

Enabling Torontonians to grow and thrive

Measuring the social impact of
Toronto Public Library

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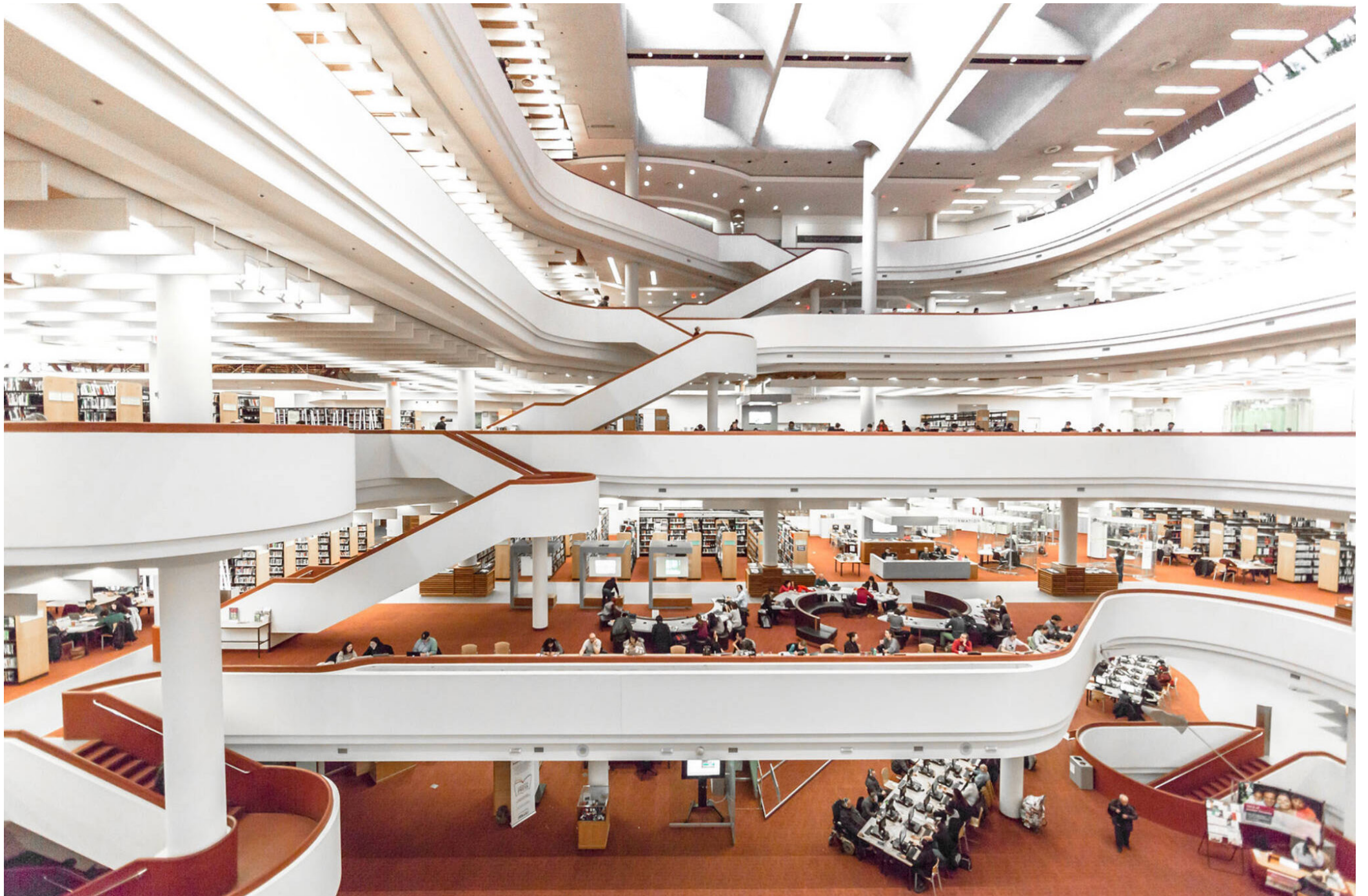
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1. Introduction

This study looks beyond classic library metrics and uncovers what actually goes on when Torontonians use the public library – and what it all means to them.

Toronto Public Library stands as one of Canada's busiest cultural institutions with its impressive record of over 10 million annual branch visits and 32 million visits to online platforms¹. Yet, there's a distinction between merely tallying foot traffic and truly understanding how the Toronto Public Library impacts the lives of Torontonians. This study provides an empirically-grounded knowledge base to support that very understanding.

¹ – 2022 data, source: <https://torontopubliclibrary.typepad.com/board-meetings/23-04-24/16-2022-public-service-statistics-trends-comparisons-combined-1.pdf>

The city of Toronto embodies an epitome of diversity and dynamism on the global stage. Its thriving economy and burgeoning population have propelled Toronto to become one of Canada's wealthiest and fastest-growing cities which is often ranked as one of the top global cities for quality of life and prosperity.

However, in post-pandemic times, Toronto is facing growing challenges. The costs of living are high, affordable housing is limited, and poverty and income inequality is growing. Under these circumstances, not all residents have access to the opportunities and resources that are critical to succeed and thrive in a city such as Toronto. At the same time, digital access and digital literacy is causing a divide across generations and social groups. One divide exists between those who have access to the internet and computers and those who do not. Another divide is related to building the skills needed to benefit from the digital resources

on a personal level, rather than merely being a digital consumer.

As Toronto has grown and changed, the library has changed along with it, playing an important role in providing the vital ingredients Torontonians need to thrive. The Toronto Public Library has 100 branches across the city, providing free and equitable access to services which are embedded into the neighbourhoods, reflecting the unique needs of communities, and established as important community hubs meeting the changing needs of Torontonians. Core to its mission, the library preserves and promotes universal access to a broad range of human knowledge, experience, information and ideas. As stated in its 2020–2024 strategic plan, *Vital to Toronto*, the Toronto Public Library is also committed to “level the

*playing field for all Torontonians*² – with a particular focus on supporting equity-deserving groups and vulnerable populations.

While Toronto Public Library's services are frequented by millions of Torontonians every year, we know only a little about the impact of these activities, and how the Toronto Public Library actually affects individual users. The purpose of this study is to demonstrate the social impact of the Toronto Public Library, utilizing both qualitative narratives and quantitative data. The study's methodological framework is tried and tested on multiple prior impact studies conducted by Seismonaut in Denmark. However, this is the first time this innovative methodology has been applied in a North American library context. The study's scope and methodology have been meticulously tailored to align with Toronto's local context and the distinctive attributes of the Toronto Public Library.

2 – Toronto Public Library (2020): Vital to Toronto – Toronto Public Library strategic plan 2020–2024, <https://www.torontopubliclibrary.ca/content/about-the-library/strategic-plan/pdfs/strategic-plan-2020-full-version-web-single-pages.pdf>

An empirically-grounded knowledge base

The study is based on comprehensive quantitative and qualitative data. We have conducted a representative online panel survey reaching 1,600 Torontonians, 65% of whom are library users, i.e. they have used at least one Toronto Public Library service within the past year. We have reached additional users through an open-link survey, resulting in a total of 2,755 library user responses, which forms the basis of the Impact Profiles of the study.

The survey was conducted in June 2023 asking about library use during the past year, i.e. use between June 2022 and June 2023.

We have conducted qualitative interviews with 64 users of the Toronto Public Library and we have hosted three focus groups with both various adult users as well as with young users at selected library youth hubs. We have performed qualitative interviews at five library branches situated in neighbourhoods across the city:

- Malvern branch
- St. James Town branch
- North York Central Library
- Albion branch
- Toronto Reference Library

We extend our gratitude to everyone who helped make this possible, and to everyone who contributed to the study!

Find more details about the scope and methodology of the study in the appendices.

A cross-Atlantic collaboration

This study emerges from a collaborative effort between the Danish agency Seismonaut and the Toronto Public Library and it holds the distinction of being the first social impact study for North American libraries, applying the innovative Experience Impact Compass and methodology to re-center the first-hand individual experience at the heart of the inquiry.

Seismonaut is a specialized research agency and consultancy with a focus on culture and experiences. Since 2008, we have offered insights, evaluations, strategies, economic assessments, and everything in between for cultural institutions, ministries, and local governments. In 2019, we discovered that a crucial element was missing in our understanding of cultural value and impact. Drawing from the insights of the British Cultural Value Project (see page 8), we recognized that the individual experience, serving as a starting point, can help bridge the gap between 'outcomes' and 'impact' in the logical framework models that we – like many others – had been utilizing for years.

Through developing a framework for nuanced comprehension of individual experiences, we found that we were able to unveil a fresh perspective on the types of benefits that cultural experiences offer on a human level. From there we proceed to understand these types of impacts in a broader context – for society, communities, democracy, public health and well-being, urban life and regional growth.

Toronto Public Library has followed a similar trajectory. Over the past decade, the library's Board, management, and Foundation have increasingly engaged in efforts to understand the impact of library services on deeper levels beyond tallying foot traffic and monitoring user statistics. In 2013, a study was conducted to illustrate the economic impact of the Toronto Public Library. The study revealed that the total economic influence of the Toronto Public Library on the city amounted to \$1 billion, and for every dollar invested in the Toronto Public

The individual experience, serving as a starting point, can help bridge the gap between 'outcomes' and 'impact' in the logical framework models that we – like many others – had been utilizing for years.

Library, Torontonians gained \$5.63 in value¹. In more recent years, the Bridge project² has developed a toolkit to assess the impact of library technology services and the value of digital access, inclusion and literacy. The findings show that most people (81%) who use library technology services would not otherwise have had access to the internet and that libraries facilitate the development of digital literacy, especially for those most vulnerable, with 82% reporting increased digital comfort after using one or more technology services at the library. The current strategic plan for the Toronto Public Library (2020–2024), *Vital to Toronto*, is likewise structured into a logical impact framework that reflects a customer-centric and data-driven approach with a focus on outcome measurement on different levels.

1 – Martin Prosperity Institute (2013): *So Much More – The Economic Impact of the Toronto Public Library on the City of Toronto*, <https://www.torontopubliclibrary.ca/content/about-the-library/service-plans-strategies-frameworks/SoMuchMoreEconomicImpactStudy.pdf>
2 – <https://www.torontopubliclibrary.ca/impact/about-bridge/>

Inspired by the Cultural Value Project

The Experience Impact Compass has taken its inspiration from The Cultural Value Project – a comprehensive British research project initiated by the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC).

The project, which concluded in 2019, included a wide range of research activities, articles, events as well as literature and methodological studies. The overarching purpose of the Cultural Value Project was to investigate how culture translates into impact and value, and how to measure that impact and value through empirical and analytical methods.

“What emerges from the Cultural Value Project is the imperative to reposition first-hand, individual experience of arts and culture at the heart of inquiry into cultural value.”

AHRC Cultural Value Project (2016)

One of the standout features of the Cultural Value Project is its unwavering commitment to placing the first-hand, individual experience at the forefront of discussions regarding cultural value and impact. The British researchers

behind the project emphasize that, all too often, we bypass this foundational element, hastily delving into the derivative impacts of arts – whether in terms of economy, urban development, or health. The resounding call is for a resurgence of the human perspective, incorporating it back into our discourse.

“It is only once we have started with individual experience that we can then work outwards, and understand the kinds of benefits that culture may have for society, for communities, for democracy, for public health and well-being, for urban life and regional growth.”

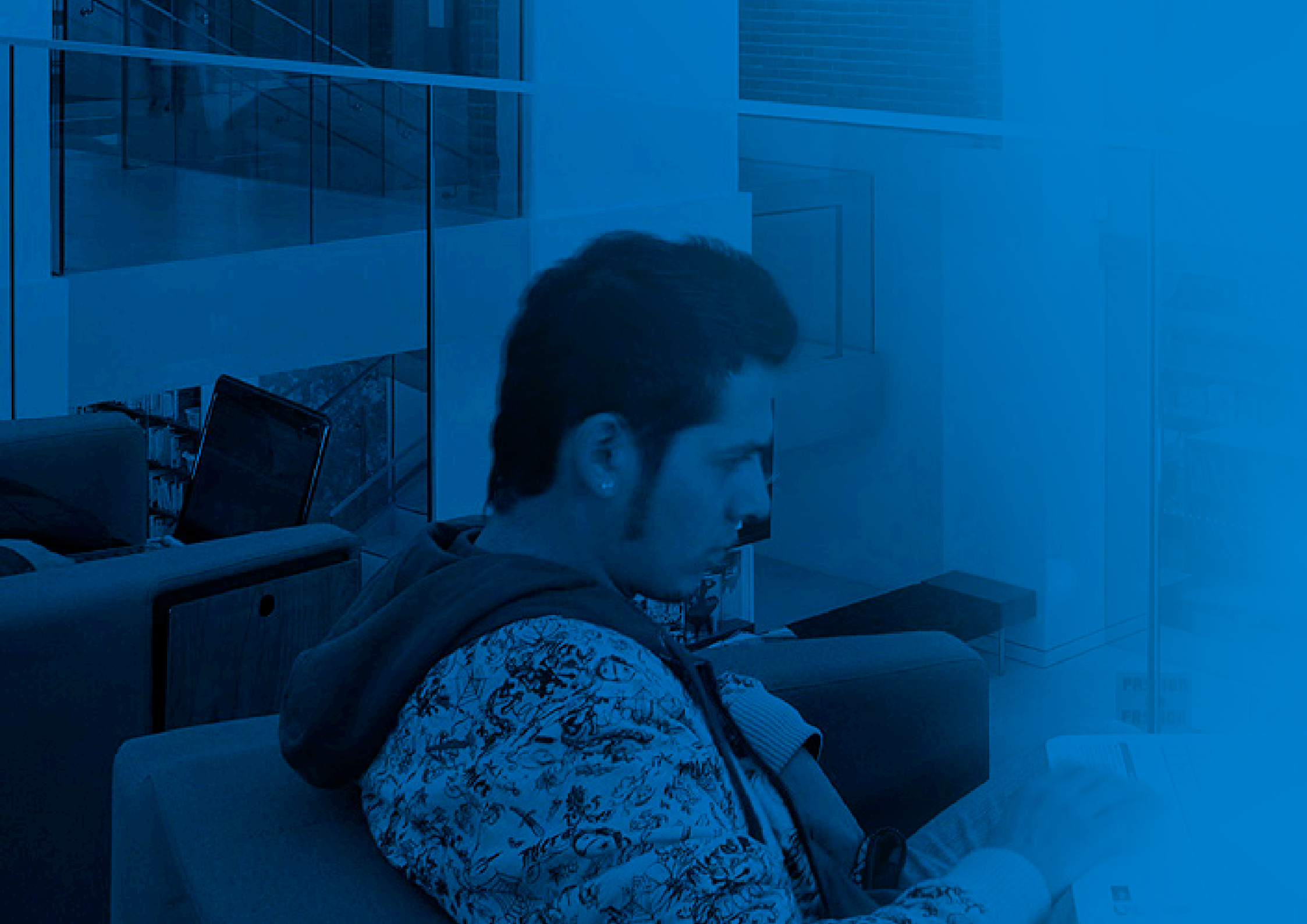
AHRC Cultural Value Project (2016)

For a more comprehensive understanding of this transformative initiative, visit the project's own source of knowledge at <https://culturalvalueproject.wordpress.com/about/> and explore the detailed report titled *Understanding the value of arts & culture*, authored by Crossick G. and Kaszynska P. (2016).



“I’m like 100%, no 110% sure that I’ll continue to find uses for the library. It’s the best. It’s my favourite institution in the city. I’ve been here for 20 years. I’ve seen things sort of deteriorate in the city. But the library has been reliable – it has always been very, very good. It has not disappointed me in any way.”

Riya, 29 years



The background of the slide is a photograph of a library interior. In the upper portion, two people are seated at a long table, looking at books or documents. The lower portion shows a glass railing of a mezzanine level, with more people visible in the background. The entire image is covered with a semi-transparent blue overlay.

2. Summary of findings

2. Summary of findings

The study reveals how and why Toronto Public Library impacts library users in multiple ways across different library services.

Building on comprehensive empirical data, the study applies the innovative Experience Impact Compass to explore the social impact of Toronto Public Library through the eyes of its users.

The study investigates each of the five service pillars of Toronto Public Library separately, before concluding with a cross-pillar analysis of the combined impact of Toronto Public Library. This summary of findings briefly presents the key results of the study.

The five service pillars of Toronto Public Library are:

- Collections
- Programs
- Spaces
- Staff
- Technology

The combined impact of Toronto Public Library

Enabling Torontonians to grow and thrive

Toronto Public Library, comprising 100 unique branches serving diverse communities and a wide array of physical and digital services, has a resounding impact on its users in multiple and significant ways. In sum, Toronto Public Library is far more than a repository of books; it's a transformative force that nurtures emotional well-being, empowers through knowledge and literacy, fuels creativity and skills, and fosters a sense of unity. The broad array of impacts it has on Torontonians substantiates its role as an essential part of the community supporting the prosperity of the city of Toronto.

A calm and shared haven

The users of Toronto Public Library see the library as a calm and shared haven in a

turbulent and 'noisy' world. Through the study, the library emerges as a catalyst for personal growth and community thriving. Users consistently emphasize the Emotional Impact of the library, highlighting the library's role as a tranquil refuge within a bustling world.

Supporting personal growth

For its users, Toronto Public Library constitutes a vital and dynamic learning environment supporting personal growth. The study reveals how the library's wide-ranging resources empower residents to learn, reflect and build new perspectives, propelling them from uncertainty to capability, unemployment to new pursuits, and isolation to connection. This transformative learning experience underscores the library's crucial contribution to individual advancement.

A catalyst for inspiration and creativity

Moreover, Toronto Public Library stands as a catalyst for inspiration and a beacon of creativity. By equipping users with tools, guidance,

and support, it encourages the pursuit of novel ventures. This nurturing environment supports endeavours spanning from traditional crafts to cutting-edge digital skills, fostering a rich ecosystem of creativity enabling library users to learn as well as to cultivate their existing skills and acquire new ones.

An inclusive environment that fosters connections

Last but not least, Toronto Public Library is a welcoming and inclusive environment that fosters connections, as it creates well-being, and helps build community across the city. The users see the library as a welcoming, inclusive community – a finding that resonates deeply throughout the study. Serving as a cultural mosaic of different age groups and backgrounds, Toronto Public Library cultivates empathy and camaraderie among diverse individuals. Programs and Staff all contribute to this ethos of social tolerance, knitting together a tapestry of connections among diverse locals and their everyday life.

Key results of the five service pillars

Collections

A key to personal growth through learning and new perspectives

Used by 75% of library users within the past year

The Collections service pillar stands as the most utilized of the five service pillars of Toronto Public Library. Being both physical and digital, Collections reach far beyond the bookshelves and the physical library branches. This pillar is a robust foundation of the library experience, distinguished by a diverse range of high impacts. The most profound impact discovered in the study points to the Collections' ability to give Torontonians access to knowledge and information – reaching levels that are unprecedented in our previous impact studies. However, the Collections are also a key driver of emotional impact by making users feel a sense of well-being, being emotionally engaged and feeling immersed.

The study reveals Collections are an important means against misinformation and preconceived ideas, as they serve as a foundation for acquiring new knowledge and broadening knowledge – both in the private sphere and in relation to education and studies – fostering a possibility for fact checking and analytical thinking. Finally, Collections are capable of bridging cultural differences and championing cultural inclusion. The library Collections are diverse and contain curated collections specific to local demographics, comprising collections in specific languages, as well as collections with a specific focus, e.g. a focus on equity-deserving groups, local history, etc. This is recognized by users as providing a unique possibility to learn from the past and make sense of the present both in regard to the history of others as well as their own.

Programs

Creating profound transformational experiences

Used by 22% of library users within the past year

While Programs engage a smaller user base than the other service pillars, this service pillar has a very profound impact on its users. In fact, the Programs service pillar displays the highest Profile average in the study.

These significant impacts of Programs is very diverse and extends across all the parameters applied in the study. Programs are especially characterized by their ability to foster personal growth and development. Exemplified by everything from Career Coaches in Residence programs to classes in digital literacy, users testify to the experience of being elevated on a personal or professional level by attending Programs through the library. Programs are also renowned among users for their ability to bring Torontonians together. Users experience feeling accepted in an inclusive space, where they can receive advice and guidance, not only from the library program as such, but also from fellow attendees.

Spaces

A versatile and inclusive haven accommodating diverse experiences

Used by 56% of library users within the past year

Toronto Public Library's 100 branches offer a broad range of physical spaces with diverse activities reflecting the needs and demographics of their local communities. For multiple users, these library Spaces play a pivotal role within their daily regimen. The study shows how users experience Toronto Public Library as a versatile haven for work, study, relaxation, recreation, and social interaction. In this daily scenery of Toronto Public Library it is widely appreciated by users, how users across all ages and life situations co-exist and share the space on equal terms.

The study reveals a clear distinction between different user groups when it comes to the Social experience of the library Spaces. While some use the Spaces to actively connect with others, other groups use the Spaces to focus and concentrate. One user group that stands out in this context is the young users at the Youth Hubs. To them, library Spaces are a vital resource that are designed and designated to provide a safe haven where they can be with their peers between school and home.

Staff

A trusted source of knowledge and empathy

Used by 40% of library users within the past year

The library Staff are the human interface of the Toronto Public Library, offering help and guidance in many different ways (40% of users in the study have received help or guidance from Staff within the past year). The study highlights the library Staff's ability to make users feel good about coming to the library, or about the library's outreach through its remote services.

The study also shows that Staff provide a human connection in a city of strangers and that there is a strong link between library Staff and the user's sense of 'being met by someone', a welcoming human face; a real person who will go to great lengths to help users achieve their goals. Multiple users emphasize how the library Staff play an important role in supporting the community; however, they draw a distinction between library Staff and social workers. The Staff has strengths in being great facilitators of knowledge and inspiration, while they are also appreciated for their abilities to facilitate social inclusion – those are the strengths that should be cultivated.

Technology

Providing digital access, inclusion and literacy

Used by 45% of library users within the past year

Technology, as the fifth and final service pillar, offers users free and equitable digital access, inclusion and literacy services (45% of users in the study have used library Technology within the past year). This extends from simply accessing the public WiFi and using public computers to using advanced software, 3D printers and more. According to the study, library Technology is especially impacting users by giving them access to new knowledge and information and strengthening their skills.

To some users, especially among vulnerable residents, the mere access to the Internet and to public computers is a vital service in itself. Other users find that the library provides them with means to 'catch up with technology' and level up their digital skills and thus promotes digital literacy. Furthermore, yet another group of users experience that the library constitutes a unique opportunity for them to access specialized digital production facilities such as Digital Innovation Hubs, recording studios, and other unique services. Some of these users apply technology at a very high level, and they have found a community of like-minded people from whom they also draw inspiration, both indirectly and directly.



Readers guide

Dive further into the results of the study.

Chapter 3 unfolds the impact of Toronto Public Library's service pillars one by one – i.e. Collections, Programs, Spaces, Staff and Technology.

Chapter 4 presents the cross-pillar analysis of Toronto Public Library's combined impact.

Chapter 5 is a brief conclusion in which we revisit the aim of the study and how we hope it will be activated in the future.

The appendices present the methodological framework of the study, and allow readers to explore the data in greater detail.



A blue-tinted photograph of a library interior. In the background, there are tall bookshelves filled with books. To the right, a person is seated at a computer workstation, looking at a large monitor. The overall scene is dimly lit, with the primary light source being the computer screen and some ambient light from the shelves.

3. The impact of Toronto Public Library's five service pillars

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Toronto Public Library delivers services online and across 100 branches throughout the vast and diverse city. Its services are customized to and embedded in local contexts, while also existing as part of the collective structure of Toronto Public Library.

The services of Toronto Public Library are designed and delivered according to the library's service delivery model, and are provided across five service pillars.

In this chapter, we first introduce the five service pillars of Toronto Public Library followed by an introduction to the Experience Impact Compass and how to read and interpret the Impact Profiles presented in the report. Then, in chapter sections 3.1–3.5, we analyze each of the service pillars, unfolding their Impact Profiles one by one.

The five service pillars correlate with Toronto Public Library's *Service Delivery Model* (2017)¹. Though no service pillar acts independently of the other services, we examine them separately to understand how they impact users in different ways. It is also important to note that

the methodology is not intended to compare the service pillars as to which are more important than others. Looking at the service pillars through the lens of the Experience Impact Compass is merely a tool to gain a deeper and more detailed understanding of how the different library services affect people in different ways.

The study finds that 65% of Torontonians have made use of one or more of Toronto Public Library's services within the past year.

65% of Torontonians have made use of one or more of Toronto Public Library's services within the past year

¹ – 2017, <https://www.torontopubliclibrary.ca/content/about-the-library/service-plans-strategies-frameworks/Service-Delivery-Model.pdf>

The five service pillars of Toronto Public Library



Collections

Covers the use of books, magazines, CDs, DVDs, eBooks, eAudiobooks, eMagazines, eVideos, etc. But also searching for information on the library website and accessing electronic databases at a library or remotely, such as OverDrive, Hoopla, and Digital Archive Ontario. Lastly the service pillar includes the use of Bookmobile services and Home Library Services, where items of the Collections are brought to the local community, or directly to the user's home.

Used by 75% of library users within the past year



Programs

Refers to the attendance in library programs or events. This can be at a branch, online, or in the local community. The service pillar covers everything from story times, book talks, author events and art exhibits; to computer or technology classes, workshops, lectures, musical performances, youth programs, seniors' programs, newcomer programs, and job and volunteer fairs.

Used by 22% of library users within the past year



Spaces

Ranges from using the library Space to read, study, work, meet up with others to collaborate, to socialize, or to entertain children; to visiting a branch to access technology, e.g. computers, printing, WiFi, or Digital Innovation Hubs; or simply to relax, or seek shelter from the heat or the cold, etc. In the study, this service pillar has explicitly excluded library visits for the purpose of attending a program or event, or to borrow items, as other service pillars already cover those instances. This service pillar also excludes the use of the library's virtual spaces for the purposes of this study.

Used by 56% of library users within the past year



Staff

Covers all staff-related guidance and support. This includes being assisted in-person at a branch, over the telephone or online with an information request; reading recommendations; community or service referrals; library Staff providing technology support; guidance for use and access of information resources, as well as one-on-one "Book a Librarian" appointments with Staff. It does not include staff assistance during a library program or event since these instances are already covered by the Programs service pillar.

Used by 40% of library users within the past year



Technology

Refers to technology as a service. This includes access to technology such as WiFi, public computers, equipment and software, digital literacy classes and support. The service pillar should not be confused with the digital channels or the digital tier of Toronto Public Library as such, for example the use of ebooks or virtual programs which would be part of Collections or Programs pillars.

Used by 45% of library users within the past year

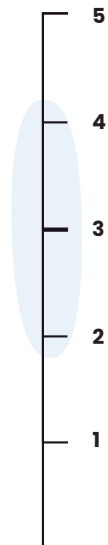
Experience Impact Compass Example

Profile average: 3.5

5 = all respondents have replied
"To a very large extent"

The probable outcome space

1 = all respondents have replied
"Not at all"

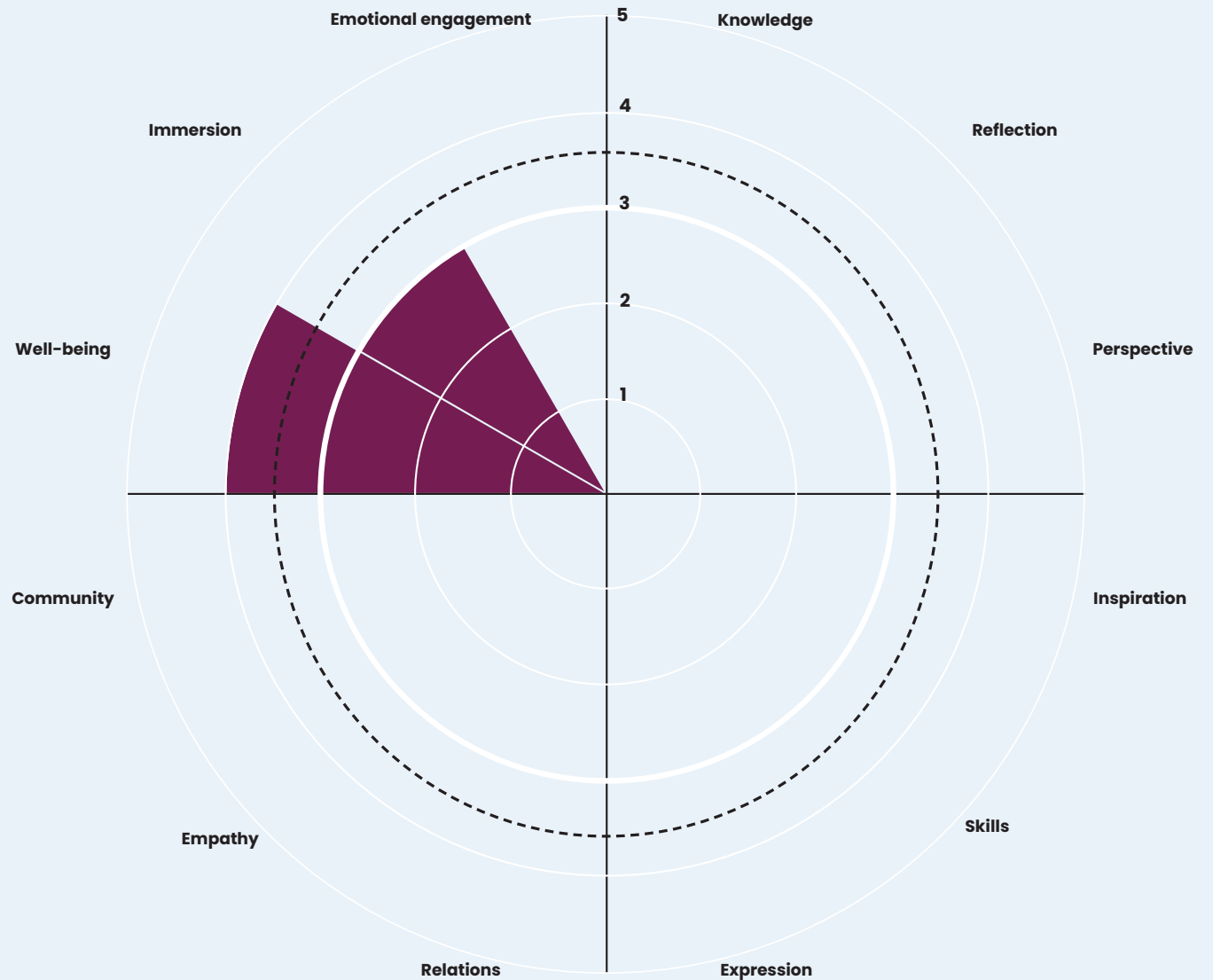


Emotional Impact

Intellectual Impact

Social Impact

Creative Impact



How to read and interpret the Impact Profiles

The Impact Profiles show – at a glance – the ways in which Toronto Public Library actually affects its users.

Each Impact Profile in the report is followed by a detailed analysis of both the quantitative data behind the profile and the qualitative insights gathered from library users.

The Experience Impact Compass consists of four dimensions: Emotional Impact, Intellectual Impact, Creative Impact and Social Impact. There are three impact parameters within each dimension, which have been tailored to match the context of Toronto Public Library.

The Experience Impact Compass is a mixed methods framework to understand how library experiences may affect individuals, and a communicative tool to structure and communicate our findings. Needless to say, it is a deductive framework, and each Impact Profile entails many nuances which cannot be analyzed or understood at a glance. We explore these nuances by examining both the qualitative and quantitative data in more

detail and by presenting these insights along with the Impact Profiles.

The respondents to the quantitative survey have rated the impact of their experiences with the Toronto Public Library in 12 parameters using a five point scale. The responses were subsequently converted into numerical values from 5-1, which are the values expressed in the Impact Profiles.

- 5 – To a very large extent
- 4 – To a large extent
- 3 – To some extent
- 2 – To a little extent
- 1 – Not at all

It should be noted that the values in the Impact Profiles express the average ratings across all respondents to the specific parameter in question. When looking at average values, it is rare to see results that are either very low or very high. In other words, it would be unexpected to see an average value close to 5.0, as this would require close to all the respondents to have answered “To a large extent”. Similarly, it would be unexpected to see an average value close to 1.0, as this would

require close to all the respondents to have answered “Not at all”. An average at around 4.0 is therefore to be considered a very high score, while an average of around 2.0 is to be considered a very low score.

Each Impact Profile has a dotted line that represents the overall average of that profile. This allows us to see how the parameters are rated compared to each other; which are more significant and drive up the overall average of the profile and which are more subtle and drive the average downwards.

It is therefore important to be aware that the Impact Profiles do not display the distribution of replies across the spectrum from 1-5. For example, an average of 3.0 may express that the users are divided in two ends of the spectrum, or that they are evenly distributed across the spectrum. Such details are highlighted in the report whenever we make relevant observations in the data and can also be explored further in the appendices.

3.1 Collections

A key to personal growth through learning and new perspectives

The Collections service pillar stands as the most utilized of the five service pillars of the Toronto Public Library. Being both physical and digital, the Collections reach far beyond the bookshelves and the physical library branches. **75%** of users have accessed books or other items from Collections within the last year. This pillar is a robust foundation of the library experience, characterized with a diverse range of high impacts and a Profile average score of **3.6**. Recalling the explanation from 'How to read and interpret the Impact Profiles' on page 22, an overall average of 3.6 is at the high end of the spectrum.

As might be expected, Collections exert a pronounced impact in the Intellectual and Emotional dimensions. In the Intellectual dimension, *new knowledge and information* has the highest overall score (4.1), while the other two parameters, *reflection*, and *new perspectives*, also reaches quite high average scores (4.0). In short, Collections have a profound impact on all parameters in the Intellectual di-

mension; in fact, these scores are higher than anything we have seen in previous Experience Impact studies. Likewise, in the Emotional dimension, we see a similar depiction of very high scores across all three parameters: *Sense of well-being* (3.9), *emotionally engaged* (4.0) and *concentrated or immersed* (4.0).

The Emotional impact of the Collections is even more pronounced when we look at the youngest users in the survey (aged 16 to 24 years). These users have rated the Emotional parameters as follows: *Sense of well-being* (4.1), *emotionally engaged* (4.2) and *concentrated or immersed* (4.3) underscoring an even more pronounced Emotional impact on young users compared to all users across age categories.

Collections provide equal opportunities for personal growth

Looking into the qualitative data, we see continued support for the finding that Toronto

Public Library's Collections are vital in regard to providing users equal access to knowledge and opportunities for learning. Many Torontonians value the library as a place to access a wealth of information and knowledge, and they appreciate the opportunity to read books and access other materials that cover a wide range of topics, from history and culture to practical skills and personal development. It is fair to say that Torontonians come to the library to educate and elevate themselves, whether it is related to studies, professional

Collections have a profound impact on all parameters in the Intellectual dimension; in fact, these scores are higher than anything we have seen in previous Experience Impact studies.



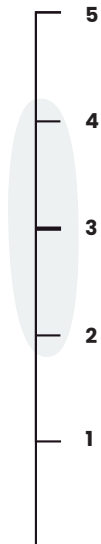
Toronto Public Library Collections

Profile average: 3.6

5 = all respondents have replied
"To a very large extent"

The probable outcome space

1 = all respondents have replied
"Not at all"



Emotional Impact

Intellectual Impact



work or life in general. In the context of the significant social divide which exists in the city, many users emphasize how Toronto Public Library is providing them with resources they need to grow and thrive, which they could not access elsewhere.

“When I was younger, I had trouble reading. Coming to a library and being exposed to books and topics helped me to excel and push through those challenges. So, I have to say, it holds a very special place in my heart. I always come back and turn to the library.”

Nina, 39 years

According to users, the library Collections are a great tool for empowerment and personal growth. Recalling the high scores mentioned above on the parameters related to personal growth (*new knowledge and information* at 4.1, *reflection* at 4.0, and *new perspectives* at 4.0), the qualitative findings show how the library Collections empower individuals to make informed decisions and contribute meaningfully to both their personal and professional lives.

“I don’t think school teaches you enough about personal issues. For example, debts and stuff like that, like finances. If you get to go to college or university, you might learn about those things. But here you can read a book off the shelf and start learning on your own.”

Juan, 26 years

Collections are an important means against misinformation and preconceived ideas

As the Impact Profile from the quantitative data reveals, Collections have a quite significant impact in the Intellectual dimension (*new knowledge and information* 4.1, *reflection* 4.0, and *new perspectives* 4.0). Looking behind the numbers, the qualitative data demonstrates that Torontonians rely on the Collections as an important means against misinformation and preconceived ideas as well as helping to unlock cultural differences and inclusion.

As the world is moving toward more and more opinionated and polarized ideas of truth and knowledge, Collections serve as a foundation for acquiring new knowledge and broadening knowledge – both in the private sphere and in relation to educational studies – thus facilitating a possibility for fact checking and analytical thinking – a fundamental tenet for establishing an engaged citizenry.

“I like to read to acquire new knowledge and the knowledge that I have, I like to expand. I like to see if I’m on the right path. A lot of people get preconceived ideas that are not based on facts but based on people’s opinions, right? So, the more books you can read, especially about history, you can begin to learn what is bull** and what is truth.”**

Daniel, 65 years

“The public library’s collections contain knowledge from 6,000 years of human history. And it attracts people with intellectual interests, who want to know what went on in the past and what’s going on now. It enlightens people. And when people are enlightened, their minds broaden. And they become more welcoming, more understanding.”

Deepak, 47 years

The library Collections offer the opportunity to gain new perspectives and to feel reassured about what is true and what is not. Of course, this does not happen by itself. In order for Collections to really have an impact on fighting misinformation and preconceived ideas, it is vital that the curation of items, combined with the impacts from other pillars like Programs, as well as Staff guidance, all play their role in activating the Collections. So, practically speaking, all service pillars of the library play a part in this.

“Well, if you ask me, the library is an arbiter of truth because you can tell me ‘the world is flat’. But in no time I’ve got six other people out here [at the library] who are going to counter that view.”

Patrick, 53 years

Bridging cultural differences and inclusion

Through the qualitative data, it is apparent that users also experience Collections as a preservation of history and human experience, which proves relevant in regard to the Social Impact dimension of the Toronto Public Library. Reading books allows users to connect with diverse perspectives and people, gaining insights into both the positive and challenging aspects of various groups in society. Across Toronto Public Library's 100 branches, there are diverse collections that are curated specifically to local demographics, e.g. collections in specific languages, but also collections about equity-deserving groups, local history, etc. Collections thus provide access to the accumulated wisdom and insights of generations, allowing people to learn from the past and make sense of the present both in relation to others and to their own history. A great example of Collections having such Social Impact for the users is when the Toronto Public Library highlights a specific theme of the month.

“My favourite thing about the library is that they have these themed months. Like Black History Month and Hindu Heritage Month. Then I read the books that they recommend for that theme. I learn about other cultures and sometimes even my own, as I am Hindu myself.”

Tiffany, 14 years



As the Impact Profile reveals, Collections are quite capable of *inspiring empathy* among library users (3.6). However, compared to the other parameters, the Collections' ability to *foster a feeling of community* ranks lower (2.8). This does not mean that Collections do not contribute to fostering a feeling of community at all. For example, it can be noted that younger groups experience that Collections *foster feelings of community* to a higher degree than the average user; with 16 to 24 year olds rating the parameter 3.2, and 25 to 34 year olds rating it 3.0.

Moreover, when looking closer at the qualitative findings, we do see that to some users, Collections do in fact play a crucial role to their sense of community. This is evident for example among users who feel the library's Collections represent their cultural heritage, or users who feel connected to the world and to other cultures through the literature and other items in Collections. The same experience is found among users of library services such as Bookmobile and Home Library Service, who sometimes even see items of the Collections as a lifeline to the world around them, sparking a feeling of being connected to others and the broader community.

“When you travel, you see what you are supposed to see. What you are prepared to see. And let’s be honest, locals will put on a show for you. The people you meet in restaurants, etc.; they are at work. But when you read you have a totally different access to the culture. Through literature you get to ‘interact’ with the actual people of the book. Also, the ones who are not smiling, the ones who might be suffering. Literature and the arts will allow you this. Nothing else will.”

Prakash, 47 years

Portrait no. 1

Deborah

Age: 80
Profession: Artist
Interest: Literature and culture

Meet Deborah, an 80-year-old Toronto resident experiencing mobility issues. She has plenty of time to read, and so she does. Her appetite for literature is enormous, as she uses the world of literature to explore the cultures of the world. During the COVID-19 pandemic, she was completely isolated for two and a half years. Her only access to the world outside was Toronto Public Library's Home Library Service, which in her own words, saved her life by providing her with a lifeline to the world beyond her four walls.

"The library has been my life blood through COVID. During the pandemic I was by myself for two and a half years. Without the library I would not have survived. I was completely isolated. The only stimulation I had was the books. It was the one thing I could rely on. The internet and TV I have no interest in. I read books."

Over the past two decades, Deborah has borne witness to enormous societal changes, with the world around her seeming to accelerate at an unprecedented pace. She believes that attention has been diverted away

from meaningful connections, making her cherish the library as an invaluable antidote to this trend. In her view, the library stands as a sanctuary for our collective mental well-being. It is one of the few constants in an ever-changing world, a source of stability and hope.

"Everything has changed now, and the healthcare system is in meltdown. The library is the only thing that remains stable. It is the one thing that for me didn't change under the pandemic. In a world that is unstable, the library's stability is incredibly powerful."

Deborah also has a soft spot for the people working at the Home Library Service. She mentions how over the years she has gotten to know the man who delivers her books. During COVID, he would come to her window at the sidewalk to chat with her, providing her a much sought after social comfort.

3.2 Programs

Creating profound transformational experiences

Programs have been frequented by **22%** of library users within the past year. Though this is lower than the other service pillars, it is consistent with what would be expected given historical Toronto Public Library trends and the impacts of the pandemic which changed the use patterns of the services offered under the Programs service pillar. While Programs may engage a smaller user base, the average of this service pillar ranks an impressive Profile average of **3.7**, which is the highest average of all the service pillars in the study. In fact, Programs is the only service pillar that displays average impact scores of 3.5 or higher in *every single parameter* of its Impact Profile, a result which is unprecedented in our previous impact studies.

In summary, though the service pillar engages a smaller user base (22%), those who do make use of Programs experience a higher impact more comprehensively than any other service pillar within the library system.

As the Impact Profile illustrates, all the scores across the twelve parameters are quite high for this pillar. However, at a detailed level, it is noteworthy that the Intellectual and Emotional Impact dimensions are slightly more pronounced. The Impact Profile shows that Programs are very capable of providing *new knowledge* (3.9), stimulating *reflection* (3.8) and fostering *new perspectives* (3.8). Users also experience that Programs make them feel *emotionally engaged* (3.8) and *immersed* (3.8). Moving to the Creative dimension, *inspiration* (3.7) is the most dominant parameter. However, it should also be noted that Programs are *motivating users to try new creative projects* (3.5). In fact, Programs are the key driver of this specific parameter looking across the study as a whole. Last but not least, Programs exert a strong Social Impact as they create *opportunities for conversations* (3.7) and *inspire empathy and insight to the lives of others* (3.7).

Programs is the only service pillar that displays average impact scores of 3.5 or higher in every single parameter of its Impact Profile

With a pronounced impact in the Intellectual and Emotional dimensions, the Impact Profile for Programs is somewhat similar to the Impact Profile of Collections. Hence, some of the same factors may be at play. Similar to the Collections service pillar, Programs cover a vast array of different content and activities ranging from children's story times to arts, crafts and culture, education, technology and digital innovation, and covering different formats such as online courses, in-person sessions, workshops, lectures, training and instruction, etc. The fact that this wide range of resources is free and accessible to everyone provides a great opportunity for Toronto



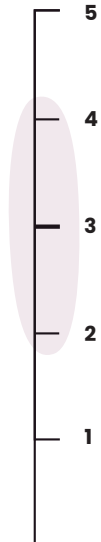
Toronto Public Library Programs

Profile average: 3.7

5 = all respondents have replied
"To a very large extent"

The probable outcome space

1 = all respondents have replied
"Not at all"

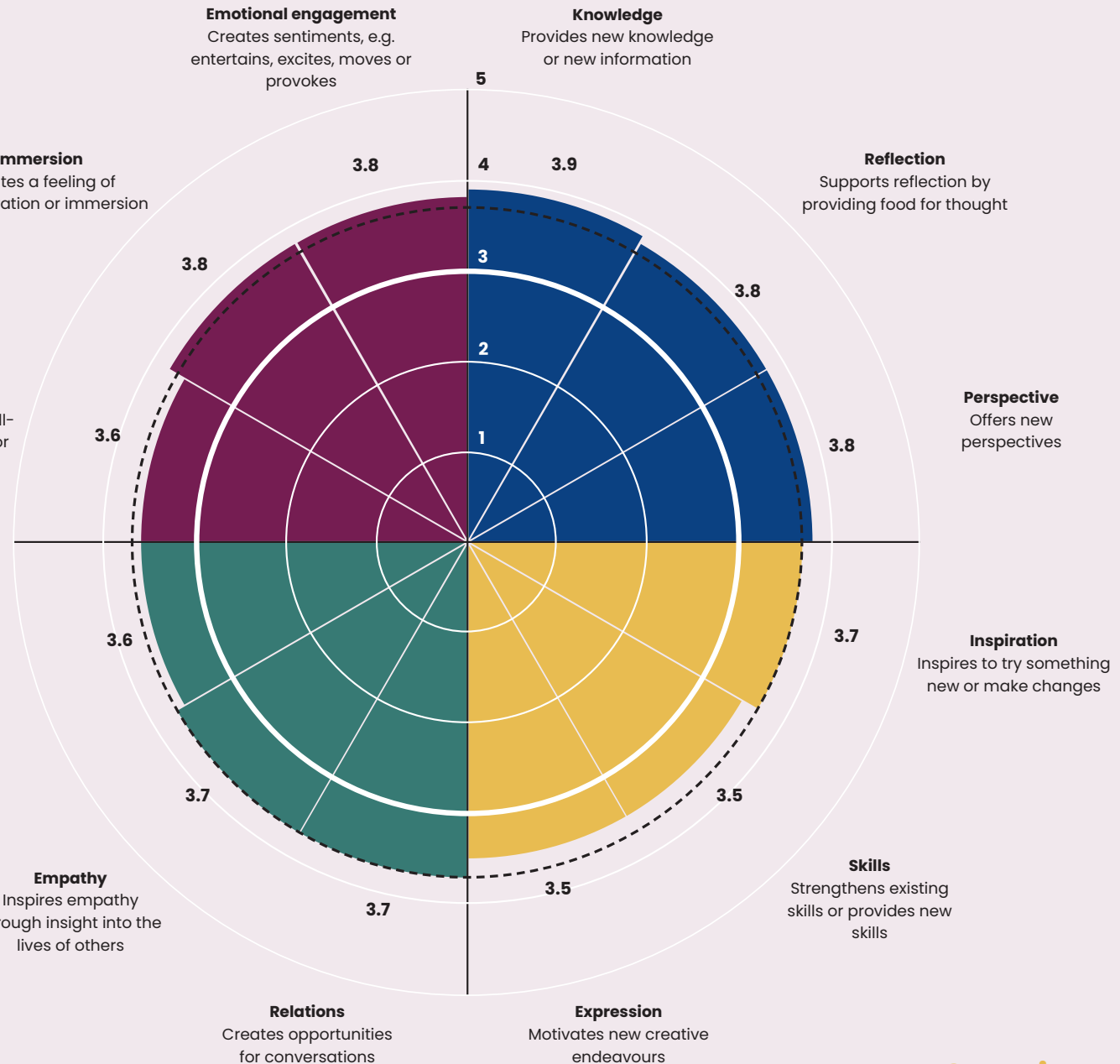


Emotional Impact

Intellectual Impact

Social Impact

Creative Impact





“The public library is building up my community. I love it. I’m coming here for programs. Programs for my education, for my expansion of knowledge. Programs to help my son and programs to help my friend. They both have schizophrenia. So, at my time of life, that’s it. Programs!”

Rosa, 71 years

residents to elevate themselves – for recreational purposes or out of sheer necessity in terms of acquiring the skills and knowledge needed to thrive.

“I have taken advantage of the French book club at Cedarbrae. I have taken advantage of computer courses and health food courses. As a matter of fact, this month I registered for the diabetic course and I registered for the seniors team. We even had a gardening session too. The whole thing is free of charge. High or low, it doesn’t matter. Supporting equal opportunity. So, it only requires your willingness.”

Piya, 31 years

As noted above, Programs also have a significant ability to affect and impact Torontonians socially. Of all the five service pillars, Programs have the highest Social Impact by far, creating *opportunities for conversations* (3.7), *a feeling of community or opportunities to meet new people* (3.6), and *inspires empathy through insight into the lives of others* (3.7). Though it might not be all Programs that aim to create social interaction, this service pillar on a whole provides an opportunity for being together and connecting with other people in meaningful contexts.

“We come here at least three times a week – me, my daughter and my son. Every Friday morning there is a group for moms where I

have met other Filipino moms and their kids. We have started a playgroup for the kids around my daughter’s age.”

Lola, 27 years

Programs are important for personal growth and elevation

Beyond the quantitative impact profile of Programs, the qualitative findings further illustrate how Torontonians experience this service pillar as a way to elevate oneself from one situation in life to another. Several individuals in the qualitative data articulated this experience. One user describes how attending workshops on crafts has been transformational for her to conquer her social anxiety (see the portrait of Jolie, p. 35). Another user describes how a music production facility, where he learned to record and produce his own music, helped him to find a new path in life.

In parallel to these examples, a third user describes how attending the Career Coaches in Residence Program lifted her out of a personal crisis she experienced after losing her job. Through the program, she realized that losing one’s job – which to her seemed like a personal failure – is quite a normal situation that many people face at some point in life. Realizing this, and receiving help and guidance from the program, provided her with the stepping

stones she needed to build confidence and find her way back to employment.

“Losing your job in your mid-thirties is kind of an ego blow. So, it makes you question what you’re doing. It’s a milestone in life that a lot of people go through. And I feel like the Career Coach program kind of normalized that for me and said, ‘This happens to a whole bunch of people. You’re not the only one!’ It made me feel more optimistic about the whole thing. And finally, I’m seeing it as an opportunity instead of a setback.”

Jessa, 36 years



Programs help Torontonians come together

The high degree of Social Impact, with averages at creating *opportunities for conversations* (3.7), providing a *feeling of community* or opportunities to meet new people (3.6), and *inspires empathy through insight into the lives of others* (3.7) is also evident in the qualitative data.

A point that stands out is the experience of feeling accepted in an inclusive space, where users can get advice and guidance, not only from the library program as such, but also from fellow attendees who are also engaged in the activities. Programs like Career Coaches in Residence are praised by the users for their ability to establish a connection between people who find themselves in similar life situations, who share the same interests, or who

find themselves in meaningful social contexts, where everyone is accepted. The previously quoted user from the Career Coach Program explains:

“It’s because we’re all connected and we all intrinsically want to contribute. And some people feel helpless or they don’t know where to start. So, it’s a really good stepping stone towards landing somewhere, to become a taxpayer, to become a part of the community.”

Jill, 36 years

The same sense of community is seen across other programs. For example, many families attend children’s programs on a regular basis, which in effect creates the same experience of a welcoming community, where residents of Toronto get to know each other and give each other advice, thus coming together in a safe environment.

“It’s comforting for me as a new parent to have this kind of space, especially when my baby was younger. Honestly, just hearing stories similar to mine – like, ‘am I ever going to sleep again?’, you know. Tips and tricks about breastfeeding, bottle feeding, everything. It’s a safe space to ask questions, learn, and be okay with not knowing everything.”

Serena, 30 years





Portrait no. 2

Jolie

Age: 17
Profession: High school student
Interest: Academic resources and creative crafts

Meet Jolie, a young and engaged user who has discovered a haven for exploration and community at Toronto Public Library. Her journey from overcoming social anxiety to embracing communication skills and creativity is an inspiring tale of how the library has shaped her growth and opened doors to new interests.

Jolie has fostered a strong connection with the library, where she not only explores academic resources but also unleashes her creative talents. The library's Fabrication Studio unlocked avenues for exciting activities like sewing, fabric printing and DIY projects.

The library has also served as a place of transformation for Jolie, allowing her to navigate social challenges that arose during the COVID pandemic. The ambiance at the library has played a crucial role in her personal growth. She highlights how the welcoming atmosphere, helpful staff, and amicable community assisted her in getting out of her comfort zone and enhancing her communication abilities.

"I saw how kind people were. They were just very open and that allowed me to become more comfortable and break out of my shell. After so many years of being isolated during the pandemic, it was really hard for me. The library is a social place but not in the way that it's too much, where you get overwhelmed and you feel like your social battery is draining. You're eased into this community in a really great way. At first I was just talking to the employees, and now I find myself talking to people who are just here."

3.3 Spaces

A versatile and inclusive haven accommodating diverse experiences

More than half of users, precisely **56%**, have used library Spaces at least once within the last year. Toronto Public Library's 100 branches offer a broad range of physical spaces with diverse activities mirroring the needs and demographics of their local communities. Some have innovation spaces such as fabrication studios and Digital Innovation Hubs; many have meeting rooms; and all have areas designated for work, study and quiet reflection.

With a Profile average score of **3.3**, library Spaces prove to have an important part of Toronto Public Library's impact on its users. The Impact Profile of this service pillar is especially pronounced in the Emotional and Intellectual dimensions. In the Emotional dimension, users experience a sense of *well-being* (3.7), being *concentrated or immersed* (3.6) and being *emotionally engaged* (3.3). In regard to Intel-

lectual Impact, obtaining *new knowledge and information* (3.5) is rated highly, along with helping users to *reflect* (3.3) or see *new perspectives* (3.3) which are both relatively high.

"Libraries are open for everyone. So, they can think that, I have a place to go to browse for books, look at other types of people you've never met, or just to look at the people who are using computers or studying. So, I think it gives more mental relief for the people who have nowhere to go."

Keiko, 39 years

Library Spaces contribute to Creative Impact as well. Some branches support personal growth and skills development by offering access to resources like sewing machines, 3D printers, and musical instruments. The Impact Profile shows how library Spaces also *inspire* users (3.3) and encourage users to learn *new skills* (3.1).

A welcoming space that creates diverse social experiences

The Social Impact of library Spaces is not as pronounced as the Emotional and Intellectual Impact dimensions. This can seem counter-intuitive, as one may tend to think of physical libraries as social spaces per se. However, when examining the qualitative data, we find that many users go to the library with a purpose to work, study, learn – or to relax. The library offers a range of designated spaces for these activities, and provides an immersive environment that helps users avoid distractions and improve their productivity, especially for students and professionals seeking a conducive place for learning and work. To users, this is not necessarily consistent with socializing with others.



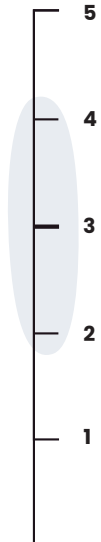
Toronto Public Library Spaces

Profile average: 3.3

5 = all respondents have replied
"To a very large extent"

The probable outcome space

1 = all respondents have replied
"Not at all"



Emotional Impact

Intellectual Impact

Social Impact

Creative Impact



However, a closer look at the quantitative data reveals that there is a significant divide between different users when it comes to the Social Impact of library Spaces. Looking into the library Spaces' ability to create *opportunities for conversations* (2.9), *spark a feeling of community* (3.1) and to *inspire empathy* (3.2), the data shows that 13-16% did not experience these parameters at all, while 31-43% did in fact experience this to a large or a very large extent. This illustrates that library Spaces actually do create significant Social Impact for some users, while less significant Social Impact or none at all for others. This also speaks to the many varied ways that library Spaces are used across the spectrum of users.



"The public libraries are good for the community because people can associate with others, see others, be with others. And it's good to associate with other people in a setting like this. You see people from different backgrounds, different age groups. Even though you might not interact with everybody, it's still a social place."

Margaret, 70 years

The study shows that library Spaces are highly capable of creating a welcoming environment that champions diversity and inclusivity – a place where Torontonians can meet each other across backgrounds and life situations. The qualitative interviews echo the experience of library Spaces as places that help people to connect, sometimes even without speaking with one another.

"It's especially true if you find a favourite branch. It's the only way to truly connect with your community. The library caters to its immediate population and the city as a whole. When I visit a specific branch, I get a sense of the area's residents and their activities. It's one of the few places where you can engage with others and feel part of the community."

Mira, 29 years

A vital resource for Toronto's youth

While the quantitative data include Torontonians between the age of 16 to 92 years, the qualitative data also includes even younger users. The interviews with the youngest users underscore library Spaces as being a vital resource for Toronto's youth.

"We come here to study because it's quieter than home for most of us. And it's easier to get together with friends and study. So many distractions at home like the TV or my fridge. Also, it's easier to study here because there's more resources. For example, if you really need help, there's probably a useful book or textbook here that you can find."

Aryan, 15 years

Many young users come to study because there are fewer distractions and useful resources that can be utilized from the Collections. Others use library Spaces to hang out after school. Through the qualitative interviews, it becomes evident that library Spaces have a profound impact on younger users.

"The library has made a big difference for us growing up here in this neighbourhood. We used to come here after school. Like every day. So, in middle school, our school work started to become harder and more intense. And that's when the libraries – the study side of it – really influenced us."

Arjun, 15 years



“It is important that my children experience the diversity of the library because Toronto is diverse, right? They need to understand that they’re in a position of privilege. They’re cocooned, so it’s good for them to see society. There are people that come here to study, to socialize and to work. But there are also homeless people and people who are affluent, but they’re all in one space. So, you’ve got to get used to that. For me, I think that’s just exposing my kids to what reality is.”

Rob, 52 years

In some branches, they have designated Youth Hubs where only the younger users are allowed and where library Staff are present during open hours. The Youth Hubs constitute a safe haven for younger user groups where they can hang out with their peers between school and home.

“When I’m here, sometimes there’s like, crazy people. Crazy-looking people around. And I feel safe in the Youth Hub, because no adults are allowed in there, which is very nice.”

Jared, 13 years

As library Spaces are used as a quiet space too, and not all branches have designated Youth Hubs, conflicts sometimes arise. For example, between youth and other user groups seeking a possibility for immersion and concentration. The idea of the library as a shared space though means that one’s own needs are sometimes set aside recognizing the positive impact that the Spaces have for other groups.

“I have been here on a number of occasions where there’s been a group of adolescent boys, and they get really rowdy. And I mean, they’re playing tag, you know, yelling and swearing. And yet, when I look at them, I don’t want to see these kids in the street. I really don’t. And I look at some of them, and you can see the hardship of their lives in their young faces. So, I do want them to have this place too, to just hang out, you know.”

Carol, 74 years



Portrait no. 3

Austin

Age: 39
Profession: Unknown
Interest: Fostering his daughter's growth

Meet Austin, a devoted father, unwavering in his mission to instill the joys of learning in his daughter, Julie. He sees the library as a haven beyond books, where knowledge, learning, empathy and respect are cultivated – something he himself missed, growing up in a rough neighbourhood with no connections to his own childhood branch.

Every Saturday, Austin and his daughter Julie step into their local branch, St. James Town, in one of Canada's most densely populated neighbourhoods, transforming the library space into their cocoon of concentration. Here, surrounded by shelves of knowledge, Austin imparts the value of routine and discipline by reading with his daughter for 45 minutes and then having some fun afterwards. He understands that routines foster mastery and make education a source of joy, not duty.

"I don't want to make education a duty for her. I don't think you should do that. It's got to be fun. But I want to give her a routine. Routines are so important if you want to be good at something. That's why I teach her this schedule and she learns that discipline

and routines pay off. Her writing is improving so fast – it's not just me who notices it, she notices it too. She sees the reward."

Austin's journey is a reflection of his own upbringing. He knows the gaps left by a lack of routine and parental involvement.

"My parents came from Jamaica, but I grew up here. They thought if they sent me to school, I'd be educated. They didn't know that the parent is the first teacher. So, they didn't teach me the value of education through the library, but I was lucky enough to experience that value myself. I saw that and I knew that if I one day would have a child, this is how I was going to be a parent."

Through the library, he aims to fill these gaps for Julie. For him, the library is more than books – it's a space where respect and empathy are nurtured, creating a foundation for responsible adulthood. In his dedication, Austin unveils that education is not just about reading, but about instilling values through routine, responsibility, and shared learning spaces.

3.4 Staff

A trusted source of knowledge and empathy

Library Staff support and guidance have been utilized by **40%** of users within the past 12 months. This includes in-person, telephone and online interactions with Staff for assistance with an information request; or receiving reading recommendations, as well as the provision of technology support, guidance using and accessing information resources, community information, referrals, and more.

With a Profile average score of **3.1**, this service pillar has a fairly high impact on all parameters in each of the four dimensions for this pillar, however with a slightly more profound impact in the Emotional and Intellectual parameters. This speaks to the library Staff's ability to make users feel good about coming to the library or reaching out to the library through other channels, such as phone or email. People generally feel well treated. Unfolding the Impact Profile of Staff we see a service pillar that contributes with Intellectual Impact,

by providing users with *new knowledge* (3.6) – which is the highest impact score for this service pillar, and paving the way for *reflection* (3.1) and *new perspectives* (3.1). Moreover, library Staff contribute with Emotional Impact by providing a sense of *well-being* (3.4), *engaging people emotionally* (3.2) and helping them feel *concentrated or immersed* (3.1).

“The librarians are indispensable. They got me through my degree because my degree was super research-heavy. They were the knowledge holders on how to best make use of the system.”

Aisha, 29 years

While it may be expected that the Staff pillar is closely linked to Intellectual Impact, the Staff service pillar also has such a profound impact on Emotional parameters. A similar depiction was seen in the Danish reference study, and is only reinforced by these findings.

“I like to come here with one of my friends, and we talk with a librarian. They are so understanding if you’re going through a hard time. We just talk about how it’s going.”

Jane, 16 years



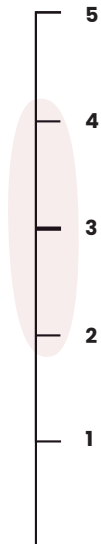
Toronto Public Library Staff

Profile average: 3.1

5 = all respondents have replied
"To a very large extent"

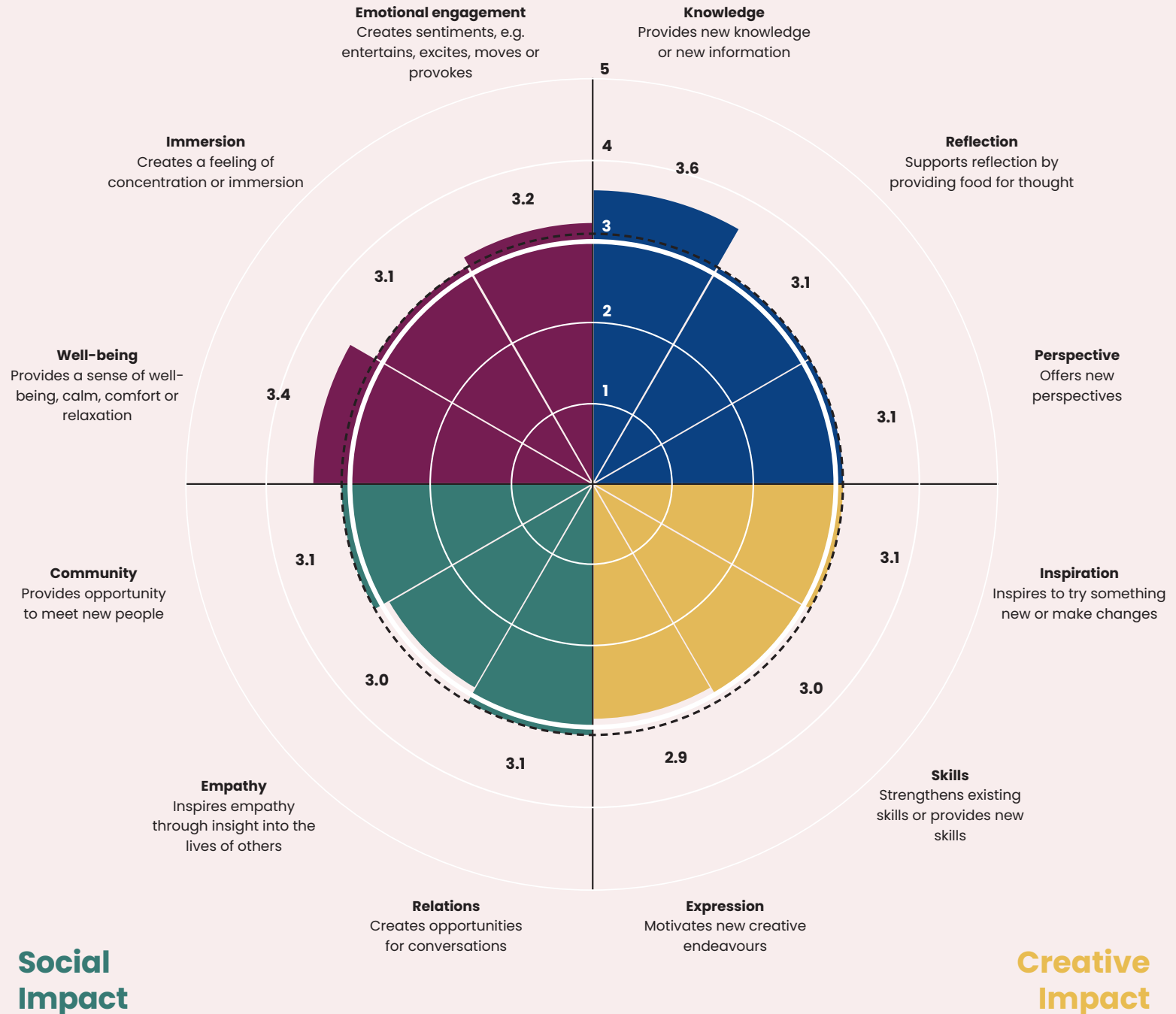
The probable outcome space

1 = all respondents have replied
"Not at all"



Emotional Impact

Intellectual Impact



Going the extra yard for knowledge and inspiration

Several of the users we have interviewed attest to librarians as highly trustworthy and always ready to go the extra yard in providing the information they require. They portray library Staff as being very committed to their task. There is a strong element of empathy present in these narratives. It is not just about finding the right item in the database, it is also about the experience of having someone on your side, a true helper, someone who is dedicated to your needs, and who has the human capability to interpret your needs – perhaps even beyond what you recognize yourself.

“I have what feels like a personal book representative, who personally picks up books for me [Home Library Service]. She will work on suggestions, and she has just been fantastic. She never says no to my questions. I’ve never had a bad experience. She has offered me wonderful choices. It is not only the service you offer, it’s the kind of people who make such a big difference. I have yet to encounter a person who wasn’t friendly. They are always trying to go the extra yard.”

Perry, 68 years

A human connection in a city of strangers

When examining the qualitative data it becomes evident that there is in fact a strong linkage between library Staff and a user’s sense of ‘being met by someone’, a welcoming human face. To users, library Staff are there for them, without any commercial interest, someone who will do what they can to help them achieve their goals, but also – to some users – a friendly face who will listen and help reduce social isolation and loneliness.

As described in the introduction of this report, Toronto is a vast and dynamic city. It is the top destination for newcomers to Canada, about 20% of new immigrants settle in the city each year. In 2021 and 2022, almost 85,000 and 82,000 respectively, came to Toronto¹. With many Toronto residents coming from all parts of the world, Toronto is quite the cultural mosaic. At the same time, a social and economic divide is challenging the cohesion of the city, a divide that is creating both a generational gap as well as a gap in digital literacy. In a city so large and diverse, there is a risk of people feeling disconnected.

1 – Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC), July 31, 2023, https://www.cic.gc.ca/opendata-donneesouvertes/data/EN_ODP-PR-CSD.xlsx

In this context, the qualitative findings of the study show that the Staff service pillar plays a crucial role in establishing a human connection to Torontonians in a variety of life situations. Everyone comes to and is welcome at the library; families, nannies, school children, youth, students, entrepreneurs, adult professionals, senior residents, and vulnerable populations struggling with homelessness, addiction, or mental health issues.

“I think the library is really inclusive. I really respect people who are from the LGBTQ community. And I respect the fact that the library also appreciates them. And they put up this board for them. But they focused also on straight people. Which doesn’t make them sidelined. Really makes me feel good.”

Serenity, 15 years

“This is a place where I can come to feel like a human also. Because I can talk to the person at the desk, who doesn’t even know me, and he is not going to tell me his life problems. I’m not going to tell him mine. But I know that ‘Andreas’ is a person and he seems civilized. He’s okay. And this is a place where I can see okayness.”

Phillip, 53 years

The library Staff seem widely appreciated among users for their ability to welcome everyone and facilitate an inclusive space. For example, a user of the Home Library Service describes how library Staff meant the world to her during the pandemic, in her own words it made the difference between life and death.



“These books are my life. My son has his own life, and my husband is disabled, he can no longer drive a car. The person who delivers my books is very kind. I talk to him – he knows all my reads. I read twenty books a month and I was so thankful that TPL were still able to deliver books during COVID. The library is one of the most important parts of my social life. I depend on it very deeply. I don’t know what I would do without it. I don’t get many phone calls anymore. The library is my friend.”

Irene, 95 years



“Librarians are trained to welcome everyone. They don’t care about where you come from, whether you’re young or old, or where you were born and so on. It’s open to everyone. Libraries may be the first place newcomers can go to explore their new life here. I think it’s like a second home.”

Rob, 52 years

Supporting the community without becoming a social worker

That Staff has a social function is no surprise. Within the Social dimension, Staff help create *opportunities for conversations* (3.1), *foster a feeling of community* (3.1) and *inspire empathy* (3.0), as seems to be natural tasks when being the face of a democratic and public open institution. Interestingly Staff gets an even higher impact rating across the Social Impact parameters among the younger users. 16 to 24 year olds rate all three parameters an average of 3.4, illustrating that the Staff service pillar plays a special part in the social experience of this group. The young users that we interviewed in the study agreed with this.

“Nice and helpful staff. They provide homework help, so if you’re doing a project or something – math, science or whatever – if you ask them a question about the topic, they always try to help you the best they can.”

Damian, 13 years

Many users appreciate how the Staff serve their communities in many ways – however, some also express a concern that library Staff should not become equal to social workers.

While Staff’s contribution to Social Impact in some respects fits the image of what the

library should be, some users believe that these days too much responsibility is being placed on library Staff as social service personnel.

Arguing that both post-pandemic issues as well as budget cuts in other social services are to blame, they see library Staff as stepping further and further into the role of a social worker which in turn will take away time and energy from the many core tasks that they already have.

“They provide, I don’t want to say ‘social services’ here, but they do. Like I’ve seen them take good care of homeless people here. I’ve seen them, you know, watch out for their safety and well-being and try to get them support. [...] This winter I saw homeless people in the libraries, homeless people sleeping in the lobby and just waiting for the library to open to come in and have a warm place to stay. The library welcomes them, offers them support.”

Ron, 52 years

3.5 Technology

Providing digital access, inclusion and literacy

The library's Technology pillar was utilized by **45%** of the users in the survey in the past year. Looking at the Impact Profile of the Technology service pillar, we see a Profile average score of **3.1**. The Impact Profile reveals that the impact of Technology is profound in the Emotional, Intellectual and Creative dimensions. It might be noted that Technology generally displays lower average scores compared to the other service pillars (except the Creative impact dimension, which is fairly high for Technology). This does not mean that Technology is less important than other service pillars. Recalling that Technology includes amenities such as access to WiFi, public computers, equipment and software, it is evident that such services are vital to many users, however the experienced impact of access to WiFi (for example) might be more subtle.

The Intellectual Impact of Technology is easy to comprehend, since it is no surprise that the services within this pillar easily can result

in *new knowledge and information* (3.4), the highest score for the pillar, *reflection* (3.1) and *new perspectives* (3.1). Likewise, the Creative Impact is intuitive to understand since Technology can easily lead to strengthening of *new or existing skills* (3.3), providing *inspiration* (3.2), and *increasing motivation for creative projects* (3.1). Many of these findings align with the effects uncovered in the Bridge Project¹.

What might be surprising is that access to Technology also leads to profound Emotional Impact. The Impact Profile reveals that Technology does in fact lead to a sense of *well-being* (3.2), making users feel *emotionally engaged* (3.1) and *concentrated or immersed* (3.3). This is likely related to the recreational use of the library's public computers. Having

1 – Nordicity and Toronto Public Library (2023): *Impact of Technology Services in Ontario Public Libraries – Bridge 2021/2022*, find it here: <https://www.torontopubliclibrary.ca/content/bridge/pdfs/nordicity-executive-summary-2021-2022.pdf>

What might be surprising is that access to Technology also leads to profound Emotional Impact.

conducted qualitative research across multiple branches, it is clear that access to public computers at the library is, to many users, equal to accessing a quiet, private space. We have observed many users who simply relax at the computer areas while playing online games, watching videos, browsing social media, etc. – as one user expressed it, 'I'm just passing time'. The Emotional Impact of Technology mirrors the users' experiences of the library Spaces pillar.

In this context it is important to understand that many people who use library Technology services would not otherwise have had access to at least some of that technology. As the Bridge Project reveals, a vast majority of the



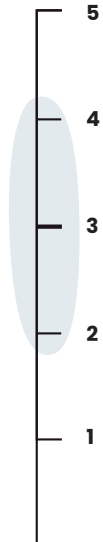
Toronto Public Library Technology

Profile average: 3.1

5 = all respondents have replied
"To a very large extent"

The probable outcome space

1 = all respondents have replied
"Not at all"



Emotional Impact

Intellectual Impact

Social Impact

Creative Impact



users who use technology services (81%) use them to access the Internet at or through the library, when they would not otherwise have been able to do so². This points to a conclusion that the Technology pillar makes a significant contribution to bridging inequities of access to technology and in reinforcing social cohesion.

However, while access to the Internet and to public computers is a vital service for many vulnerable residents in Toronto, the impact of the Technology pillar is particularly striking when looking at the qualitative results for specialized technology services. This is especially

2 - Ibid.

the case for those who use the library's Digital Innovation Hubs, the recording studios, and other similar specialized technology services. Some of these users apply technology at a very high level, and they have found a community of like-minded people from whom they also draw inspiration – directly or indirectly.

In some cases, the impacts stretch far beyond recreational or educational purposes and become transformational. Technology at the library allows users to develop new skills, enabling residents with poor digital skills to build the fundamental skills needed to become digitally literate, and to use the Internet and digital resources for personal gains.

Diverse use fosters different social experiences

All three parameters of the Social Impact dimension for the Technology pillar had a score of 2.9. This is the lowest average rating in the Social dimension across all five service pillars. As with lower scores in other service pillars, this does not mean that no users derive Social Impact from the use of library Technology services. There are users who have indicated experiencing no Social Impact from Technology, this amounts to 22% of users in regard to creating *opportunities for conversations*, 22% for fostering a feeling of community or *opportunities to meet new people*, and 25% for its capacity to *inspire empathy* for or give *insight into the lives of other people*. However, in this dimension we also find users who have reported a large or a very large extent of Social Impact – that is, 34%, 32% and 34% respectively. In other words, even though the average scores of the parameters are relatively low,



“I use the Internet at the library because I don’t have a phone or other device that I can use. I look up information to educate myself. For instance, I grow vegetables at home and I want to know if I’m doing it in the best way. So, I do research on growing vegetables and on health problems using the Internet. I also check out videos and books and come here just to connect with other people.”

Martha, 70 years

around a third of the users of the Technology pillar report having experienced a high degree of Social Impact. This demonstrates that the use of library Technology services is much more divided than that of the other pillars, thus providing different experiences for diverse users.

“I have met a fellow in here who is also working with code the same way as I am. He is developing a specific product. We’ve been talking every time we meet here. It’s nice!”

Grayson, 68 years

If we take an even closer look at the data, we see that the Technology pillar has a different Social Impact across different age groups. This seems intuitive as different generations often utilize technology for different ends. Younger users between 16 and 24 years reported experiencing a significantly more pronounced Social Impact from use of the Technology pillar, rating the three Social Impact parameters at 3.2 for its ability to create *opportunities for conversations*, 3.3 for its ability to foster a feeling of community or *opportunities to meet new people*, and 3.3 for its capacity to *inspire empathy for or give insight into the lives of other people*.

Others use the public computers at the library even if they have similar technology at home. They explain that the computers at the library

are slightly better, and that they can more easily tune in and concentrate on their work or studies due to the unique ‘immersive’ atmosphere present at the library, another Impact parameter that is also more pronounced among the younger users, who rate the Emotional Impact parameter *immersion* at 3.6, compared to the overall of 3.3.

“It’s difficult to study at home because we have games on our laptop and we often get sidetracked. These computers are more secure and they don’t allow you to download any games or do stuff like that. It helps you focus more on your studying.”

Arun, 15 years

Technology is a pathway for transformational skills

Many users that we have encountered in the Digital Innovation Hubs, the recording studios, audio/visual studios and the like, express how they use the library’s facilities as a launch pad for their creative or professional endeavours, which they hope to become defining for their life and careers. Dreams are born in these facilities, and the first steps are taken to make them come true.

In another example, a user at the Digital Innov-

ation Hub explains that he is an entrepreneur, and that he needed to make some technical drawings using the software AutoCAD for 2D and 3D modeling. Since he could not afford to have an architect make the drawings, he needed to learn it himself, which to him seemed like an impossible task. But, everything cleared up when he entered the Digital Innovation Hub. As he explains:

“I explained the project and what I wanted to get done. So, they took me into the technical room and they showed me, ‘Okay, well, this is the software you need’. Then they taught me how to use it. And I could go on it right now and do any form of modification to my project that I want. I know how to use it now. I could teach someone how to use it now. Oh, man. It’s such a big thing for me to tell this to you.”

Marvin, 57 years

Catching up with technology to bridge the digital divide

At the other end of the spectrum we find users who are utilizing Technology to catch up with the digital fundamentals needed to thrive and be part of modern society. These skills can sometimes be learned in conjunction with Programs, or with receiving help and guidance

from the library Staff. However, this impact might also occur simply by spending time with the computers and establishing confidence with controlling the mouse, using a browser and all of these things that digitally-proficient users take for granted.

“I learned to use the computer here. I was [digitally] illiterate and always asking my daughter how to do this, how to do that. Then TPL was offering a program on how to use a computer, so I took it, and I came here to practice afterwards. It gives you independence, that you can learn how to use these computers and gain knowledge by using them.”

Martha, 70 years

Another user explains how she has experienced how government service points have become increasingly digital in their communication and contact points with citizens. So, in order to be able to interact with the government or other public bodies, you need a certain level of digital literacy.

As these examples show, despite some of the Impact dimensions scoring lower, a broad range of users clearly find that access to Technology at the library is a vital service – for novices who are still learning the basics, as well as for those at the very top of the digital literacy continuum who access the library’s digital services in order to leverage their work and be part of specialized communities for direct or indirect inspiration.

“It’s great that the Internet was intended to be this wonderful source of all kinds of information. But when [official] services decide that you have to contact them through the Internet, you’re getting only this one portal for communication. And the Internet is not considered a necessary service like electricity or water yet. Not in Canada at least.”

Nancy, 74 years

“Well, my relationship to this library is basically like I’m reinventing myself. There’s a recording studio here, and a visual studio. So, I’m trying to reinvent myself that way. I’ve had a passion for music for a long time, but I gave it up because ‘life calls’, right? So now that I get a chance to, I come here and polish those skills.”

McKenna, 42 years







4. The combined impact of Toronto Public Library

4. The combined impact of Toronto Public Library

In this chapter we conclude with the combined impact of Toronto Public Library based on a cross-pillar analysis synthesizing the five service pillars into one combined Impact Profile for the library system as a whole.

As shown in the previous chapter, this study demonstrates how each of the five service pillars has unique ways of influencing and affecting Torontonians across all four dimensions of the Experience Impact Compass.

When looking across the five service pillars and analyzing the Toronto Public Library in its entirety, our findings reveal that Toronto Public Library is a place where Torontonians come to grow and to thrive. Whether it is through the local Youth Hub spaces; access to the Internet, public computers and technology; the innovation labs fostering skills development and creative and human growth; the citywide services like the Home Library Service; the access to a broad range of expertly curated collections; the helpful and empathetic staff, or the vast array of programs – there is no doubt among users that Toronto Public Library has a positive impact on their lives in multiple

and significantly important ways.

In particular, Toronto Public Library is experienced as a place for focus and immersion – *a calm and shared haven* in a turbulent and ‘noisy’ world, but also a vital and *dynamic learning environment supporting growth* among the residents of Toronto. It stands as a *catalyst for creativity and inspiration*, equipping its users with both the tools and guidance necessary to embark on new endeavours. Furthermore, it is a *welcoming and inclusive environment fostering connections* where Torontonians can find comfort and relax – a shared place that sparks a strong sense of local community even for those who do not actively engage with others.

For the synthesized cross-pillar analysis of Toronto Public Library, we look at both the Combined Impact Profile (see page 57) as well as overall Dimension averages (see appendices, table 6). The overall Dimension averages are:

- 3.5** – Emotional Impact
- 3.5** – Intellectual Impact
- 3.3** – Creative Impact
- 3.2** – Social Impact

The Emotional and the Intellectual Impact dimensions are most profound with average scores of 3.5. Recalling the explanations in ‘How to read and interpret the Impact Profiles’ (page 23), an average of 3.5 is considered quite high, as the usual outcome span is between 2–4 in the five point scale. The Creative and Social dimensions are fast followers with average scores of 3.3 and 3.2, respectively. This leads us to conclude that Toronto Public Library does indeed affect and influence its users significantly and in multiple ways across all four dimensions in the Experience Impact Compass. This compares well to the Danish study in terms of the relative ‘shape’ of the impact profile. The Danish study found the highest impacts in the Emotional (3.5), and the Intellectual Impact dimensions (3.4), followed by the Creative (3.0) and the Social Impact dimensions (3.0).

In the following section we examine the combined impact of Toronto Public Library through the lens of the four dimensions.



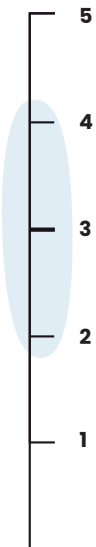
Toronto Public Library Combined Impact

Profile average: 3.4

5 = all respondents have replied
"To a very large extent"

The probable outcome space

1 = all respondents have replied
"Not at all"



Emotional Impact

Intellectual Impact

Social Impact

Creative Impact



4.1 Emotional Impact

A calm and shared haven in a turbulent and 'noisy' world

Toronto Public Library is experienced as a place for focus and immersion. The findings highlight that users to a high degree embrace Toronto Public Library as a nurturing environment – a calm and shared haven – where they engage in activities such as reading, studying, working, and relaxing while relishing the library's focused and immersive atmosphere. Amidst a tangible and digital realm inundated with ceaseless messages and distractions, the library stands as one of the few remaining bastions of tranquility, offering a slower passage of time. Whether offering the physical facilities sitting among the extensive bookshelves, diving into a topic through the Collections, use of Technology, or helpful library Staff interactions, Toronto Public Library offers Torontonians a calm break from an otherwise accelerated pace of everyday life.

As shown in the Combined Impact Profile, Toronto Public Library's Emotional Impact – as

a calm and shared haven – is one of the two most profound overall impacts uncovered in the study (3.5). The Emotional Impact is evenly driven by the three Emotional Impact parameters, *well-being* (3.6), *feeling emotionally engaged* (3.5) and *feeling concentrated or immersed* (3.6).

Similarly, all five service pillars contribute to the Emotional Impact – but each in different ways. Collections, Programs as well as Spaces are the key drivers of Emotional Impact, yet the Staff and the Technology service pillars are still ranked fairly high across the Emotional parameters.

“In a world that is unstable, this stability of the library is very powerful in this strange quiet way.”

Judith, 80 years

“The library holds significant meaning to me. It's a deep-rooted connection that originated from my childhood. If I didn't have access to that resource, I suppose I would rely on technology. However, it wouldn't be quite the same. The library is a secure and inclusive haven for everyone.”

Ivana, 39 years

4.2 Intellectual Impact

A vital and dynamic learning environment that inspires personal growth

Toronto Public Library is experienced as a vital and dynamic learning environment that inspires personal growth, facilitating access to a plethora of knowledge, information and other resources delivered across the different service pillars of the library. Toronto Public Library plays a crucial role in the personal growth and self-development of numerous Toronto residents, as it provides essential resources, opportunity for reflection and new perspectives that all might otherwise be inaccessible to them. Toronto Public Library has – in very direct ways – the capacity to help individuals elevate from one stage to another. From being a newcomer to becoming a Torontonians, from experiencing low literacy to high literacy, from being unemployed or without direction to finding new paths in life.

As illustrated in the Combined Impact Profile, Toronto Public Library's Intellectual Impact – as a dynamic learning environment – is the second of the two most profound averages of the overall cross-pillar impact dimensions (3.5). The Intellectual Impact is especially

driven by Toronto Public Library's ability to provide its users with *new knowledge and information* (3.7), followed by the ability to make the users *reflect* (3.5) and see *new perspectives* (3.5).

Collections as well as Programs truly excel in creating Intellectual Impact, speaking to these service pillars' ability to elevate users for their personal growth. However, the other service pillars most certainly also play a part with generally high ratings especially when it comes to providing users with new knowledge and information.

"I always start with the library. It is a good way to get an understanding of something you might want to pursue. I went to learn about coding, but realized that it wasn't engaging me the way I expected. So, it helped me to just get my feet wet without investing myself at really high cost."

Norm, 43 years

"The library provides a certain level of mobility or transformation of your own skillsets. I'm not a young kid anymore but I have a lot of the knowledge I need for my business. And there are incubators and programs to help you along too. The library helps me continue my flow."

Marvin, 57 years

4.3 Creative Impact

A catalyst for inspiration and creativity through guidance and skills

Toronto Public Library is experienced by users as a catalyst for inspiration and creativity, empowering them to undertake new projects and cultivate their skills across a diverse range of crafts and art forms. This encompasses all sorts of endeavours from music production, piano playing, advanced sewing techniques, to learning new digital skills, coding, mastering 3D printing, and beyond.

As shown in the Combined Impact Profile, the Creative Impact of Toronto Public Library – as a catalyst for inspiration and creativity – received a cross-pillar average rating of **3.3** for the dimension. This impact is especially supported by Toronto Public Library's ability to *inspire* its users (3.4) – which is clearly evident across all five service pillars – followed by its capacity to strengthen new and existing *skills* (3.2) and *build motivation for creative projects* (3.1).

While each library branch differs in terms of its amenities to directly support creative endeavours, the study finds that Programs is the most dominant service pillar for driving Creative Impact at the overall level. However, the study also find that the Creative Impact dimension is very significant in regard to the Impact Profile of the Technology service pillar.

“There was a small part of me that always really wanted to sew because my grandmother did, so when I heard that they have a fabrication studio, I got excited. I can’t express how much I love this space and how much I learned here.”

Jolie, 17 years

“I’ve noticed there’s a piano room. I would like to try it. I have never played the piano before. I think I want to make an appointment so I can try it. Maybe I can also practice on my violin with my friend. That would be nice.”

Xiaowen, 17 years

4.4 Social Impact

An inclusive environment that fosters connections

Entering the physical or virtual realm of Toronto Public Library is like looking into a mirror that reflects the rich tapestry of Toronto's communities. Here you will encounter individuals spanning all age groups, ethnicities, and life circumstances. Individuals experiencing homelessness coexist alongside parents, nannies and toddlers, students, and professionals utilizing the library as a temporary remote workspace. In this shared space, Torontonians experience the diverse lives of others firsthand, fostering a sense of empathy and community. It is, in essence, a welcoming and inclusive space where social tolerance permeates.

As shown in the overall Impact Profile, the Social Impact of Toronto Public Library – as a welcoming and inclusive environment – has received a cross-pillar average rating of **3.2**. This Social Impact is lifted primarily by Toronto Public Library's ability to *inspire empathy* and provide insights into the lives of others (3.3) and secondly by creating *opportunities for conversations* (3.2) and *fostering a feeling of*

community (3.1).

The study clearly shows how Programs really excel in creating Social Impact – driving up the average quite significantly. Yet, Staff and Collections most certainly also play a big part in that.

Collections are generally more pronounced as drivers for personal growth through learning and new perspectives, while that also entails gaining knowledge about and access to other cultures and the lives of others not least through literature.

“The library is like a social support hub for the community. I have made friends here, people I had never met before. You start talking to people and you just kind of hear their story. There are people who spend the entire day here. So, I’m like, that’s wicked, for a public place to do that.”

Ray, 52 years

“I have made acquaintances at the library. Not necessarily close friendships, but nonetheless, it’s nice to come in and see the same people. And the staff have been great, really! It’s comfortable once you become familiar with a particular branch. It’s just a very companionable kind of environment.”

Nancy, 74 years

Vanessa

Meet Vanessa, whose love for the library extends far beyond the pages of her favourite books. The library offers a space where all generations of her family can engage – her grandma can relax and her niece plays, while she plunges herself into a world of literature.

Vanessa uses the library on many different occasions. It's a place where her niece can play, and she can immerse herself in the pages of her book. Her eyes light up when she speaks about the library's themed months. Whether it's Black History Month or Asian Heritage Month, Vanessa embraces the opportunity to dive into recommended books, unveiling hidden gems of knowledge. For her, the library serves as a bridge to understanding herself better as a part of the Hindu community but also to connect better with the world around her.

Age: 14
Profession: Junior high school student
Interest: Family time, friends and reading books

"If the library were to close we would lose so much community in the area. I know people here and have come to meet new kids in this library space, kids who also read. It would also limit my reading significantly. Through the books I discover new themes, I have improved my writing skills and I discover new things and places."

During lunch breaks, Vanessa's social circle transforms the library into an arena of shared exploration. She goes to the library with her friends, where they take turns reading aloud and chatting. These sessions don't just deepen their friendships but also provide a wellspring of conversation as well.

Portrait no. 4

5. Conclusion

The study reveals a tapestry of social impacts for the Toronto Public Library. Beyond the realm of mere foot traffic, our findings highlight the multi-faceted ways these 100 library branches spread across the city and the five library service pillars influence and impact the lives of individuals. The significance of Toronto Public Library on the individual experience is woven with diversity. For some users, the library represents a calm and shared haven in the midst of life's hustle, for others it serves as a reliable and dynamic learning environment and for yet others again it serves as a catalyst for inspiration and creativity in a welcoming atmosphere supporting an inclusive community.

The aim of our study has been to center first-hand individual experience in the discourse on Toronto Public Library's value and impact. Moving beyond performance statistics that rely on input and output metrics, the study has sought to add depth and complexity to the ongoing dialogue about the role of public libraries, today and in the future.

As we share this inaugural study, we hope it can and will act as a catalyst for future explorations, strategic decisions and through that, hopefully help to transform conversations within the Toronto Public Library, as well as other cultural sectors and institutions in Canada and North America alike.

Let us continue to uncover the transformative impact of cultural experiences together. We believe that the potential is huge and that the conversation has only just begun!



Appendices

A. Methodology

This study is the first of its kind conducted with a library system in North America. It is based on a Danish reference study, which is rooted in a methodological framework created by Seismonaut.

The study identifies library users who have made use of at least one of the five library service pillars within the past year. The rest of the population, i.e. current non-users, are by definition excluded from the Impact Profiles presented in the study.

Quantitative data

We have conducted an online survey covering questions about the user's first-hand experiences with the five service pillars of the Toronto Public Library. The survey includes two sources of data:

The first source is a survey panel from which we have retrieved 1.600 respondents representative to the population of Toronto. This representative data set is used as a foundation to separate users from non-users, and to determine the usage of each of the five

service pillars among users. 65% of the panel respondents have used Toronto Public Library services within the past year, defined as between June 2022 and June 2023. The survey was conducted in June 2023.

The second source is an online survey distributed through TPL's communication channels and local branches. This set of data consists solely of users and was therefore not representative to Torontonians.

We have thus weighted this second set of data on the basis of the representative population of users, i.e. the 65% from the panel survey, and thereby creating a *third set of data*; an accumulated user group that consists of 2.755 users. It is on this accumulated dataset that all Impact Profiles as well as the data tables in the appendices are built.

Qualitative data

We have conducted qualitative interviews with 64 users of Toronto Public Library and we have hosted three focus groups with different groups of users, for instance one was at a Youth Hub.

We have conducted qualitative interviews at five library branches situated in neighbourhoods across the city:

- Malvern branch
- St. James Town branch
- North York Central Library
- Albion branch
- Toronto Reference Library.

Some interviews were planned ahead in order to reach specific user segments, e.g. users of the Home Library Service or Bookmobile. However, most of the interviews were unscheduled, and were conducted with users who happened to be present at the selected branches during our research visit. In order to ensure a broad and nuanced qualitative dataset, we deliberately visited quite diverse branches at different weekdays and at different times of the day.

B. Data Tables

The study refers to Impact Profiles and average scores throughout the report. In the tables on the following pages you can look into the detailed responses that lie behind the Impact Profiles presented in the report.

Table 1A
Collections – average scores across age and gender

Dimension	Impact parameter	Overall score	16 to 24 years	25 to 34 years	35 to 44 years	45 to 54 years	55 to 64 years	65 + years	Male	Female
Emotional	Well-being – Provides a sense of well-being, calm, comfort or relaxation	3.9	4.1	4.1	4.0	3.8	3.7	3.7	3.7	4.0
	Immersion – Creates a feeling of concentration or immersion	4.0	4.3	4.2	4.0	3.8	3.8	3.7	3.8	4.1
	Emotional engagement – Creates sentiments, e.g. entertains, excites, moves or provokes	4.0	4.2	4.2	4.0	3.9	3.8	3.7	3.8	4.1
Intellectual	Knowledge – Provides new knowledge or new information	4.1	4.1	4.2	4.2	4.1	4.1	3.9	4.1	4.1
	Reflection – Supports reflection by providing food for thought	4.0	4.0	4.2	4.0	4.0	4.0	3.8	3.9	4.1
	Perspective – Offers new perspectives	4.0	4.1	4.1	4.1	3.9	3.8	3.7	3.8	4.0
Creative	Inspiration – Inspires to try something new or make changes	3.7	3.8	3.8	3.8	3.6	3.5	3.3	3.6	3.7
	Skills – Strengthens existing skills or provides new skills	3.3	3.4	3.5	3.5	3.4	3.1	2.8	3.3	3.2
	Expression – Motivates new creative endeavours	3.2	3.3	3.4	3.3	3.1	3.0	2.6	3.2	3.1
Social	Relations – Creates opportunities for conversations	3.3	3.5	3.6	3.4	3.1	3.1	2.9	3.2	3.3
	Empathy – Inspires empathy through insight into the lives of others	3.6	3.8	3.8	3.7	3.5	3.5	3.4	3.4	3.8
	Community – Provides opportunity to meet new people	2.8	3.2	3.0	3.0	2.7	2.6	2.4	2.8	2.8

Table 1B
Collections – details behind average scores

Dimension	Impact parameter	Overall score	Distribution among responses (percentages of population)				
			To a very large extent	To a large extent	To some extent	To a small extent	Not at all
Emotional	Well-being – Provides a sense of well-being, calm, comfort or relaxation	3.9	40%	29%	20%	8%	4%
	Immersion – Creates a feeling of concentration or immersion	4.0	40%	32%	18%	7%	4%
	Emotional engagement – Creates sentiments, e.g. entertains, excites, moves or provokes	4.0	42%	28%	19%	7%	4%
Intellectual	Knowledge – Provides new knowledge or new information	4.1	46%	29%	18%	5%	2%
	Reflection – Supports reflection by providing food for thought	4.0	43%	28%	19%	6%	4%
	Perspective – Offers new perspectives	4.0	41%	27%	21%	8%	3%
Creative	Inspiration – Inspires to try something new or make changes	3.7	31%	26%	27%	10%	6%
	Skills – Strengthens existing skills or provides new skills	3.3	26%	20%	26%	16%	13%
	Expression – Motivates new creative endeavours	3.2	23%	17%	27%	17%	16%
Social	Relations – Creates opportunities for conversations	3.3	23%	21%	29%	16%	12%
	Empathy – Inspires empathy through insight into the lives of others	3.6	33%	26%	23%	11%	7%
	Community – Provides opportunity to meet new people	2.8	16%	14%	26%	19%	24%

Table 2A
Programs – average scores across age and gender

Dimension	Impact parameter	Overall score	16 to 24 years	25 to 34 years	35 to 44 years	45 to 54 years	55 to 64 years	65 + years	Male	Female
Emotional	Well-being - Provides a sense of well-being, calm, comfort or relaxation	3.6	4.2	3.5	3.5	3.8	3.5	3.5	3.6	3.7
	Immersion - Creates a feeling of concentration or immersion	3.8	4.4	3.7	3.7	3.9	3.7	3.6	3.6	3.8
	Emotional engagement - Creates sentiments, e.g. entertains, excites, moves or provokes	3.8	4.2	3.8	3.6	4.0	3.7	3.6	3.6	3.8
Intellectual	Knowledge - Provides new knowledge or new information	3.9	4.4	3.9	3.6	4.0	4.1	3.9	3.8	3.9
	Reflection - Supports reflection by providing food for thought	3.8	4.2	3.7	3.5	4.0	4.1	3.8	3.7	3.8
	Perspective - Offers new perspectives	3.8	4.1	3.7	3.5	4.0	4.0	3.7	3.7	3.8
Creative	Inspiration - Inspires to try something new or make changes	3.7	4.2	3.6	3.5	3.8	3.8	3.4	3.5	3.7
	Skills - Strengthens existing skills or provides new skills	3.5	4.2	3.5	3.2	3.5	3.5	3.3	3.5	3.4
	Expression - Motivates new creative endeavours	3.5	4.3	3.5	3.2	3.5	3.6	3.2	3.6	3.4
Social	Relations - Creates opportunities for conversations	3.7	4.2	3.7	3.6	3.8	3.6	3.4	3.6	3.7
	Empathy - Inspires empathy through insight into the lives of others	3.7	4.2	3.6	3.6	3.9	3.7	3.5	3.6	3.8
	Community - Provides opportunity to meet new people	3.6	4.3	3.6	3.7	3.8	3.5	3.2	3.6	3.7

Table 2B
Programs – details behind average scores

Dimension	Impact parameter	Overall score	Distribution among responses (percentages of population)				
			To a very large extent	To a large extent	To some extent	To a small extent	Not at all
Emotional	Well-being – Provides a sense of well-being, calm, comfort or relaxation	3.6	31%	23%	29%	13%	5%
	Immersion – Creates a feeling of concentration or immersion	3.8	32%	30%	24%	10%	4%
	Emotional engagement – Creates sentiments, e.g. entertains, excites, moves or provokes	3.8	33%	29%	23%	12%	3%
Intellectual	Knowledge – Provides new knowledge or new information	3.9	35%	33%	23%	6%	4%
	Reflection – Supports reflection by providing food for thought	3.8	34%	28%	23%	11%	4%
	Perspective – Offers new perspectives	3.8	32%	31%	22%	10%	5%
Creative	Inspiration – Inspires to try something new or make changes	3.7	31%	24%	29%	11%	5%
	Skills – Strengthens existing skills or provides new skills	3.5	27%	24%	26%	13%	9%
	Expression – Motivates new creative endeavours	3.5	28%	23%	27%	12%	10%
Social	Relations – Creates opportunities for conversations	3.7	32%	23%	29%	12%	3%
	Empathy – Inspires empathy through insight into the lives of others	3.7	32%	28%	22%	12%	5%
	Community – Provides opportunity to meet new people	3.6	32%	23%	26%	15%	4%

Table 3A
Spaces – average scores across age and gender

Dimension	Impact parameter	Overall score	16 to 24 years	25 to 34 years	35 to 44 years	45 to 54 years	55 to 64 years	65 + years	Male	Female
Emotional	Well-being – Provides a sense of well-being, calm, comfort or relaxation	3.7	4.0	3.8	3.8	3.6	3.6	3.4	3.6	3.8
	Immersion – Creates a feeling of concentration or immersion	3.6	4.0	3.7	3.6	3.5	3.4	3.2	3.6	3.7
	Emotional engagement – Creates sentiments, e.g. entertains, excites, moves or provokes	3.3	3.5	3.3	3.5	3.3	3.2	3.0	3.3	3.3
Intellectual	Knowledge – Provides new knowledge or new information	3.5	3.5	3.5	3.5	3.5	3.5	3.5	3.5	3.4
	Reflection – Supports reflection by providing food for thought	3.3	3.4	3.3	3.4	3.4	3.4	3.2	3.4	3.3
	Perspective – Offers new perspectives	3.3	3.5	3.3	3.4	3.4	3.3	3.2	3.4	3.3
Creative	Inspiration – Inspires to try something new or make changes	3.3	3.6	3.2	3.4	3.3	3.2	3.0	3.3	3.3
	Skills – Strengthens existing skills or provides new skills	3.1	3.3	3.1	3.2	3.1	3.1	2.9	3.2	3.1
	Expression – Motivates new creative endeavours	3.1	3.4	3.2	3.2	3.2	2.9	2.8	3.2	3.0
Social	Relations – Creates opportunities for conversations	2.9	3.0	2.8	3.2	2.9	2.9	2.6	2.9	2.9
	Empathy – Inspires empathy through insight into the lives of others	3.2	3.4	3.2	3.4	3.2	3.1	3.0	3.2	3.3
	Community – Provides opportunity to meet new people	3.1	3.2	3.2	3.5	3.0	3.0	2.6	3.1	3.1

Table 3B
Spaces – details behind average scores

Dimension	Impact parameter	Overall score	Distribution among responses (percentages of population)				
			To a very large extent	To a large extent	To some extent	To a small extent	Not at all
Emotional	Well-being – Provides a sense of well-being, calm, comfort or relaxation	3.7	31%	29%	24%	11%	5%
	Immersion – Creates a feeling of concentration or immersion	3.6	30%	27%	25%	11%	7%
	Emotional engagement – Creates sentiments, e.g. entertains, excites, moves or provokes	3.3	24%	22%	27%	16%	10%
Intellectual	Knowledge – Provides new knowledge or new information	3.5	27%	24%	26%	16%	7%
	Reflection – Supports reflection by providing food for thought	3.3	23%	23%	28%	15%	10%
	Perspective – Offers new perspectives	3.3	24%	21%	29%	17%	10%
Creative	Inspiration – Inspires to try something new or make changes	3.3	23%	22%	30%	15%	11%
	Skills – Strengthens existing skills or provides new skills	3.1	21%	19%	27%	17%	15%
	Expression – Motivates new creative endeavours	3.1	22%	19%	25%	17%	17%
Social	Relations – Creates opportunities for conversations	2.9	18%	14%	27%	26%	16%
	Empathy – Inspires empathy through insight into the lives of others	3.2	23%	21%	26%	18%	13%
	Community – Provides opportunity to meet new people	3.1	21%	18%	26%	20%	14%

Table 4A
Staff – average scores across age and gender

Dimension	Impact parameter	Overall score	16 to 24 years	25 to 34 years	35 to 44 years	45 to 54 years	55 to 64 years	65 + years	Male	Female
Emotional	Well-being – Provides a sense of well-being, calm, comfort or relaxation	3.4	3.5	3.6	3.4	3.4	3.3	3.2	3.4	3.5
	Immersion – Creates a feeling of concentration or immersion	3.1	3.3	3.3	3.0	3.2	3.0	2.8	3.2	3.1
	Emotional engagement – Creates sentiments, e.g. entertains, excites, moves or provokes	3.2	3.4	3.4	3.2	3.2	3.1	2.8	3.2	3.2
Intellectual	Knowledge – Provides new knowledge or new information	3.6	3.7	3.7	3.4	3.6	3.5	3.4	3.5	3.6
	Reflection – Supports reflection by providing food for thought	3.1	3.3	3.2	3.0	3.2	3.1	2.9	3.1	3.1
	Perspective – Offers new perspectives	3.1	3.3	3.3	3.0	3.2	3.2	2.9	3.1	3.1
Creative	Inspiration – Inspires to try something new or make changes	3.1	3.0	3.2	3.1	3.1	3.1	2.8	3.0	3.1
	Skills – Strengthens existing skills or provides new skills	3.0	3.0	3.2	3.1	3.1	3.1	2.8	3.0	3.1
	Expression – Motivates new creative endeavours	2.9	3.0	3.0	2.9	2.9	2.9	2.5	2.9	2.8
Social	Relations – Creates opportunities for conversations	3.1	3.4	3.3	3.1	3.2	3.0	2.6	3.1	3.1
	Empathy – Inspires empathy through insight into the lives of others	3.0	3.4	3.1	3.0	3.1	2.9	2.7	3.0	3.1
	Community – Provides opportunity to meet new people	3.1	3.4	3.3	3.2	3.2	2.9	2.6	3.0	3.1

Table 4B
Staff – details behind average scores

Dimension	Impact parameter	Overall score	Distribution among responses (percentages of population)				
			To a very large extent	To a large extent	To some extent	To a small extent	Not at all
Emotional	Well-being – Provides a sense of well-being, calm, comfort or relaxation	3.4	26%	24%	26%	13%	10%
	Immersion – Creates a feeling of concentration or immersion	3.1	24%	18%	24%	16%	18%
	Emotional engagement – Creates sentiments, e.g. entertains, excites, moves or provokes	3.2	24%	19%	25%	16%	16%
Intellectual	Knowledge – Provides new knowledge or new information	3.6	28%	25%	27%	14%	6%
	Reflection – Supports reflection by providing food for thought	3.1	24%	17%	24%	17%	19%
	Perspective – Offers new perspectives	3.1	24%	18%	24%	17%	18%
Creative	Inspiration – Inspires to try something new or make changes	3.1	23%	17%	25%	17%	19%
	Skills – Strengthens existing skills or provides new skills	3.0	21%	19%	23%	18%	20%
	Expression – Motivates new creative endeavours	2.9	20%	15%	22%	15%	26%
Social	Relations – Creates opportunities for conversations	3.1	21%	18%	25%	20%	16%
	Empathy – Inspires empathy through insight into the lives of others	3.0	22%	17%	22%	18%	21%
	Community – Provides opportunity to meet new people	3.1	21%	19%	23%	20%	17%

Table 5A
Technology – average scores across age and gender

Dimension	Impact parameter	Overall score	16 to 24 years	25 to 34 years	35 to 44 years	45 to 54 years	55 to 64 years	65 + years	Male	Female
Emotional	Well-being – Provides a sense of well-being, calm, comfort or relaxation	3.2	3.4	3.3	3.1	3.2	3.2	2.9	3.3	3.1
	Immersion – Creates a feeling of concentration or immersion	3.3	3.6	3.3	3.3	3.4	3.2	2.9	3.4	3.2
	Emotional engagement – Creates sentiments, e.g. entertains, excites, moves or provokes	3.1	3.4	3.1	3.1	3.2	3.1	2.8	3.3	3.0
Intellectual	Knowledge – Provides new knowledge or new information	3.4	3.7	3.3	3.4	3.4	3.5	3.5	3.5	3.4
	Reflection – Supports reflection by providing food for thought	3.1	3.2	3.1	3.2	3.1	3.2	2.9	3.3	3.0
	Perspective – Offers new perspectives	3.1	3.2	3.1	3.2	3.2	3.1	2.9	3.3	3.0
Creative	Inspiration – Inspires to try something new or make changes	3.2	3.4	3.1	3.3	3.2	3.1	3.0	3.3	3.1
	Skills – Strengthens existing skills or provides new skills	3.3	3.4	3.2	3.3	3.3	3.3	3.2	3.4	3.1
	Expression – Motivates new creative endeavours	3.1	3.2	3.0	3.3	3.1	3.1	2.7	3.2	2.9
Social	Relations – Creates opportunities for conversations	2.9	3.2	2.9	2.9	3.1	2.9	2.6	3.1	2.8
	Empathy – Inspires empathy through insight into the lives of others	2.9	3.3	2.8	3.0	3.0	2.9	2.6	3.0	2.9
	Community – Provides opportunity to meet new people	2.9	3.3	2.8	3.1	3.0	2.8	2.5	3.1	2.8

Table 5B
Technology – details behind average scores

Dimension	Impact parameter	Overall score	Distribution among responses (percentages of population)				
			To a very large extent	To a large extent	To some extent	To a small extent	Not at all
Emotional	Well-being – Provides a sense of well-being, calm, comfort or relaxation	3.2	23%	20%	24%	17%	15%
	Immersion – Creates a feeling of concentration or immersion	3.3	26%	21%	24%	14%	15%
	Emotional engagement – Creates sentiments, e.g. entertains, excites, moves or provokes	3.1	24%	17%	24%	17%	18%
Intellectual	Knowledge – Provides new knowledge or new information	3.4	27%	25%	24%	14%	11%
	Reflection – Supports reflection by providing food for thought	3.1	24%	19%	23%	15%	19%
	Perspective – Offers new perspectives	3.1	23%	18%	25%	13%	20%
Creative	Inspiration – Inspires to try something new or make changes	3.2	25%	19%	24%	14%	18%
	Skills – Strengthens existing skills or provides new skills	3.3	24%	22%	24%	16%	14%
	Expression – Motivates new creative endeavours	3.1	23%	18%	24%	16%	20%
Social	Relations – Creates opportunities for conversations	2.9	19%	17%	23%	19%	22%
	Empathy – Inspires empathy through insight into the lives of others	2.9	21%	17%	21%	16%	25%
	Community – Provides opportunity to meet new people	2.9	20%	16%	24%	18%	22%

Table 6
Impact scores of the six Impact Profiles

		Impact Profile						Dimension average
		Collections	Programs	Spaces	Staff	Technology	Combined	
Emotional Dimension	Well-being - Provides a sense of well-being, calm, comfort or relaxation	3.9	3.6	3.7	3.4	3.2	3.6	3.5
	Immersion - Creates a feeling of concentration or immersion	4.0	3.8	3.6	3.1	3.3	3.6	
	Emotional engagement - Creates sentiments, e.g. entertains, excites, moves or provokes	4.0	3.8	3.3	3.2	3.1	3.5	
Intellectual Dimension	Knowledge - Provides new knowledge or new information	4.1	3.9	3.5	3.6	3.4	3.7	3.5
	Reflection - Supports reflection by providing food for thought	4.0	3.8	3.3	3.1	3.1	3.5	
	Perspective - Offers new perspectives	4.0	3.8	3.3	3.1	3.1	3.5	
Creative Dimension	Inspiration - Inspires to try something new or make changes	3.7	3.7	3.3	3.1	3.2	3.4	3.3
	Skills - Strengthens existing skills or provides new skills	3.3	3.5	3.1	3.0	3.3	3.2	
	Expression - Motivates new creative endeavours	3.2	3.5	3.1	2.9	3.1	3.1	
Social Dimension	Relations - Creates opportunities for conversations	3.3	3.7	2.9	3.1	2.9	3.2	3.2
	Empathy - Inspires empathy through insight into the lives of others	3.6	3.7	3.2	3.0	2.9	3.3	
	Community - Provides opportunity to meet new people	2.8	3.6	3.1	3.1	2.9	3.1	
Profile average		3.6	3.7	3.3	3.1	3.1	3.4	

