
BRIEFING NOTE

Branch Visits per Hour of the Day

Issue/Background

This briefing note responds to the City Council request that the Toronto Public Library *provide customer count (information) for each library by week (day) and by the hour.*¹

Branch hours are allocated by service tier (Research and Reference, District and Neighbourhood Branch) facility size, usage levels, geographic location and local considerations, including the requirements of joint facilities.

Methodology

In-person library visits are a measure of library branch use. Visits are captured during library open hours in four sample survey weeks per year, which is a standard methodology used in library benchmarking surveys. Sample survey weeks are scheduled in each quarter to reflect seasonal usage trends and are selected to reflect a typical week without school holidays or other significant events that may affect typical usage patterns.

Data collected during sample survey weeks are pro-rated to provide an annual total. Currently, visits are tracked using laser counters and manual hourly counts of people entering the building. The Library is investigating an automated solution for all locations with visits tracked both in Library open hours as well as after hour's use of the facilities and meeting room space.

This report uses two sample survey weeks in November 2011 and May 2012 to calculate average branch visits by hour of the day.

¹ January 17, 2012 Council approval of Capital and Operating budgets
<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2012.EX14.1>

Context

Visits as a performance measure captures those residents who use the collections or services and when used with other measures including circulation, in-library use, reference questions, program attendance and workstation and wireless usage, contribute to an overview of branch-based library use (excluding virtual library services).

In 2011 there were 19,083,534 visits to Toronto Public Library branches, an increase of 4% over 2010, which averages to over 367,000 visits per week.

Branch Open Hours/ Schedules

Research and Reference and District branches are open seven days a week, including Sundays (September to June). Most neighbourhood branches are open five to six days a week, including Saturdays; eight neighbourhood branches also offer Sunday service.

Tier	Visits per Hour*
Research & Reference (2)	387
District (17)	113
Neighbourhood (79)	56

*based on 2012 open hours

Branches Open by Day of the Week

- Percentage of visits is proportional to distribution of open hours;
- Sundays have a greater proportion of visits compared to the percentage of weekly open hours.

Day of Week	Weekly Open Hours	% Open Hours	Average Weekly Visits	% of Visits	Branches Open	Branches Closed
Sunday	94.5	2%	13,169	3.4%	27	71
Monday	657.0	13%	56,372	14.4%	61	37
Tuesday	918.5	18%	69,827	17.9%	96	2
Wednesday	916.0	18%	65,719	16.8%	96	2
Thursday	909.0	18%	65,162	16.7%	96	2
Friday	819.0	16%	60,916	15.6%	94	4
Saturday	758.0	15%	59,607	15.3%	95	3
Total	5,072.0	100%	390,771	100.0%	96	96

Visits by Hour of the day

- The number of visits to a branch is influenced by facility size, location and community needs;
- The busiest time of day varies by the service tier, day of the week, and programs and other events ongoing in the library;
- The charts below show the average visits per open hour in three time periods: 9am to 1pm, 1 to 5, 5 to 8:30. Not all libraries are open during the entire time period; average visit numbers are normalized to reflect the number of branches open on a given day.

Average Visits per Open Hour: Neighbourhood Branches (79 branches)

- Neighbourhood libraries are generally busiest from 1 - 5 pm followed by mornings and then evenings

Day of Week	Average Hourly Visits			Average Daily Visits	% of Daily Visits*		
	9-1 4 hrs	1-5 4 hrs	5-8:30 3.5 hrs		9-1	1-5	5-8:30
Sunday		60.7		242.7		100%	
Monday	59.5	71.6	44.9	652.3	31%	43%	26%
Tuesday	53.8	60.7	43.3	522.3	23%	47%	30%
Wednesday	51.4	54.4	44.7	482.5	34%	45%	21%
Thursday	54	56.4	39.5	486.2	23%	46%	31%
Friday	52.4	56.7	44.7	436.7	40%	51%	10%
Saturday	55.7	62.1		463.8	47%	53%	
Average Day	54.5	60.7	42.4	469.5	33%	41%	24%

*Percentage may not add to 100% due to rounding

Average Visits per Open Hour: District Branches (17 branches)

- District libraries are busiest from 1 - 5pm; from Monday - Thursday evenings are busier than mornings, Friday mornings are busier than evenings.

Day of Week	Average Hourly Visits			Average Daily Visits	% of Daily Visits*		
	9-1	1-5	5-8:30		9-1	1-5	5-8:30
Sunday		125.6		502.4		100%	
Monday	95	121	105.3	1,213.9	25%	40%	35%
Tuesday	94.8	123.2	108.4	1,298.9	29%	38%	33%
Wednesday	93.2	113.3	98.5	1,220.2	31%	37%	32%
Thursday	87.8	110.6	90.6	1,156.4	30%	38%	31%
Friday	100	123.5	88.2	1,163.9	34%	42%	23%
Saturday	119.1	149.4		1,073.8	44%	56%	
Average Day	98.3	123.8	98.2	1,089.9	32%	42%	31%

*Percentage may not add to 100% due to rounding

Average Visits per Open Hour: North York Central Library (1 branch)

- The North York Central Library is generally busiest in the afternoon with no clear preference for evening or morning hours.

Day of Week	Average Hourly Visits			Average Daily Visits	% of Daily Visits*		
	9-1	1-5	5-8:30		9-1	1-5	5-8:30
Sunday		394.4		1,577.5		100%	
Monday	313	417	437.5	4,670.5	27%	36%	37%
Tuesday	350.8	438.1	351	4,559.5	31%	38%	31%
Wednesday	397.9	406.8	360.6	4,661	34%	35%	31%
Thursday	355.3	413.8	397.6	4,666.5	30%	35%	34%
Friday	333.3	543.1	353.6	4,916	27%	44%	29%
Saturday	418	555.3		3,893	43%	57%	
Average Day	361	453	380	4,135	32%	41%	32%

*Percentage may not add to 100% due to rounding

Average Visits per Open Hour: Toronto Reference Library (1 branch)

- The Toronto Reference Library is generally busiest from 1-5 pm; evening hours are consistently busier than mornings.

Day of Week	Average Hourly Visits			Average Daily Visits	% of Daily Visits		
	9-1	Visits	5-8:30		9-1	1-5	5-8:30
Sunday		342.1		1,369		100%	
Monday	206.6	374.3	314.3	3,581	23%	42%	35%
Tuesday	231.3	414.8	290.4	3,746	25%	44%	31%
Wednesday	229.4	402.5	342.6	3,898	24%	41%	35%
Thursday	229.6	432	356.4	4,072	23%	42%	35%
Friday	265.5	414.1	150.1*	3,319	32%	50%	18%*
Saturday	201.3	388		2,357	34%	66%	
Average Day	227	395	291	3,192	27%	48%	31%

*Toronto Reference Library closes at 5:30 on Fridays

Appendix 1: Average Visits by Tier – shows average branch visits by tier (Research and Reference, District and Neighbourhood) by hour of day and day of the week during Sample Survey weeks: November 2011 and May 2012.

Appendix 2: Average visits by hour of day for 98 branches as captured during Sample Survey weeks: November 2011 and May 2012.

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