Methods for studying customers' use of the physical space at Edmonton Public Library

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Literature Review

Traditional lit review and more. Blogs, YouTube tours of other library spaces, Flickr, design journals.

Pros: See highlights of best practices, cutting edge of (library) design.

Cons: Does not reflect needs/desires of specific community.

Community Partner Questionnaire

Questionnaire designed for organizations with whom EPL has partnered

Pros: Different type of user has opportunity to provide feedback.

Cons: Difficult to recruit participants through intermediary.

Behavioural Mapping

Observational walks through public spaces at all branches recording what customers are doing and where.

Pros: See who is in the library and how they are using the physical space.

Cons: Snapshot of single moment of customer's visit to library. Unable to collect any context for behaviours/ reasons for visit.

21st Century Library Spaces Internship

- Zoning for activity, group size, noise level
- Current and emerging technology available
- Flexible, safe, clean, and aesthetically pleasing spaces
- Importance of collections
- Need for community space

Branch Visits

Walk around and become familiar with all of libraries' spaces. Discuss spaces with staff and get their perspective.

Pros: Better picture of spaces. Able to better plan for behaviourral mapping. Get feedback from staff about space

Cons: Staff are not customers; can discuss perceived issues but have distinct bias as professional users of space.

Survey

Ask customers about their use of library space and their opinions about the spaces.

Pros: Large number of customers can give feedback on their use and experiences in space. Collect quantitative and qualitative data.

Cons: Recruitment limited to individuals already using space. No possibility of following up on comments.

Photo Elicitation Interviews

Semi-structured qualitative interviews which asked participants to take pictures of library space.

Pros: Customers give literal pictures of their image of the library. In-depth conversation about space

Cons: Limited number of participants. Recruitment from survey participants; individuals who are already active library users.