

Customer Feedback Project Summer 2019 Findings

A project of the Library Board Communications
Committee

Presented by Tina Nielsen

*Communications Committee members: Elizabeth Bowker, Len Gilday, Steve Mitchell, Susan
Munro, and Tina Nielsen*



Executive Summary

The Board Communications Committee, acting on goals of the Communications Plan, hosted focus groups and opened a public online survey in July and August of 2019. The purpose of the survey and focus groups was to elicit feedback from the community about library services.

Focus Groups

What we learned from focus group participants was that they most valued the library as a community gathering space, a democratic institution, a safe space, a trustworthy institution with curated information that it is central and available, and is a place for human interaction and connection.

Survey

The online survey, with 349 respondents, is considered statistically valid. The survey respondents were primarily regular Bowen Library users (89%); fairly equally split between employed and retired; 68% were female and 30% male; and 88% of respondents were over the age of 40.

- Hours: The majority of respondents (60%) were happy with the Library's hours. For those looking for a change to library hours, evening hours and Monday opening were the most requested changes.
- Priority use of the Annex: Respondents felt that Library programming (adult and children) was the highest priority use of the Annex, with community rentals and alternative work space as the lowest ranked priorities.
- Other programs: Top respondent suggestions for other programs were learning or education programs, book/author/reading programs, and programs for children and youth.
- Library service: Overall service was rated either excellent or good by 91% of respondents. Customer service was also rated either excellent or good by 93% of respondents. Collections were rated excellent or good by 69% and fair or poor by 24% of survey respondents.
- Improvements to Library services: The most frequently suggested improvement to Library services was to expand the collections. Other often requested improvements were for increased hours of operation and expanded programming.
- Library value: 98% of respondents either agreed or strongly agreed that Bowen Library is a valuable resource in our community. When asked what they most value about the library, respondents listed the collections highest, social and community benefits second, the physical space and location third and the service integrity and quality fourth.
- Communication: In several questions respondents commented that they were unaware of many services and felt that marketing and communication could be improved. Regular customer feedback should be sought from both library users and non-users.

The valuable feedback generated from this project will inform the work of the Library Board and staff in future.

Introduction

The Library Board Communications Committee developed a communications plan in 2018 based on the following strategic goals outlined in the library's 2018-2020 Strategic Plan:

- 1) **Foster BIM awareness of library issues and needs**
- 2) **Develop enhanced external communications**

In response to these goals the Committee created a workplan that included the following tactic:

Develop plan for focus group and public survey (potentially scheduled for Spring or mid-2019), including analyzing and communicating results back to the public.

The committee created an online survey open from June 30 to August 5, 2019 and received 349 responses. They also hosted three focus groups on July 23 and 24, with youth, seniors, and community group representatives. A further focus group with families of children under 12, is planned for fall or winter 2019; those results will be added to this report at that time.

The goal of the customer feedback project was to ask for feedback on:

- 1) Uses of the new Annex space
- 2) Library hours of operation, services and programs
- 3) Suggestions for future services and programs
- 4) The value of the library and its services and programs to the community

Methodology

Focus group participants were sent email invitations and follow up emails if they hadn't responded. From the Community Group invitations, 8 people responded that they would attend. The Youth Group had 5 positive responses to the invitation, and the Seniors group had 7.

An online survey was designed by the Committee and marketed through the Library's e-newsletter, Facebook, posters, and the Library's website.

The online survey had a total of 349 responses. The island population is 3680 according to the 2016 census. With a 95% confidence rate and a margin of error of 5%, statistical validity is achieved with 348 responses. At 349 responses, this survey can be considered statistically valid.

Results

Focus Groups

The focus group participants were engaged and articulate and had great suggestions for library services as well as generally expressing their support and appreciation of the library. Here is the summary of those findings.

In general, we believe this is what participants value about the library:

- Community space, meeting
- Democratic
- Safe

- Trustworthy
- Available, central
- Curated
- Place for human interaction, human connections

Youth told us:

The library is a great space for getting media and meeting people. It’s important that it is central, accessible and safe and is a welcoming environment.

Seniors told us:

The library is an important place for curated information, a gathering space for human connection that is open, democratic, free and accessible to all.

Community group representatives told us:

The library is useful for lending of various things and supporting the sharing economy, as well as a community meeting space. They would like use of the space for functions to be free.

Online Survey

Demographics

Respondents to the survey were primarily Bowen Library card holders (89%). They were also predominantly female, employed and over the age of 40.

Age Range		Gender		Employment Status	
25 - 40	9%	Female	68%	Employed	53%
41 - 64	48%	Male	30%	Retired	41%
65+	40%			Students	3%

Library Use

Use of Bowen Library was high amongst our respondents. Almost 52% said they visited Bowen Library either weekly or monthly, and 55% of respondents said they also use other libraries.

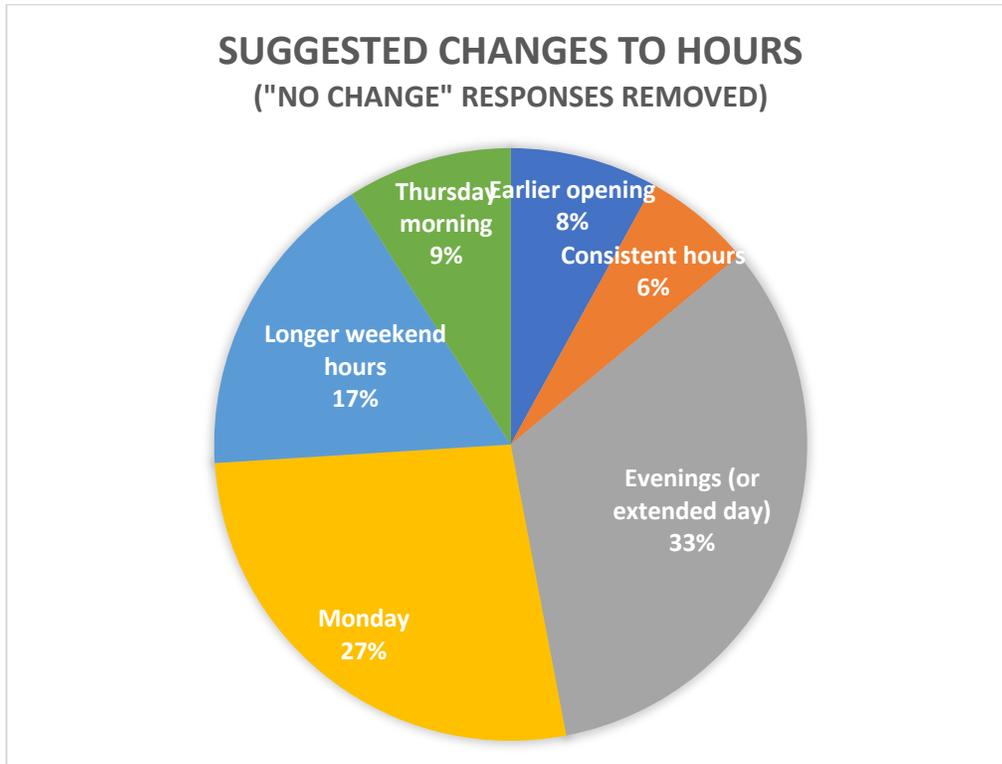
Q2. How often do you visit the Bowen Library? (Choose one only)

Answer Choices	Responses	
Weekly	23.92%	83
Monthly	27.95%	97
5-10 times per year	21.90%	76
Fewer than 5 times per year	11.53%	40
Rarely	10.09%	35
Never	4.61%	16

Library Hours

Question 4 asked “Is there a time you wish the library was open that it is currently not?”. Analysis of the 253 open ended responses resulted in 7 main categories of feedback. The largest response (60%) was no change, or that respondents were happy with existing hours.

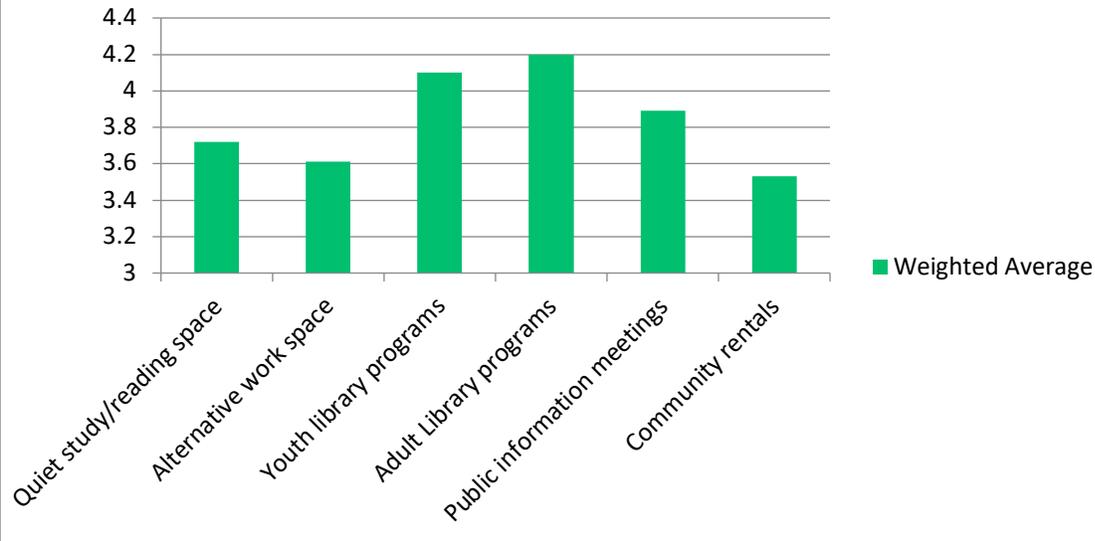
When the “no change” answers are removed, the breakdown of requests for changes show evening hours and Monday hours as the highest requested changes. See chart below:



Annex Space

The highest priority noted was for adult library programs, with youth library programs as second highest priority. The lowest priority use identified was community rentals, with alternative work space as the second lowest.

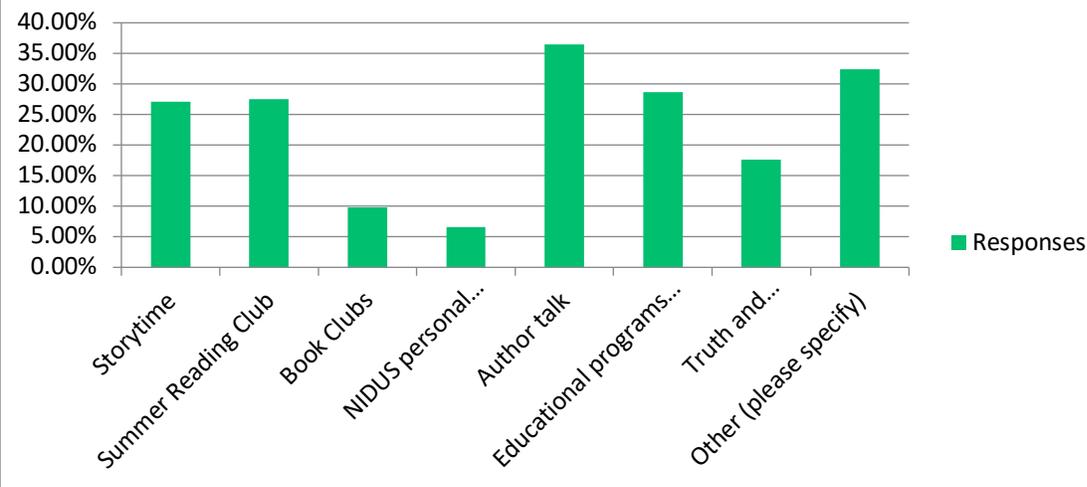
What would you consider to be priority uses for the Library's new Annex space?



Programs and Services

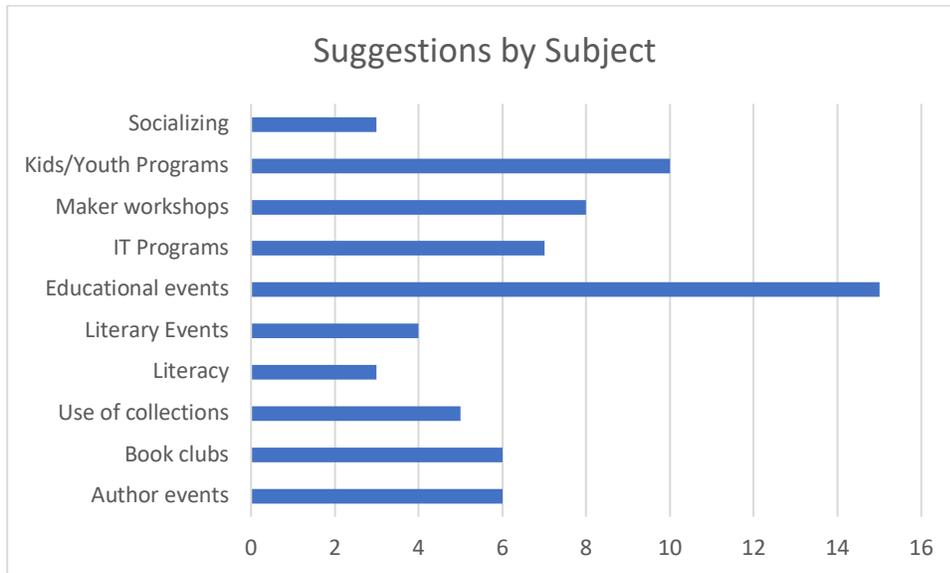
Programs and events most often attended by Bowen Islanders are author talks, educational programs and children's programs. Many of the programs listed in the survey have only been available in the past year, this may account for the lower attendance records at new programs such as NIDUS webinars and Knowing Our Place Book Club.

Events or programs you or your children have attended.

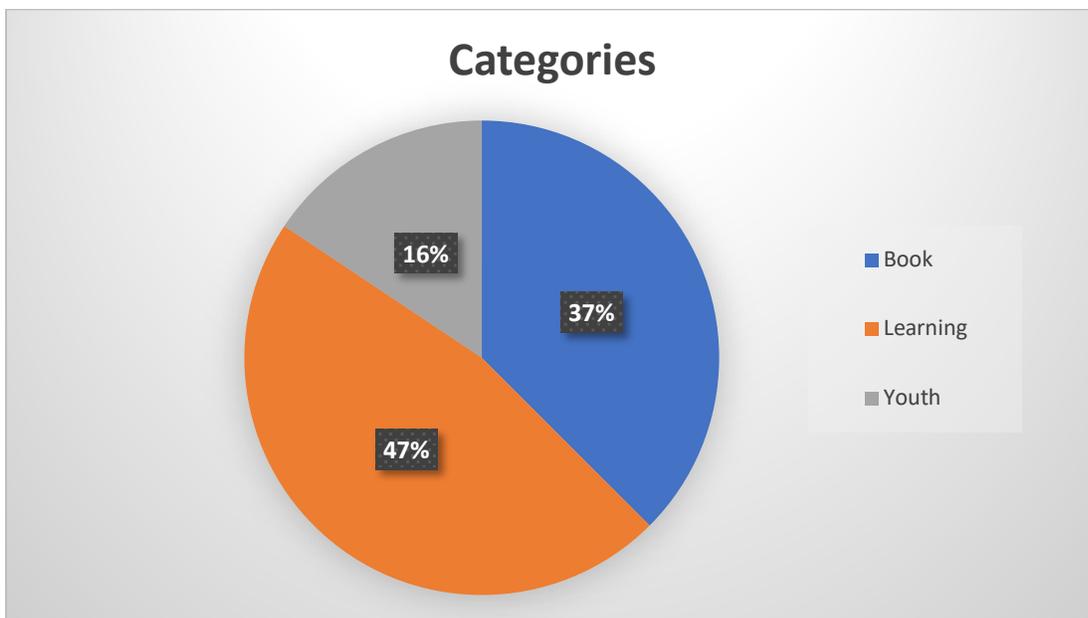


Open ended responses were sought for suggestions of additional programs or events the library could add. 140 people responded with ideas ranging from traditional book related programs, to maker workshops, tool lending, music events, and language conversation circles.

The responses to the question “Other programs, events you would like the Library to add?” were categorized into 13 subjects. Overall learning or educational programs were ranked highest.



Similarities between subjects allowed us to combining the 13 subjects into 3 dominant categories: youth events, book or literary events, and learning programs.



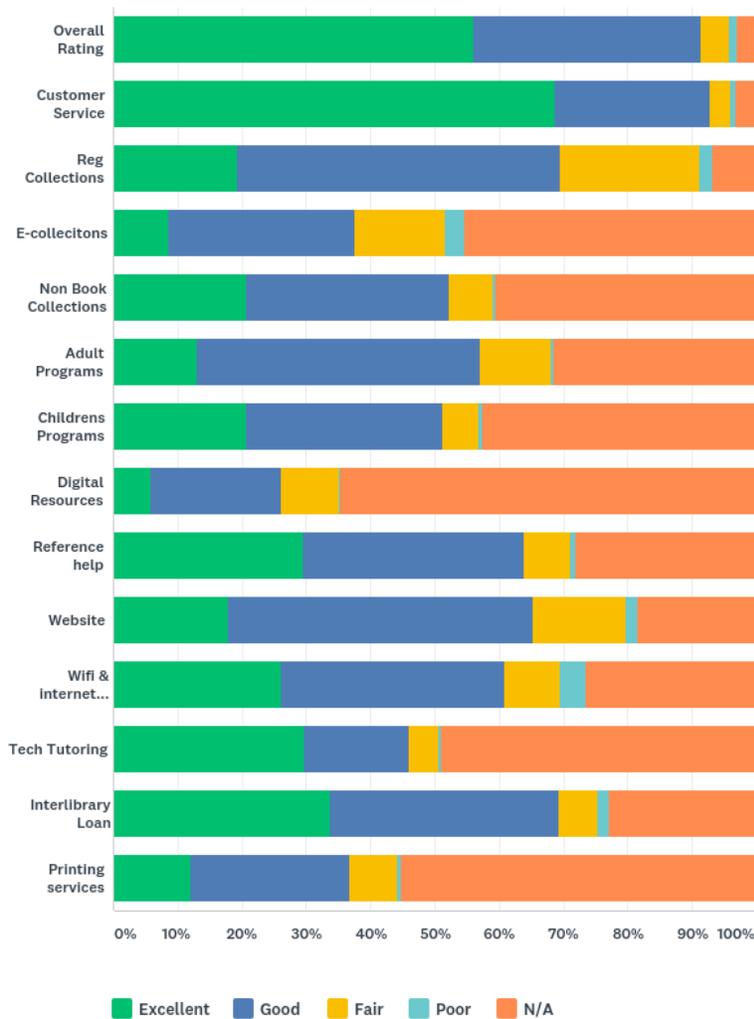
Services

Respondents were asked to rate the quality of library services, to identify services that were important to them and to suggest how services might be improved.

- *Ratings*

- Library service overall was rated either excellent or good by 91% of respondents. Customer service was also rated either excellent or good by 93% of respondents. Collections were rated excellent or good by 69% and fair or poor by 24% of survey respondents.

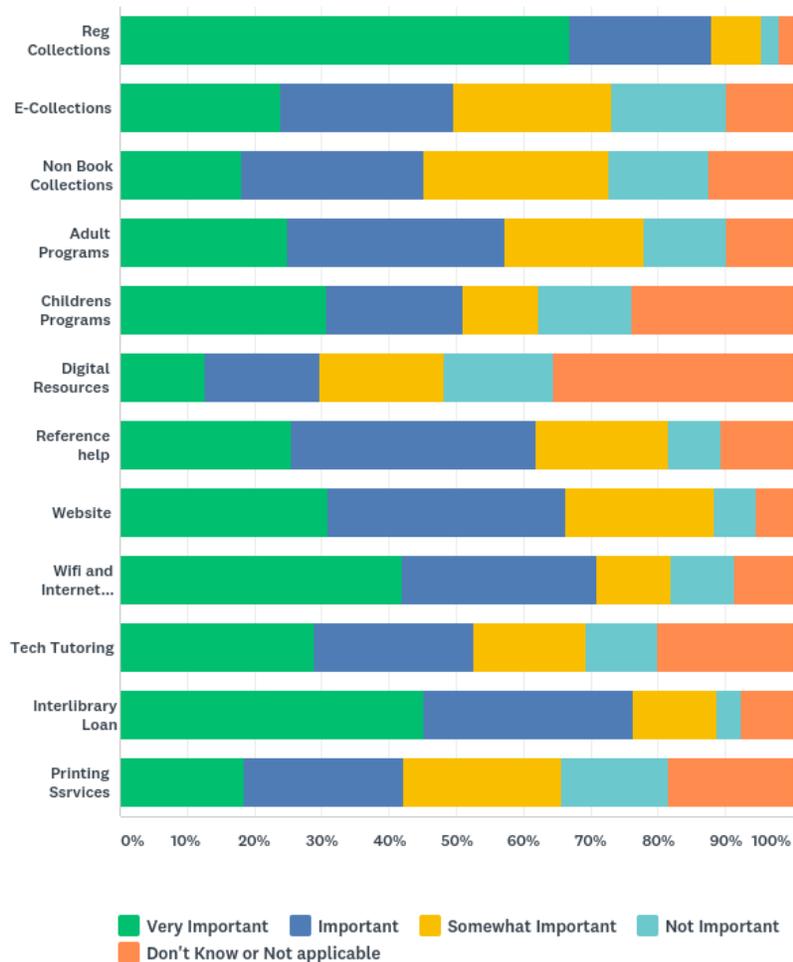
Q11 How would you rate Bowen Library's services?



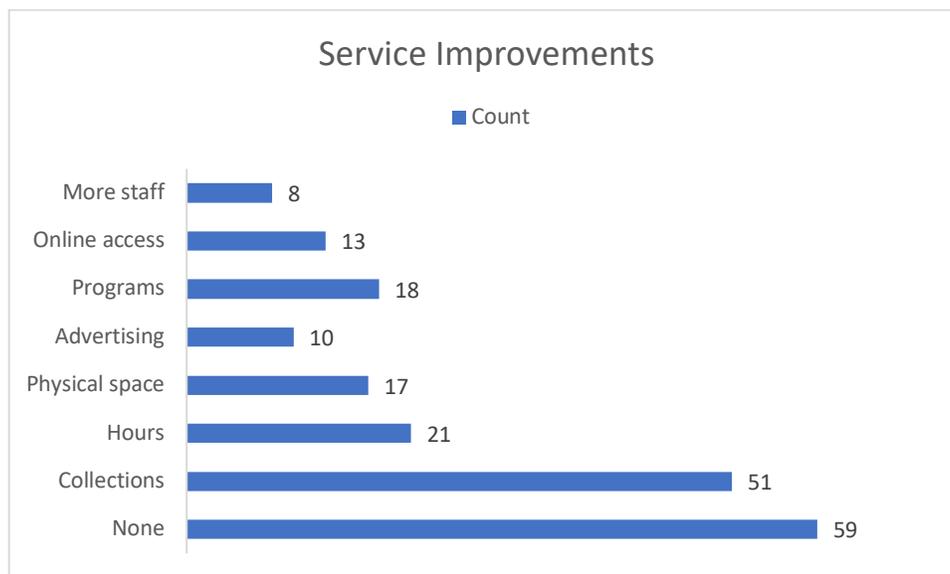
- *Importance*

- The majority of library services (75% or 9 out of 12) were considered important by more than 50% of respondents.
- The services considered very important or important by the largest number of people were:
 - ◆ Traditional book and DVD collections – 88%
 - ◆ Interlibrary Loan service – 76%
 - ◆ Public WIFI and internet – 71%
 - ◆ Library website – 66%
 - ◆ Reference help – 62%
- The three services that were considered somewhat important or not important by a majority were:
 - ◆ Non-book collections – 45%
 - ◆ Printing and Photocopying – 42%
 - ◆ Digital Resources – 30%

Q12 How important are these Library services to you?



- *Service Improvements*
 - Question 16 asked how the library could improve services. Of the 208 open ended responses the largest response set was from people who felt no improvements were needed; however, from those who suggested improvements the most frequently requested improvements were:
 - ◆ Expanded collections including traditional collections (books, DVDs, etc.) electronic collections (e-books & e-audiobooks) and non-traditional collections (Med Shed, equipment, tools, instruments, etc.)
 - ◆ Expanded hours of operation
 - ◆ Expanded or new programming
 - ◆ Expanded or improved physical space
 - ◆ Improved online access
 - ◆ Improved advertising and marketing
 - ◆ More staff



Communication & Awareness of Special Services

Survey respondents were asked to identify special services (other than book borrowing and programming) that they were familiar with and to rate how familiar they were with those services. It is clear that many of the library’s special services are not widely known. Only Interlibrary loan service had more than 50% of respondents either moderately or extremely aware of the service. Some services may only be known when someone requires that service (Med Shed, Tech Tutoring, Print Disability resources); however, responses indicated that people were surprised that they did not know about many services.

Special services with the highest awareness (respondents were either moderately or extremely aware) were:

- 1) Interlibrary loans 62%
- 2) E-books 39%
- 3) Med Shed 38%

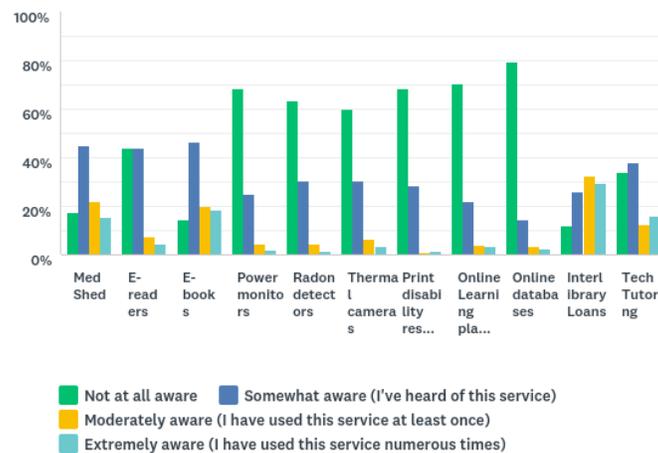
Services with the lowest awareness (more than 90% of respondents were either not at all aware or only somewhat aware) included:

- 1) Print disabled resources and equipment
- 2) Online Learning Platforms and databases
- 3) Lending of Power monitors, thermal cameras, and radon detectors

A few services were somewhat known but not as well-known as we had assumed. More than 60% of respondents were either not at all aware or only somewhat aware of the following services:

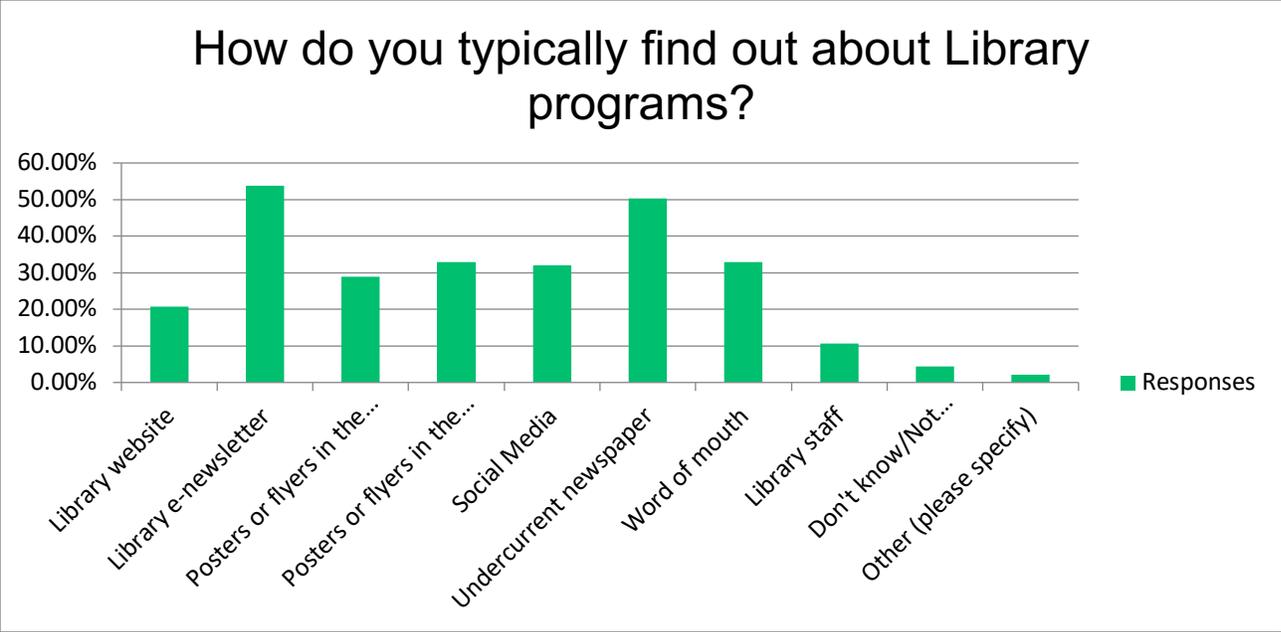
- 1) Med Shed Service
- 2) Tech Tutoring

Q10 Are you aware of the following special services and equipment for loan that the Library provides?



Based on the responses to question 10 above, a majority of people have limited awareness of many of the library’s special services. Communication plans and advertising methods should be reviewed and assessed.

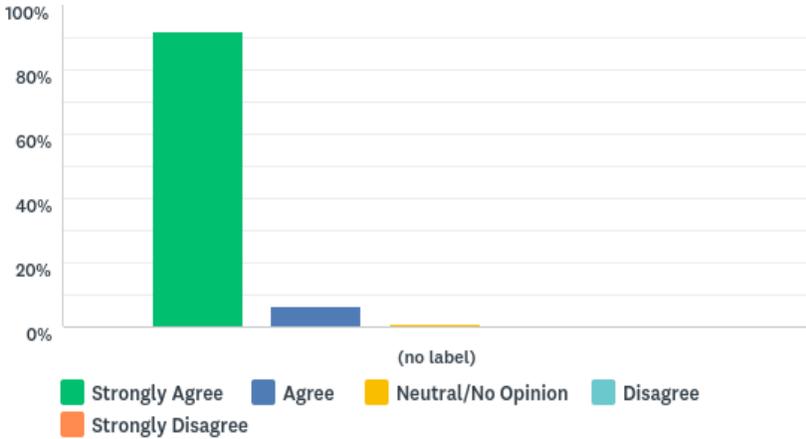
Our patrons find out about our services from a diverse range of sources. Overall our e-newsletter was the highest ranked, with the Undercurrent and word-of-mouth, posters, and social media receiving similar percentages of response.



Library Value

98% of respondents either strongly agreed or agreed that Bowen Library is a valuable resource in our community.

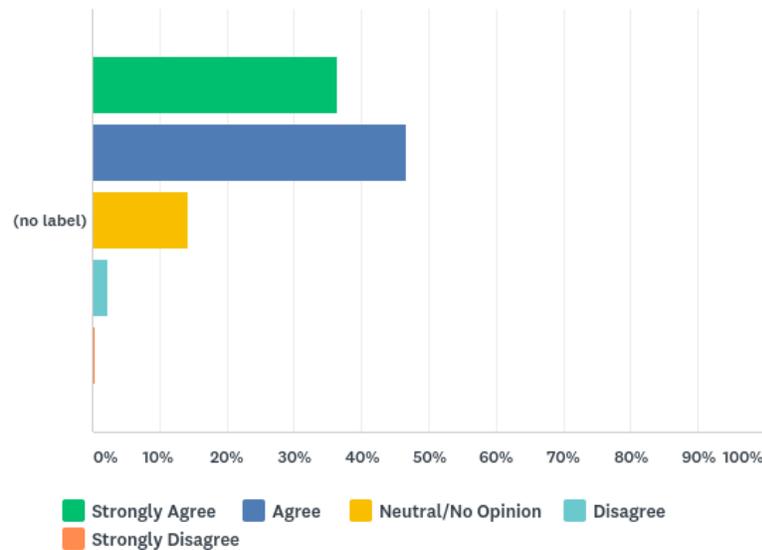
Q13 Bowen Library is a valuable resource in our community.



When asked what they most value about the library respondents, not surprisingly, valued the collections (including digital resources and access) highest. Open ended responses covered a broad range of values, but categorized into larger concepts, the responses fell into 6 areas (ranked below in order)

1. Books, collections and digital access (including WIFI) – 255 responses
2. Social and community benefits - 175 responses

Q14 Bowen Library meets the current needs of the community as a centre for sharing ideas, knowledge and resources?



Conclusion

The purpose of this project was to ask the public for their feedback and opinion on uses of the new Annex; library hours and services; ideas for new services and programs; and to tell us what value they place on the library and its services.

What we learned is that Bowen Islanders value the Library highly as a community resource. They appreciate the programs and services offered, and would like to see programming continue and expand. They shared many excellent ideas for programs and services, but clearly felt that the collections were the most important aspect of Library service and that the collections should be expanded and improved. Participants also expressed their appreciation of the warm, welcoming atmosphere in the library and they valued the help they receive from staff.

Bowen Islanders would love to see Monday openings and longer hours into the evenings, but are generally satisfied with access considering the size of our budget and our community.

The new Annex space is seen as a place for library programs first and foremost, but is recognized as a great space for study, work, reading and community gathering. Bowen Islanders would like to see more educational, informational and cultural events and activities in the Annex.

Responses to survey questions were thoughtful and considered, and the use of focus groups provided a method to engage people in deeper consideration of the current library services, to facilitate “blue sky” thinking about what the library means to them, and to discuss what they would want to see in the library in the future.

Undertaking community feedback is a valuable exercise to ensure that we are being efficient and effective with tax dollars, and that we are providing good value to our community. The feedback generated from this project will inform the work of the Library Board and staff in future.