**What is your least favourite location or place in the library? Why do you dislike it?**

**If you could change one thing about the library's space, what would it be and why?**

**Please describe how EPL could make the library a more inspiring space for you.**

**Additional comments or suggestions about library space:**

**Gender:** ___ Female        ___ Male      ___ Prefer not to respond
**Age:**        ___ 18-35 years        ___ 61 years and over
                    ___ 36-60 years        ___ Prefer not to respond

**Would you be willing to participate in a 30-45 minute interview to further discuss your views on EPL's library spaces?** *If yes, please request form from service desk staff.*

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**Appendix C: Interview Recruitment – Print**

# INTERVIEW RECRUITMENT

Would you be willing to participate in a 30-45 minute interview to further discuss your views on EPL's library spaces? Please complete the following form and we will contact you to set up an appointment as soon as possible.

First name: _____

Last name: _____

Phone number: _____

Preferred branch location for interview: _____

Preferred time for interview (please circle one):

    Morning    Afternoon    Evening

Personal information is collected under the authority of the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, Section 33c and will be used to administer the EPL library spaces interview.

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