Semesterly & Annual Trends

Circulation numbers have been declining overall, in our case partly due to a declining demand for our circulating laptops. Spring 2013 bucked this trend thanks to an early childhood literature assignment that spiked our usage numbers.

Overall, this past academic year saw an increase in Access Services use. One unexpected increase was a sharp jump in reserves items use, despite a similar number of items being on reserve.

Overall Access Services Use

The data examined here tell us when students are using the library’s circulating collections and when they’re going to resources beyond ours. It can inform a variety of activities:

- **Staffing:** Knowing when we’re busiest – and when we’re not – can help with staffing decisions.
- **Access Services – Circulation:** Staffing at peak times could be adjusted through the semester. A confluence of busy interlibrary loan activity and reserves administration work at the beginning of the spring semester means the clerk who handles both may need backup until one or the other settles down.
- **Reference – Checking:** Items out is often like printing a paper: the last thing a student does before leaving the library. Comparison with reference statistics is needed, but the hour preceding each of our peak circulation hours may be a reference hot spot.
- **Building hours:** We’ve discussed adjusting our weekend hours based on our circulation, reference, and gate count statistics.
- **Library instruction:** Knowing which services are being used at which times can help focus indirect instructional activities, such as our table-top signs and flyers.
- **Marketing services:** ILL use generally increases later in the fall semester and has higher usage levels all spring; we may need to start selling it to students earlier in the fall semester.
- **Further exploration:** We can follow up with surveys and further data gathering to do some qualitative analysis and see why some usage activities are happening when they do.