Effingham Public Library
Usage Report
Fall 2021

As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic that took hold in March 2020, Effingham Public Library has had to re-evaluate all services based on shifting user needs and perceptions of library service. While we closed our doors completely for about 6 weeks during the start of the pandemic, we have been adding back hours and services and were back to "full service" and hours as of February 2021. However, since that time, we have not seen patrons return to the building and services in the same manner or volume as we had previously experienced. You can see in this chart a snapshot of several different months/years representing our prime services and how they have changed and recovered (or not) as we begin the slow exit from the pandemic.

	June 2017	June 2018	June 2019	June 2020	June 2021
Circulation	24,088	26,452	26,080	8,893	22,859
Library Cards	81	59	65	21	46
Adult Programs	9	11	16	3	12
Adult Attendance	146	149	489	45	309
YS Programs	53	68	69	32	39
YS Attendance	2,076	2,645	2,097	1,836	1,442
Meeting Rooms	11	23	32	0	15
Computer Use	1,556	1,571	1,237	128	730
Wifi Use	N/A	5,133	5,087	3,775	4,294

	Oct. 2017	Oct. 2018	Oct. 2019	Oct. 2020	Oct. 2021
Circulation	20,826	22,539	23,309	13,734	18,541
Library Cards	52	48	38	19	38
Adult Programs	13	12	23	18	18
Adult Attendance	159	304	480	372	292
YS Programs	17	38	50	23	47
YS Attendance	777	854	1,040	431	778
Meeting Rooms	29	34	41	1	22
Computer Use	1,333	1,389	1,240	569	593
Wifi Use	N/A	5,189	4,276	2,978	2,410

	FY2018	FY2019	FY2020	FY2021	FY2022 To Date
Circulation	253,454	269,744	254,732	155,917	119,763
Library Cards	624	534	474	240	244
Adult Programs	132	129	174	101	77
Adult Attendance	1,920	2,983	3,567	2,635	1,772
YS Programs	269	485	456	271	219
YS Attendance	9,402	15,879	15,304	8,177	5,521
Meeting Rooms	233	335	356	14	85
Computer Use	16,141	16,237	12,542	5,569	3,900
Wifi Use	N/A	47,414	47,988	36,253	21,366

June represents our biggest and most active month—it is when Summer Read kicks off and we by far have the highest attendance. October represents a more "typical" month—there are usually a steady number of programs and attendance with no big events or holidays to impact service schedules.

As you can see above, some areas are recovering well—adult program attendance would be a good example as it is nearly recovered to FY19 levels. Youth Services attendance is lagging behind and will likely finish the year at above FY18 levels, but not to FY19.

Circulation is projected to finish with around 228,000 circs for FY22 (given an average circ of 18,000/month), which still has us below FY18, and is certainly concerning. Our growth had been steady and consistent for 15 years coming into FY20 and recovering from this massive drop in usage has been hard.

While it's true that the pandemic is not over, the perception within the community appears to be one of being able to navigate the challenges that arise from the pandemic and finding a way to co-exist with the risks associated with COVID-19. Given this, we can assume that for at least the next couple of years, people's general usage of the library is not subject to change. Things have changed in how people interact with the world and meeting those changes can create challenges, but also new opportunities.

While usage of our resources is one factor in our overall success and usefulness as a library, it's not the only thing. Below are several different metrics that were gathered to better understand how and when people use our services.

Daily door counts

One of our most basic indicators of usage is our daily door counts. This counts how many people come into our building each day. We are seeing the trend of door counts improve each month. We only have monthly data going back to 2019, but during September and October of 2019, we averaged at least 400 people per day. In 2021, we are back to at least 250 per day, so we are nearing 60% of our previous capacity.

	Total Door Count			Total Door Count
September 2019	10,421		October 2019	11,043
September 2020	4,688		October 2020	3,996
September 2021	6,481		October 2021	6,704

Heat/Usage Mapping

Appendix A shows the daily counts for each of the 12 days we did heat mapping. This represents the different types of usage throughout each day, based on the hour that we observed people. We have more detailed data, down to where specifically the usage was, but these charts will give a sense of when the most activity was happening in the building.

Heat mapping was used for two different weeks: October 11 – October 16 and November 1 – November 6. Staff were to mark at least once every 30 minutes where all non-employees were located in the building. If possible, they were asked to record each time they saw someone move to a new area during that 30 minute period. This provides us with real time information about how much use is happening during a given time period.

Peak usage times were definitely noted. On most days, there's a steady rise until lunch time (with a spike at lunch nearly every day), a decline during the afternoon hours, a sharp rise after school and then a sharp drop after 6pm. Exceptions to these spikes are typically explained by room rentals or library programming.
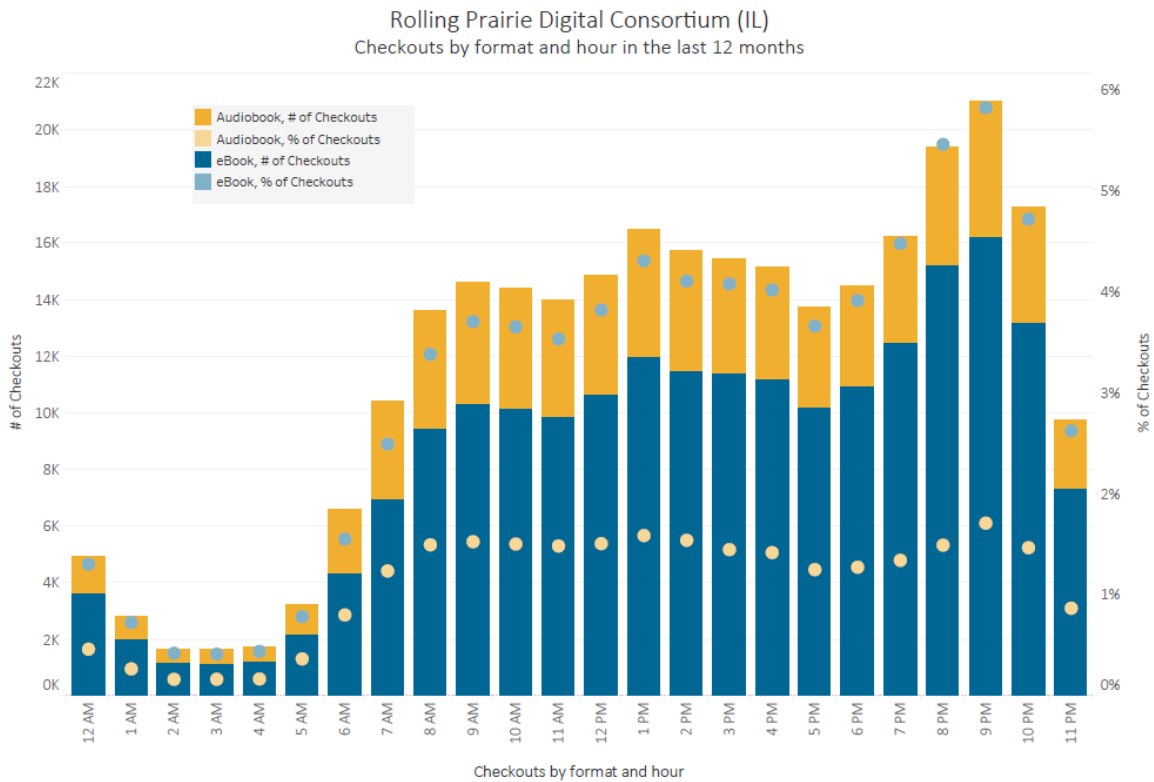
Spikes in the evening are related to room rentals from outside groups. Those have been noted for each graph, including total foot traffic they brought in. Without these assorted spikes from room rentals, we do not have a lot of foot traffic in the evening past 6 pm. Additionally, when we have library programming, there is a spike in foot traffic, though regardless of source of the room booking, it does not appear to relate to additional library usage.

Circulation By Hour

Appendix B shows times circulation is occurring. Consistently, the last hour of operation Monday – Thursday is low circulation. Additionally, having programs during this time does not seem to correlate into additional circulations. Daytime circulations continue to improve, though these can still vary from week to week.

eResources usage

As was expected, eResource usage increases as the evening progresses and experiences a major rise between 7 and 10pm.

Rolling Prairie Digital Consortium (IL)
Checkouts by format and hour in the last 12 months

Checkouts by format and hour

The orange and blue bars, ebooks and audiobooks respectively, represent the number of checkouts which occurred in the hour denoted.
The orange and blue circles, ebooks and audiobooks respectively, represent the percent of total checkouts which occurred in the hour denoted.

OverDrive

Business Systems and Analytics // October 22, 2021

Library Computer Usage for October 2021

This chart shows total computer usage for the month of October by days, which shows rather consistent usage across the days.

Weekday	Total Uses	Total Time	Average Session
Monday	104	56:34:00	32.635
Tuesday	110	52:30:00	28.636
Wednesday	102	52:08:00	30.667
Thursday	102	50:38:00	29.784
Friday	121	52:41:00	26.124
Saturday	54	25:19:00	28.13
TOTALS	593	289:50:00	29.325

This chart shows the start of the login across the month of October.

Computer Login Time
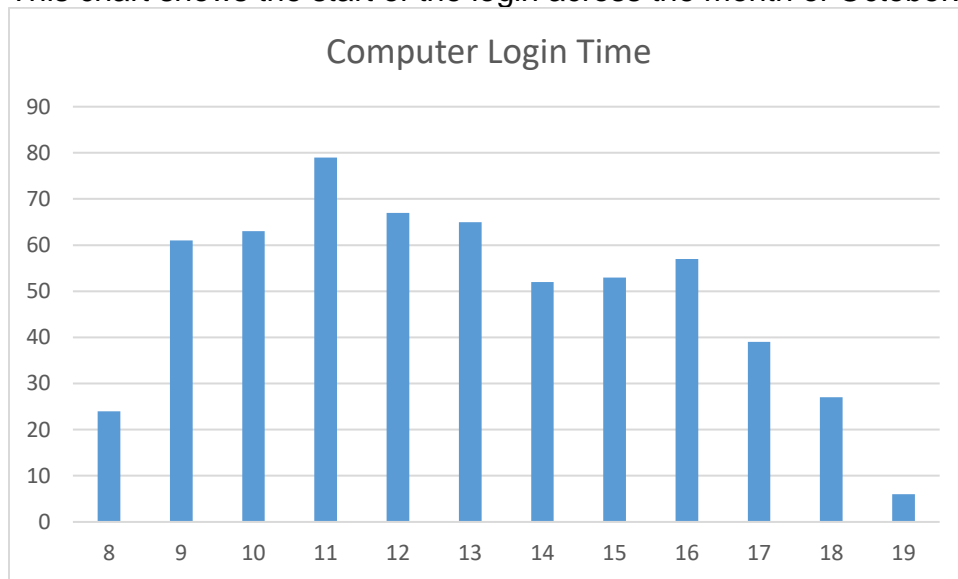
What these charts show is that typical usage of our computers is pretty consistent across each of the days of the week and that use by hour is fairly consistent until we reach 5pm, at which time it starts to fall.

Program times/attendance

While we don't track programs by time, we do track attendance age range. Below are two charts representing the ages of our program attendees in October 2021. As you can see, youth makes up the overwhelming majority of attendees and programs. Typically, these programs occur in the morning or afternoon.

Number of Programs by Age Groups

0%
36%
6%
58%

Youth ■ Teen ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ Adult ■ General

Number of Total Participants by Age Group

0%
29%
3%
68%

■ Youth Participants
■ Teen Participants
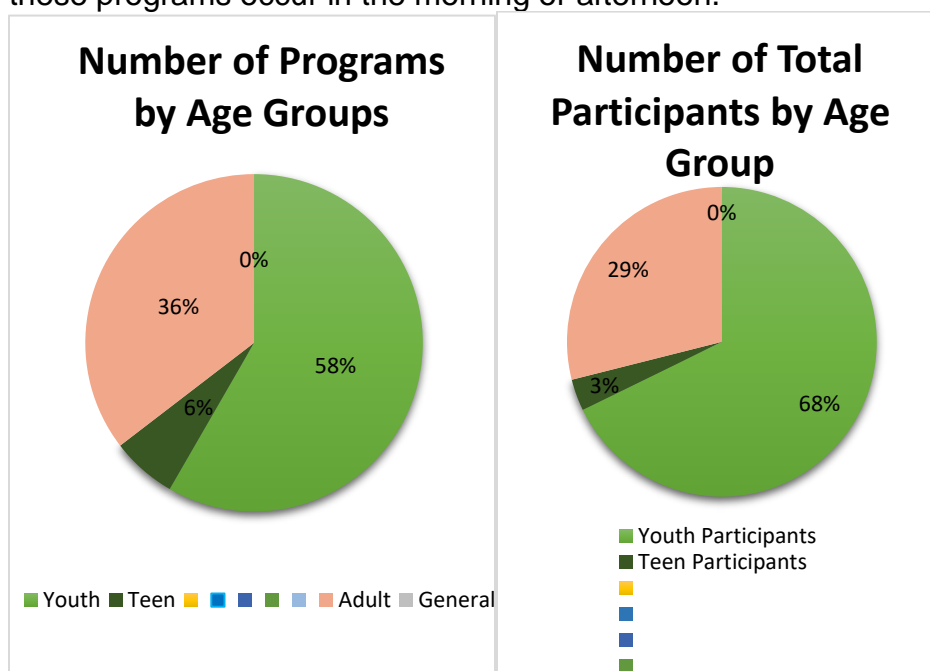
CONSIDERATIONS/DISCUSSION TOPICS

In an effort to be good stewards of our community's tax resources, we need to determine where to focus our efforts—where can we focus our resources (both monetary and staff) to have the largest impact?

One clear area of focus would be during the lunch hours and maximizing patron interactions during that time. Another area for discussion is room rentals and the impact of this usage. Finally, the big picture question to think about is what metrics are important? Is it important to continue to grow certain metrics (like in-person circulation) or is it time to transition to other areas? These are large, philosophical questions that our forthcoming strategic planning will help us to tackle, but in the meantime, some changes can be implemented to allow us to be nimble and utilize our resources well.

Some possible ideas for implementation include:
1. Close at 7pm Monday – Thursday
2. Allow room bookings after hours again, but charge full rates, even to non-profits, during the times that the library is closed. We might also consider instituting a small fee for tax exempt organizations even during our regular hours of operation.
3. Every room booking will receive a scripted visit from a library staff member at the start of their meeting to promote library services.
4. Place additional focus on eResources, including staffing a virtual help desk after hours to assist patrons with checkouts.
5. Sell an eResources only card to non-residents.
6. Concentrate on in-person lunch hour and after school programming. Evening programming would largely be virtual, excluding large special events.
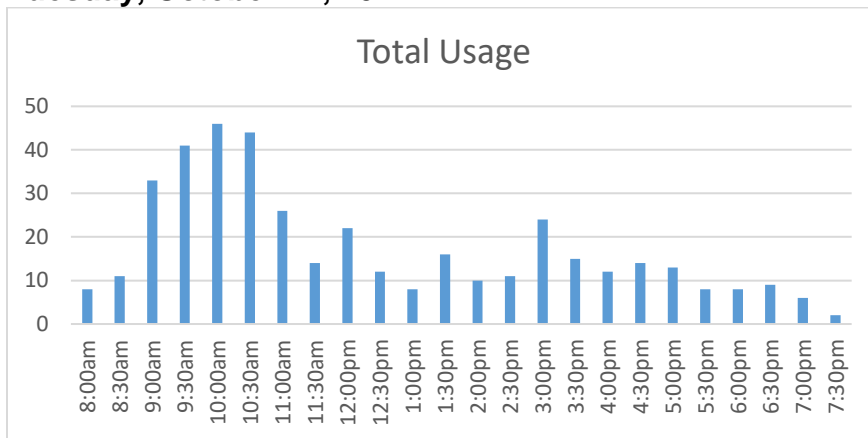
Monday, October 11, 2021
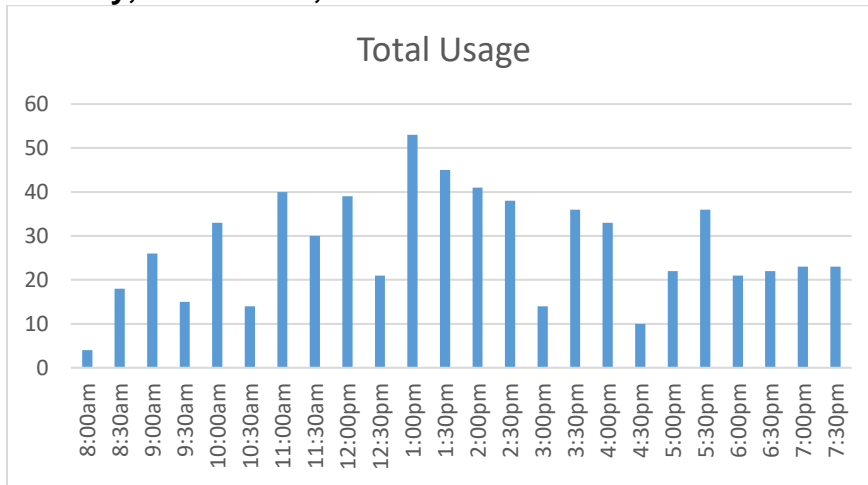
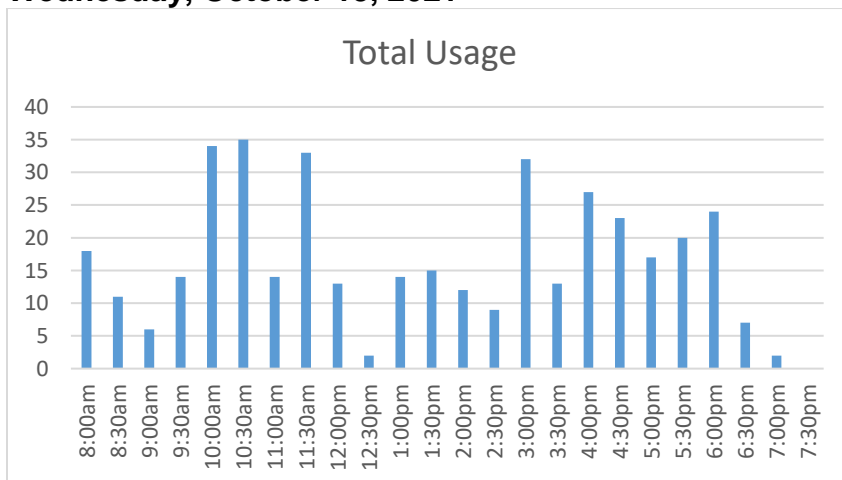

*5:30-8pm Workman—EWA 20 people

Tuesday, October 12, 2021
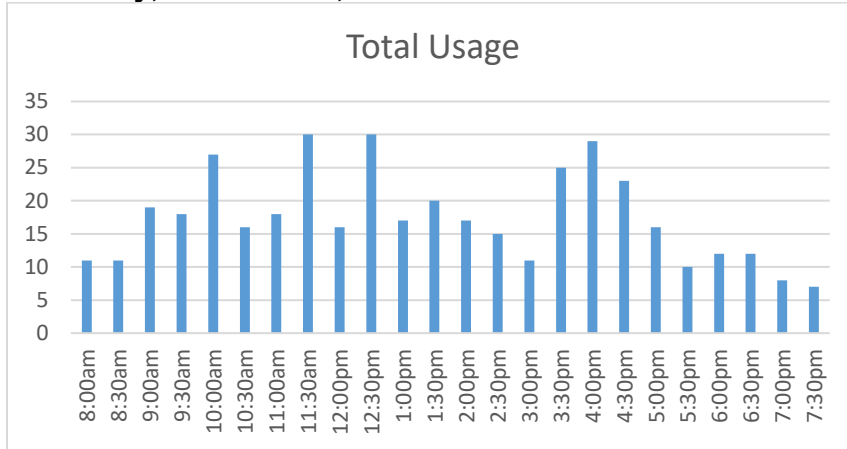

Wednesday, October 13, 2021

Thursday, October 14, 2021

Total Usage
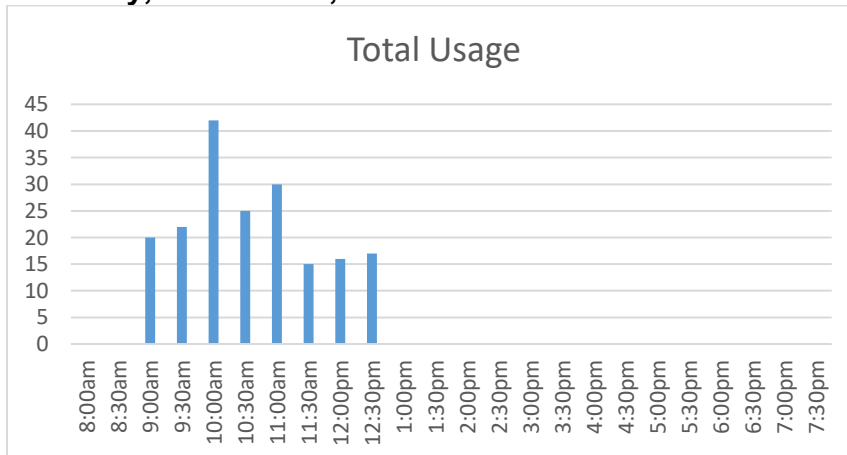

Friday, October 15, 2021
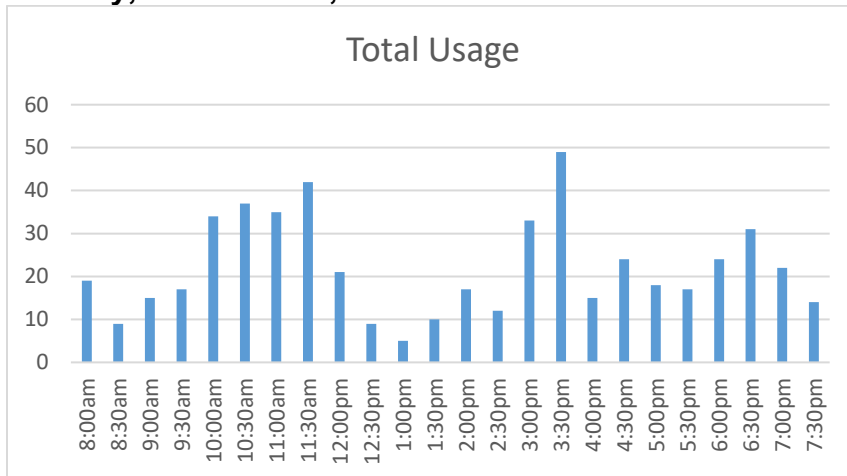
Total Usage
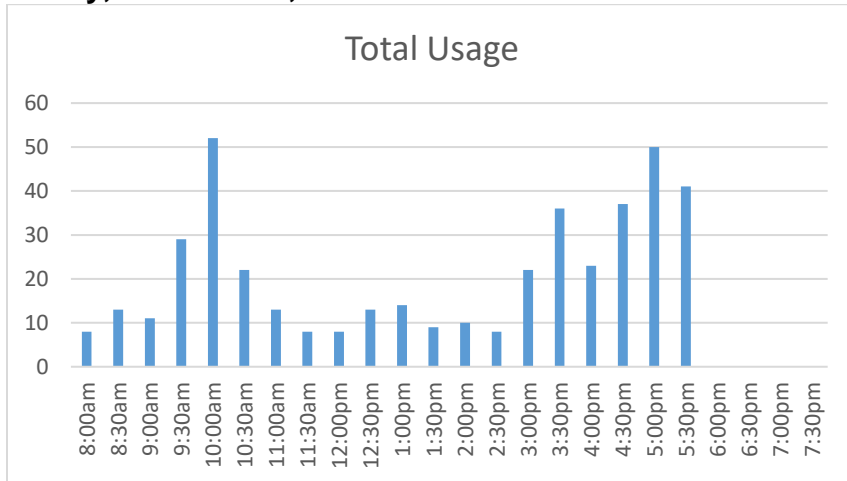
*5-6pm Workman and Luttrell Rooms SAFE 20 people
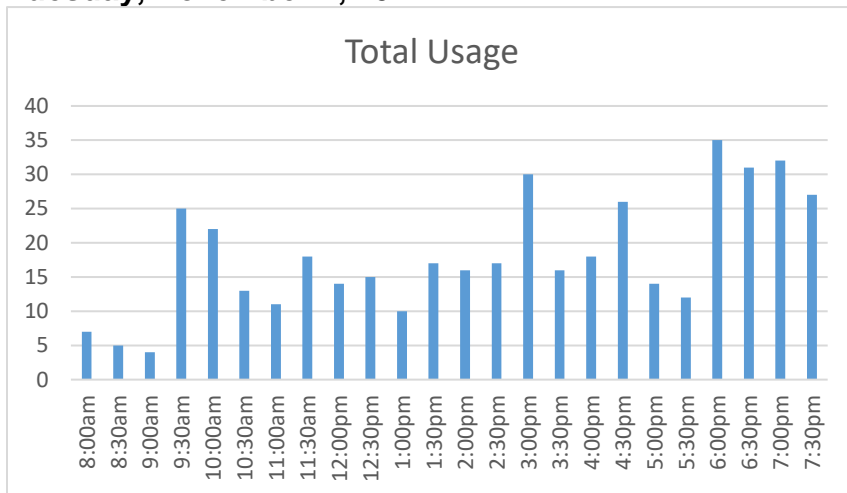
Saturday, October 16, 2021
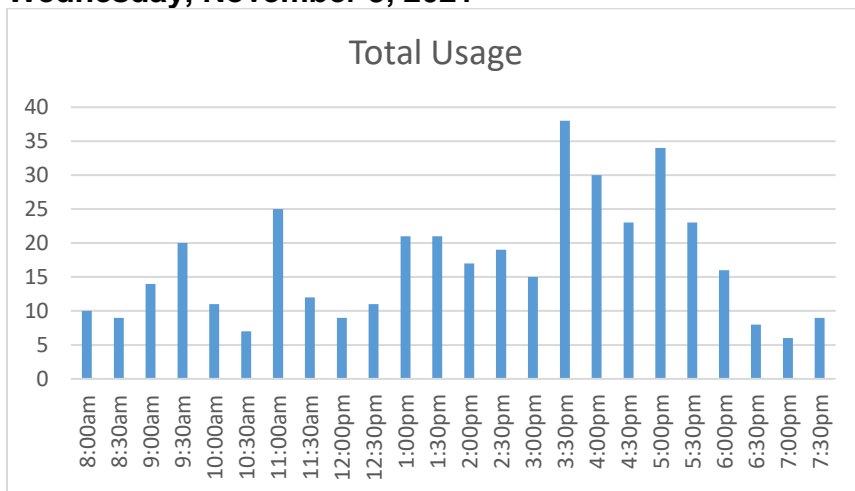
Total Usage

Monday, November 1, 2021

*6-8pm Workman Library Program 11 people

Tuesday, November 2, 2021
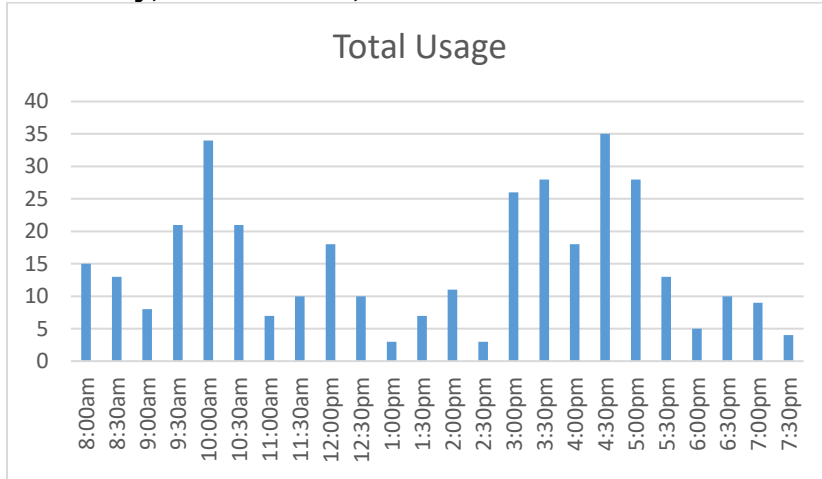

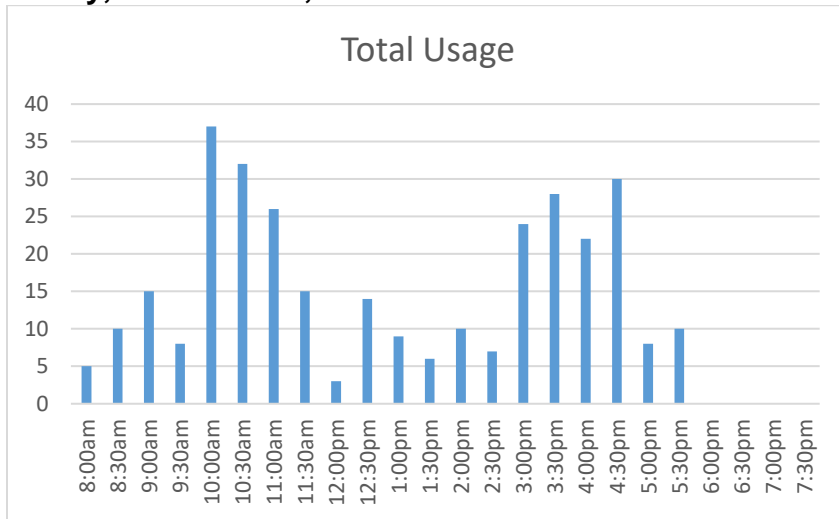*5-7:30pm Bauer: Knitters 5 people * 6-7:30pm Luttrell: Girl Scouts 8 *6-8pm Workman: PEO 15 people

Wednesday, November 3, 2021

Thursday, November 4, 2021

Total Usage

Time	Value
8:00am	15
8:30am	13
9:00am	8
9:30am	21
10:00am	34
10:30am	21
11:00am	7
11:30am	10
12:00pm	18
12:30pm	10
1:00pm	3
1:30pm	7
2:00pm	11
2:30pm	3
3:00pm	26
3:30pm	28
4:00pm	18
4:30pm	35
5:00pm	28
5:30pm	13
6:00pm	5
6:30pm	10
7:00pm	9
7:30pm	4

Friday, November 5, 2021

Total Usage

Time	Value
8:00am	5
8:30am	10
9:00am	15
9:30am	8
10:00am	37
10:30am	32
11:00am	26
11:30am	15
12:00pm	3
12:30pm	14
1:00pm	9
1:30pm	6
2:00pm	10
2:30pm	7
3:00pm	24
3:30pm	28
4:00pm	22
4:30pm	30
5:00pm	8
5:30pm	10

Saturday, November 6, 2021

Total Usage

Time	Value
9:00am	33
9:30am	42
10:00am	32
10:30am	30
11:00am	20
11:30am	30
12:00pm	24
12:30pm	11
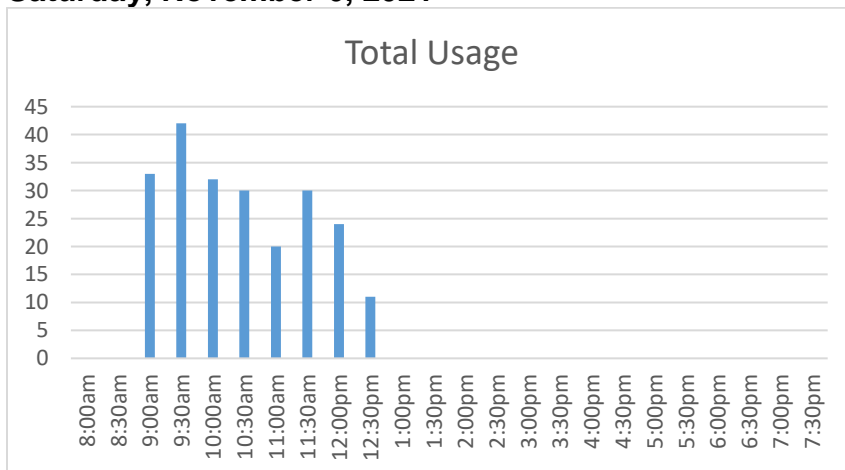
Appendix B
Circulation By Hour

Week of October 11 – October 16, 2021

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
8AM-9AM	1	26	59	21	35	
9AM-10AM	21	78	59	50	33	36
10AM-11AM	52	164	58	30	166	68
11AM-12PM	88	51	39	58	30	110
12PM-1PM	57	42	17	36	13	29
1PM-2PM	145	62	31	22	41	
2PM-3PM	52	31	65	33	51	
3PM-4PM	36	66	13	23	66	
4PM-5PM	68	26	51	30	49	
5PM-6PM	41	56	22	24	30	
6PM-7PM	31	31	2	22		
7PM-8PM	14	25	22	24		
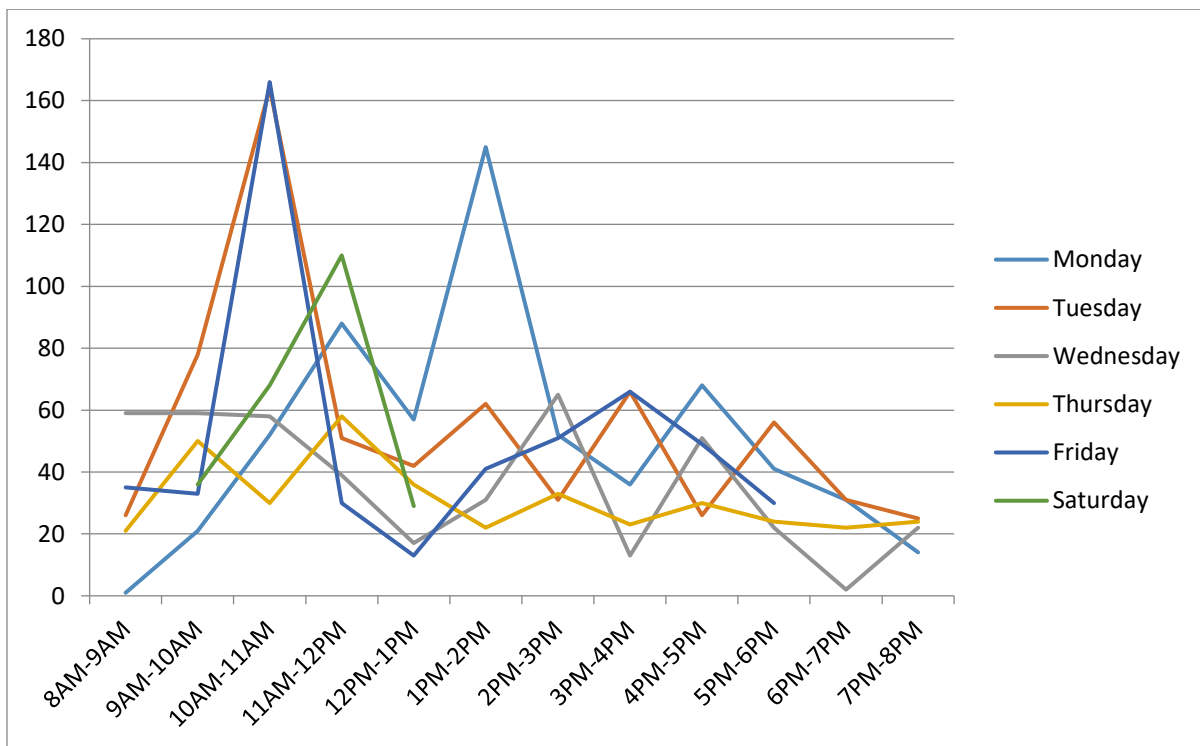
Week of November 1 – November 6, 2021

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
8AM-9AM	13	21	32	62	22	
9AM-10AM	91	20	69	61	31	95
10AM-11AM	168	44	44	70	139	90
11AM-12PM	30	75	67	44	37	49
12PM-1PM	66	59	7	109	64	45
1PM-2PM	135	51	18	32	22	
2PM-3PM	63	34	78	59	73	
3PM-4PM	24	58	32	29	109	
4PM-5PM	40	20	37	48	58	
5PM-6PM	100	27	46	20	19	
6PM-7PM	22	15	34	18		
7PM-8PM	4	25	6	1		