

Assessing Scan and Deliver during COVID-19 and Beyond

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INFORMATION AND LEARNING COMMONS



Co-Presenters



Sonny Banerjee
Acting Head, Borrowing & Lending Services
sbanerje@ryerson.ca



Lisa Levesque
Assessment Librarian & Law Librarian
lisa.levesque@ryerson.ca

Agenda

What is scan and deliver?

Why and how did we assess it?

What did we learn from our assessment?

What are our reflections on this assessment?

Toronto Metropolitan University Context

- Institutional focus on social justice, entrepreneurship, and practical education
- Increasing focus on research, internationalization, new graduate programs, research centers, and a law school
- Located in downtown Toronto, the most populous city in Canada (pop 2.8 mil)
 - Most patrons commute using public transportation within the Greater Toronto Area (GTA)
- FTE (Full Time Equivalent) 42,000+ students
- During the height of the COVID-19 pandemic TMU libraries limited access to physical spaces, and we pivoted to offer new services to support remote teaching and learning

Many academic libraries created or enhanced access modes mid-pandemic

[Tolppanen \(2021\)](#) surveyed 121 US academic libraries. Most library services continued despite closures with many creating or enhancing services e.g. book return processes, scanning, & eReserves additions. More than half of the respondents (62, 51.7%) provided scanning on request (74).

[Trembach & Deng \(2022\)](#) found through an analysis of 50 US academic library websites that COVID-19 prompted academic libraries to enhance their digital collections, services, and online instruction (2).

Scan and Deliver

- The Scan and Deliver Service was implemented June 2020 during the COVID-19 pandemic
- With this service patrons can request a portion of text, such as a chapter of a book/journal article, be scanned by a Library staff member and emailed to them
- This service, along with Contactless Print Pickup, was implemented because of limited access to the physical library building and the print collection.
- The COVID-19 lockdowns also meant that the Library had to limit access to other services, such as print interlibrary loan, focusing on new services and electronic resources acquisitions

Why Assess Scan and Deliver?

- In Spring 2022 when we assessed the service it had been in place for 1.5 years.
- Beginning February 2022 classes were increasingly scheduled in-person
- Assessing what barriers the service has allowed patrons to overcome was a priority for determining the future of the service.
- Understanding the role the scan and deliver service plays in the overall scholarly research process, especially as these evolve with new practices and a physical return to campus, is critical to meeting patron needs

Research Questions: The purpose of this assessment is to better understand why Library patrons, including students, faculty, and staff, have used the Scan and Deliver service.

What benefits does it offer them?

What role do scanned materials play in their scholarly research?

And, what barriers does it help them overcome?

How Did we Assess Scan and Deliver?

Survey

- Sent by email with an attached Google form
- Sent to scan and deliver users who had used the service more than two times within fall 2021. This user group and time period was chosen to reach [users who have recently and frequently used the service](#).
- The survey [limitations](#) include that this design did not provide opportunities for input from users who used scan and deliver one time, who used it prior to August 15 2022, and non-users
- The survey used a mixture of [multiple choice and open text questions](#).

Participation in the survey was voluntary and participants gave informed [consent](#).

This assessment was exempt from [ethics review](#) as it concerns program development.

As an [incentive](#) survey participants were entered into a draw for one of three \$20 gift cards at a local grocery store or cafe.

Collaborative assessment

The survey results were coded using open and axial coding. The results were interpreted by the investigators who have knowledge of the scan and deliver program (Sonny Banerjee) and qualitative research methods (Lisa Levesque). Collaborative coding and conversations about the data formed an important part of analysis.

When our initial results were completed we consulted with borrowing and lending services librarians and all staff who work on the service to confirm accuracy and compare patron perceptions to staff experience and expertise. We later shared results with librarians council and library leadership with the recommendation to continue the scan and service for another year, which was approved.

Results

What is working well with the scan and deliver service?

Overall, the results of the scan and deliver survey were positive.

Most responses to the question "what is working well with the scan and deliver service?" relate to speed (n=24, 63%), with respondents describing the services as "fast," "very timely," and able to meet their coursework needs. They also described the service as "fair" as when shared scans enable all students in a class access to resources. A high number of responses also relate to access, ease, and convenience.

One respondent wrote: "The service is fast and reliable. It's easy to use and has never let me down."

What impact has the scan and deliver service had on your work?

The majority of responses to this question (n=24, 60%) relate to how the service enabled them to complete their work, often allowing access to a critical resource for completion. For students this relates to coursework and for instructors to course preparation and research. Additional responses relate to the ease and convenience of completing work using the scan and deliver service.

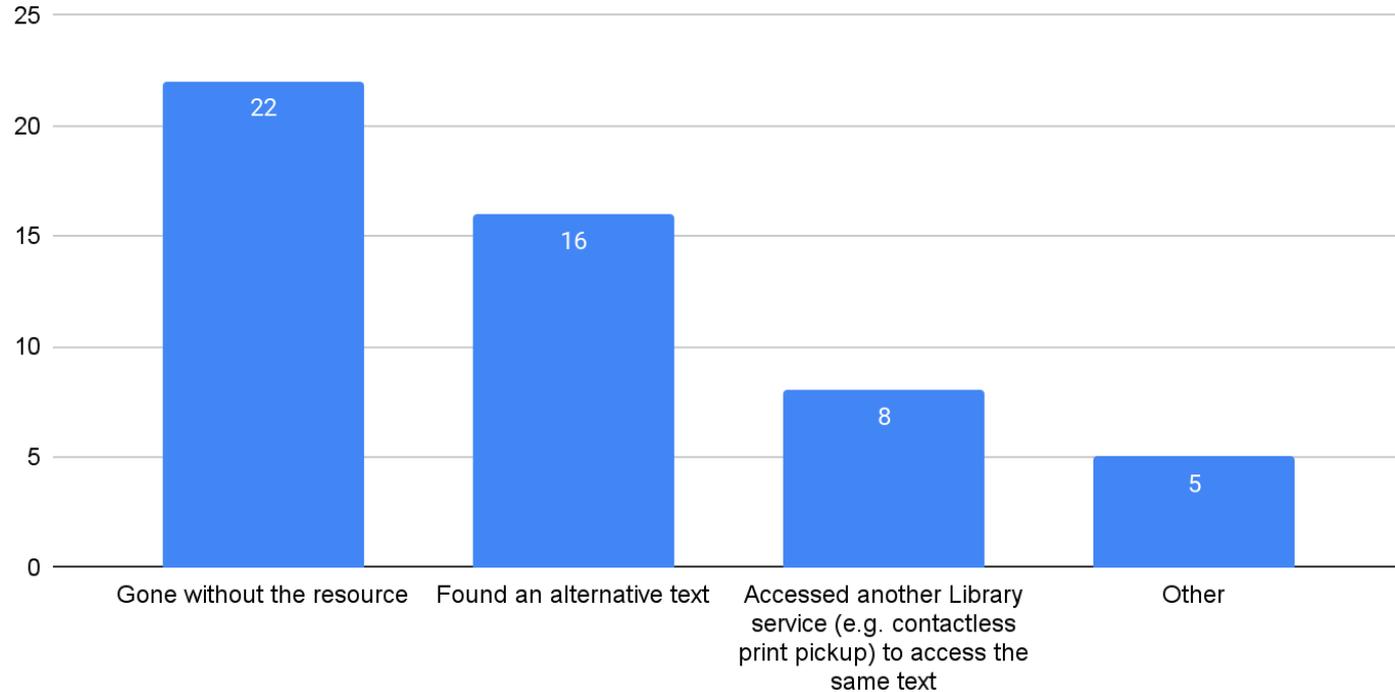
One student wrote: "I've been able to complete assignments with reputable sources that I would not have access to due to the pandemic or having to pay for access on other websites."

How could the scan and deliver service be improved?

The largest issue patrons reported with the service was that they faced challenges in entering in page numbers to the request form. Patrons also expressed confusion over aspects of the scan and deliver service, especially related to copying limitations, and they had suggestions for making the process easier and more transparent.

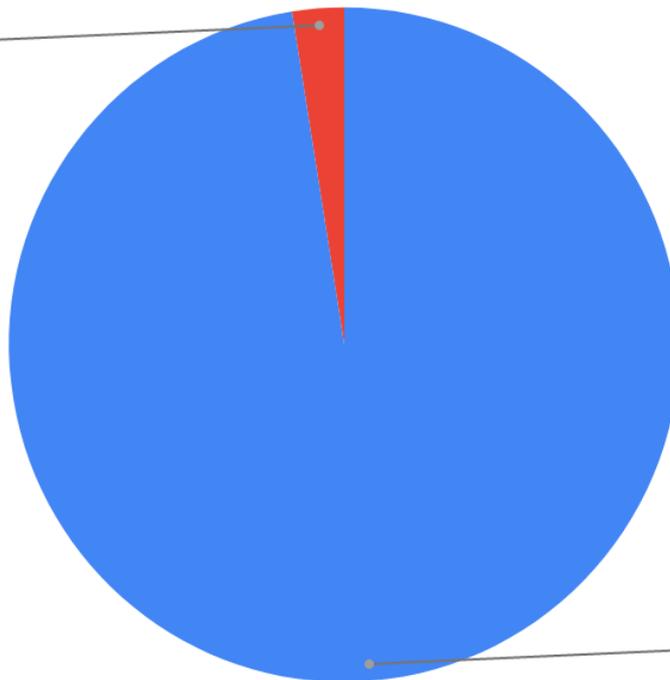
Concerns about page numbers and copyright restrictions should be read in conjunction with positive comments about communication with staff, such as “**staff are always so helpful in reaching out if there are questions with the request.**” In general respondents identified the human labour required to complete requests and that using the service is “**not like dealing with a robot.**”

If the scan and deliver service were not available at the time you used it, what would you have done?



Has the scan and deliver service enabled you to overcome barriers to completing your academic pursuits?

To a minimal extent
2.5%



Yes
97.5%

Overcoming barriers

The highest number of responses explaining why the service allowed them to overcome barriers relate to location (n=19). Respondents describe living far from campus, being unable to commute due to lockdowns and the risk of infection, and being unable to visit the Library due to university closures.

A large proportion of Toronto Metropolitan University patrons are commuters and some describe relocating during the pandemic. One respondent wrote: “I live in [a nearby city] and do not have an easy way of traveling to Toronto Metropolitan University due to reduced VIA rail service. I also have had dependent care responsibilities.”

Overcoming barriers

A few respondents with serious health issues could not travel to campus due to the risk of COVID-19 infection. One respondent wrote: "As an immunocompromised person, attending a library in-person is not an option. Without this service, I would not have access to non-digital materials." These responses are notable because individual health risks differ among patrons but all should have the same access to Library resources.

A number of respondents also describe their reluctance to travel for a single resource. One respondent wrote: "I prefer not to go downtown for a single/few classes and I would certainly not go downtown for a resource for a paper. The scan and deliver service helped me overcome the barrier of transportation and allows me to access resources I may not have been able to receive otherwise."

Final feedback

Respondents compared the scan and deliver service to other library services, such as interlibrary loan and ereserve, and these are for the most part seen as complementary.

Finally, in describing how the service has been valuable and impactful for them, numerous respondents requested that the scan and deliver service continue to exist post-COVID-19. One respondent called scan and deliver “critical to mission” in combination with other Library services that expand access to resources.

Study reflections

In reviewing the scan and deliver service, we considered what impacts it might continue to have on patrons and what barriers it will help them to overcome. Regardless of pandemic conditions our patrons will continue to be:

- Busy
- Commuters and travelers
- Experiencing health problems
- Learning using different material formats
- Engaged in hybrid work and learning

Holistic approaches needed for assessment:

Assessment of access services with the patron's life in mind, where the speed and convenience of scan and deliver material means it fits into the life of a commuter/student/instructor/researcher who also travels/has dependent care/works, and so on.

Studying the COVID-19 implemented service of scan and deliver was an opportunity to explore barriers to access and the patron's lived experience.

Assessment of access services with the life of scholarly materials in mind, where scanned research can become course material. Different services (interlibrary loan, print pick up, and scan and deliver) coexist and interrelate for patrons.

Looking forward

We have continued to make the scanning service available this year, documenting new patterns and possible changes in user behaviour.

This Fall semester, is the first one since March 2020, where we've had a full return to campus.

“Post-pandemic” is a challenging designation. In fall 2022 classes are held on campus during the 8th wave.

Pandemics will continue and be exacerbated by growing global travel, climate change, and information systems where health misinformation flourishes (WHO report [Imagining the future of pandemics and epidemics: a 2022 perspective](#)).

Questions?