

Library Services

Public libraries are an important service for the educational and social development of citizens. They serve and help to build our diverse communities and the desire of residents to increase their knowledge and learning. They also foster the simple pleasure of reading.

Public libraries meet these objectives through a variety of materials, services, and programs that are always changing to meet the ever-increasing needs of citizens.

With the emergence of the Internet, library services are expanding beyond their role of providing educational and leisure materials in print form, to offering library and reference materials through library web sites. These electronic services have become an integral part of library operations, extending public access beyond physical library walls.

When examining the results for library services, it should be noted that the Regional Municipality of Waterloo only provides library services to its four rural townships.

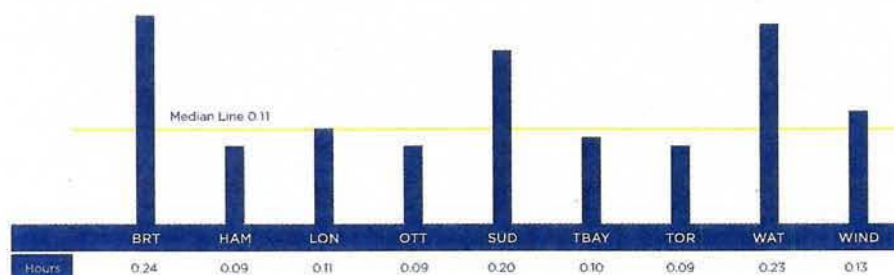
Two aspects of library services that can be used to compare service levels are:

- The service hours of library branches
- The size of the library holdings or collections



HOW MANY HOURS ARE ALL LIBRARY BRANCHES OPEN?

FIG. 3.1 Annual Number of Library Service Hours per Capita (2005)

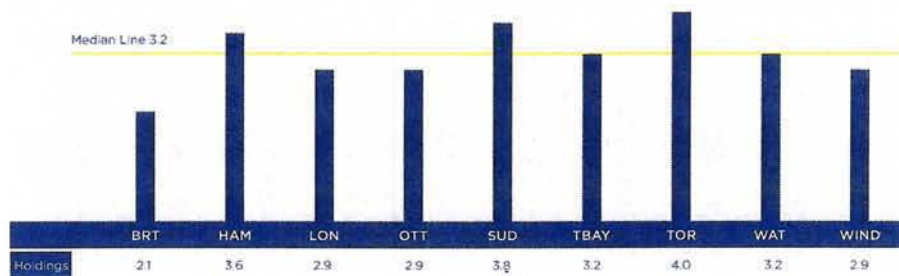


This graph compares the number of hours per capita/person that all library branches were open in 2005, regardless of the size of those branches. The higher the bar in the graph, the more hours library branches were open. This measurement excludes the numerous electronic services provided on a 24-hour, seven-day-a-week basis, through library web sites, as well as through outreach services such as bookmobiles.

A municipality's results can be influenced by the density of its population. Municipalities with relatively lower population densities may require more library branches and more service hours so that service can be provided within a reasonable distance from residents.

HOW MANY HOLDINGS DO LIBRARIES HAVE?

FIG. 3.2 Number of Library Holdings per Capita (2005)



This graph shows the number of library holdings in the municipal library system on a per capita/person basis. Library holdings consist of both print and electronic media.

Print media include:

- Reference collections
- Circulating/borrowing collections
- Periodicals

Electronic media include:

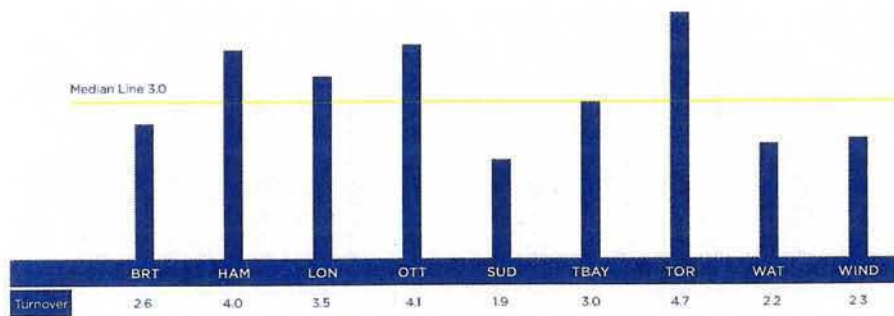
- CDs/DVDs
- MP3 materials
- Audio books

Results can be influenced by:

- Differing needs for multilingual collections
- The size of a library's electronic collection

HOW MANY TIMES IS EACH ITEM BORROWED FROM A LIBRARY?

FIG. 3.3 Number of Times in Year Circulating Items are Borrowed (Turnover) (2005)



This graph indicates the average number of times each item in a library's circulating collection is borrowed. This is one way the quality of a library's collection can be measured. The higher the bar, the more times an item was borrowed from the circulating collection.

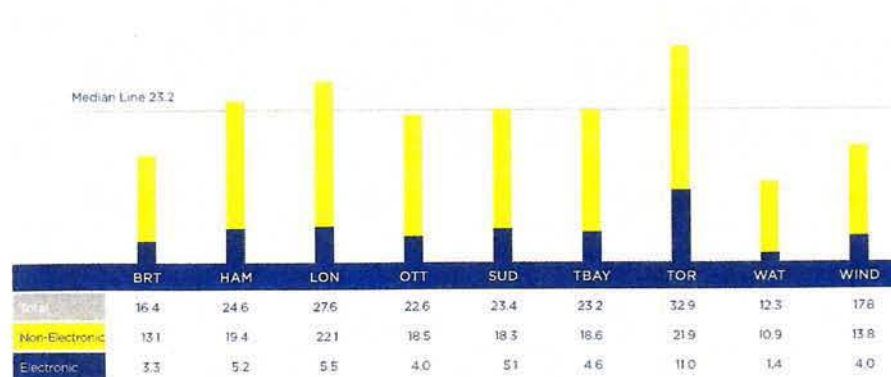
Generally, if the number of times an item has been borrowed in a year is higher, it is an indication of how popular and relevant the item is to users.

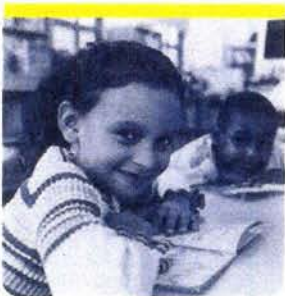
Each municipality's results can be influenced by:

- The size, variety, and how current the circulating collection is.
- The extent of library web services available.
- Each library system's borrowing policy.

HOW MANY TIMES WERE LIBRARIES USED?

FIG. 3.4 Number of Library Uses per Capita (2005)





One of the primary goals of a municipal library system is to maximize the use of library resources and programming by residents

This graph illustrates how many times a library system was used in 2005 on a per capita/person basis. The higher the bar, the greater the use of the library system.

Library uses have been grouped into two categories

- Non-electronic
- Electronic

Non-electronic library uses include:

- A visit to a library branch
- Borrowing materials
- Reference questions
- Use of materials within the branch
- Attendance at programs

Electronic library use is a growing service channel of many library systems. It includes:

- The use of computers in libraries
- On-line collections available in branches
- 24-hour access to library web services and collections from home, work or school

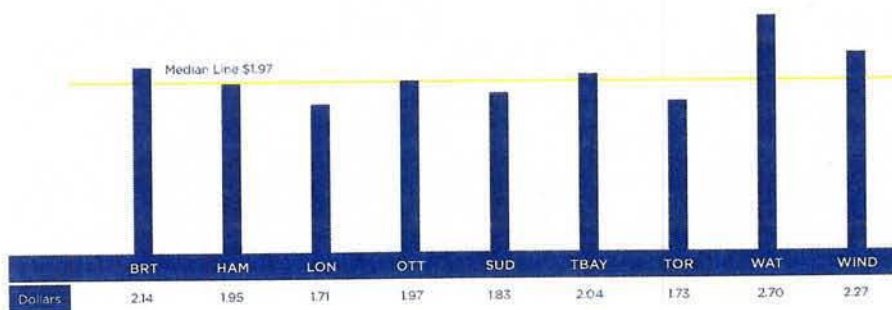
A number of variables can influence how much and how often a library is used, including:

- The number and size of branches
- Hours of operation
- The size and mix of collections
- The number of languages supported in library collections
- The range of program offerings
- The availability and degree of investment in web services

It is important to note that library systems can also provide services to residents beyond their municipal borders. For example, reference or research libraries may have significant collections and other specialized services that are used by the business community, post-secondary students, and residents from other municipalities. These groups of users are not included in this per person/capita measure.

HOW MUCH DOES IT COST FOR EACH LIBRARY USE?

FIG. 3.5 Cost per Library Use (2005)



This graph illustrates how much it costs to operate a library system on a per library use basis. It includes all library costs such as staffing, facilities, technology, and library materials. The lower the bar, the less it costs per library use.

A number of variables influence results, including:

- The mix, variety, and depth of library uses
- The number and types of staff time needed to support these different activities

CONCLUSION

The wide variety of library materials, services, and programs will continue to expand in the future to respond to the desire of residents to increase their knowledge, learning, and pleasure of reading.