

‘Intraloan’ project – Executive Summary

The Intraloan project (December 2016 to May 2017) was an in-depth research study looking at current experiences of library users at the University of Cambridge, specifically focusing on their use of and access to printed library resources. Although the Intraloan name is taken from a pilot book delivery service trialled during the project, it is important to note that the research was far broader than this, interested in the ways in which people access and use printed library content in the widest sense.

Methodology

- Initial scoping phase: methods used included interviews, student workshops and email questionnaires circulated to University of Cambridge academics.
- SWOT analysis exercise conducted with Cambridge library staff.
- ‘BookTrack’ digital diary study with student participants.
- Examination and evaluation of pilot services, including a book delivery service and a multi-library books returns drop box.

Key Findings

- Access to printed resources is still extremely important.
- People’s schedules have a large effect on their access to printed library resources.
- Cambridge library opening hours do not always meet user needs.
- People are confused by differing policies and procedures in place at the libraries they use.
- More e-resources may help to solve the problem for some.
- Contact and communication with library staff are extremely important.

Service Design Considerations

- Library services should respond to user needs, schedules and commitments.
- It is vital that services support users with accessibility issues.
- It is important to provide a range of library services, to give users options and offer a tailored library experience.
- Input from library staff is key to ensuring successful and valued service delivery.

Service Design Suggestions

The full project report outlines several suggestions for further piloting and testing. These include: book drop points; book delivery services; book fetching (open-shelf material) and roving assistance services at the main University Library (UL); an assessment of current library opening hours; a scan and deliver service.

The full Intraloan project report can be downloaded here: <http://bit.ly/intraloanproject>

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