



STAFF REPORT INFORMATION ONLY

8.

RFID Circulation, Sorters and Online Fines Payment – Staff Savings

Date:	June 3, 2014
To:	Budget Committee
From:	City Librarian

SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is to respond to a Budget Committee request for information about staff savings resulting from RFID circulation, automated sorters and online fines payment.

Since 2004, self-service check-out has been implemented in all Toronto Public Library (TPL) branches and automated check-in and sorting systems installed at 13 branches, resulting in 81.8 FTE of benefit. A total of 46.5 FTE of this benefit was reinvested in expanding open hours between 2008 and 2014, resulting in a total increase of 177.5 hours per week. A total of 35.3 FTE of benefit was used to reduce operating costs in 2012 and 2013. There is no further benefit to be achieved from RFID self check-out or branch sorters.

Online fines payment was implemented on December 17, 2013 to increase convenience for customers paying fines and encourage prompt payment. During the first quarter of 2014, \$46,796 was collected online, representing 6% of fines collected overall. At this date, it is too early to comment on the impact on staffing and the Library will continue to assess usage.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

There are no financial impacts resulting from this report beyond what has already been approved in the current year's budget.

The Director, Finance and Treasurer has reviewed this financial impact statement and is in agreement with it.

DECISION HISTORY

At its April 17, 2014 meeting, the Toronto Public Library Board Budget Committee requested that staff report back "on the quantification of staff-time savings realized and anticipated resulting from the implementation of expanded RFID, automated sorters, and online fines payment".

ISSUE BACKGROUND

Toronto Public Library began investigating self-service circulation technology in 2001, when a cost-benefit analysis was undertaken by a consultant, Johnson Smith International.

Implementation began on a limited scale in 2004 when St. James Town Branch opened. It was integrated into seven branch capital projects between 2004 and 2008 where the new staff complements were built based on the assumption of increased efficiency and expanded hours. In 2009, a four-year capital project was approved to implement self-service check-out at branches where a benefit could be achieved and then used to expand open hours. With RFID implementation costs falling during the life of the project, self-service circulation was expanded to the remaining 25 locations. Automated check-in and sorter systems have been installed at 13 branches since 2010.

Online fines payment was implemented on December 17, 2013 to increase convenience for customers paying fines and encourage prompt payment.

COMMENTS

Self-Service Circulation

Since 2004, self-service check-out has been implemented in all TPL branches and automated check-in and sorting systems installed at 13 branches, resulting in 81.8 FTE of benefit. A total of 46.5 FTE of this benefit was reinvested in expanding open hours between 2008 and 2014, resulting in a total increase of 177.5 hours per week. A total of 35.3 FTE of benefit was used to reduce operating costs in 2012 and 2013. There is no further benefit to be achieved from RFID self check-out or branch sorters.

The amount of benefit achieved through the installation of an RFID workstation depends on the circulation of the branch. At a branch with high circulation, self-service yields a higher benefit than at a branch with a lower circulation. Similarly, the amount of benefit required to increase the hours depends on the size and busyness of the branch. Larger, busier branches require more staff per open hour than smaller branches. Note that self-service check-out was implemented at the largest, busiest branches first. No RFID staff reduction was achieved in smaller branches where staffing levels and circulation are low; self-service check-out was implemented at these locations to standardize the customer experience, reduce materials handling and enable staff to attend to other tasks.

The benefits of RFID circulation since 2004 and how they were used are summarized in the following table. There is no further benefit to be achieved from RFID self check-out or branch sorters.

RFID Circulation Service	Benefit Used for Hours Expansion	Benefit Used for Budget Reduction
Self Check-out	46.5	14.3
Sorters	0	21.0

Online Fines Payment

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SIGNATURE

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