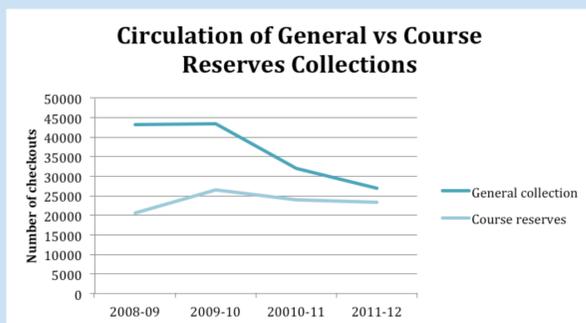


INSTITUTION SNAPSHOT

- One of two satellite campuses of the University of Toronto
- 13,000 students
- Primarily undergraduate
- Highly diverse urban community

PURPOSE

The use of course reserves continues to grow at the University of Toronto Scarborough Library. The circulation of course reserves is the one area of growth compared to the circulation of the general collection. In fact, one can imagine the circulation of course reserves (less than 1%) overtaking the circulation of the general collection:



The purpose of this research is to investigate the direct and indirect value of course reserves to students, and to explore how other libraries approach the service.

Note about the graph: we are comparing the general print collection to the print course reserves collection. We are not taking into account e-resource use (e-books, databases) and this may partially account for the downward trend in non-course reserve resource use.

METHODOLOGY

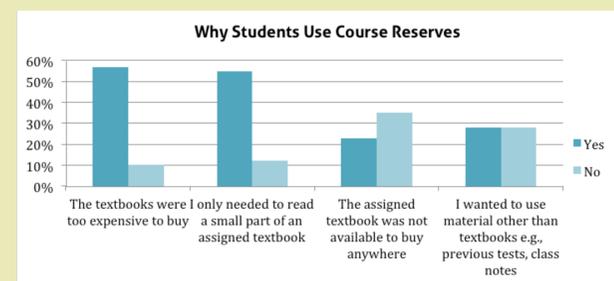
For our study, we administered a survey to students in person at the circulation desk, as well as online. In addition, we interviewed library administrators on their perceptions of the value of course reserves. Finally, a literature review provided several metrics, used at public and academic libraries, to guide our investigation of value.

FINDINGS

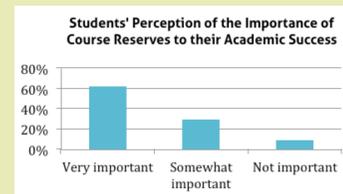
Students

We found that most students surveyed (n=829) used course reserve materials because the text was too expensive and/or only a small portion of the text was required reading for the course. The unavailability of textbooks to purchase was only a factor for very few students. A slightly higher number of students used course reserves as a source for additional material. Interestingly, 80% said their preferred format for textbooks is print. Only 9% prefer e-books.

Question: Please indicate whether or not each of the following is a reason why you chose to use the Course Reserves service in the last year (Fall 2011 – Fall 2012).



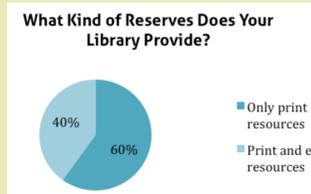
A majority of students reported that the Course Reserves service is important (62%) to their academic success.



Administrators

We also surveyed a small number of libraries (n=15) about their approach to course reserves. While two libraries work directly with the bookstore to purchase every required textbook, most other libraries will buy the textbook only when requested by faculty.

Understandably, every library surveyed believed that course reserves are an important aspect of academic libraries. They cite the popularity of the service as validation for its existence. Interestingly, few libraries saw the physical course reserve collection being phased out any time soon, reasons being few textbooks are available electronically, as well as the students' preference for looking at an actual book.



VALUE

Many methods can be used to measure the value of course reserves. We selected the following three:

1) **Implicit value** measures the use of the library service. In our study, this is the number of circulations of course reserve material. As the table below demonstrates the number of course reserve circulations has increased over the past 4 years. As course reserves are used by students, there is an implicit assumption that they are valuable to these stakeholders.

2) **Explicit value** measures the stakeholders' opinion about the value of a specific library service. We interviewed 15 library administrators as well as received 829 student survey responses. The results of the interviews and surveys are summarized in the charts below:

3) **Derived value** uses data collected on the returns (benefits) and the library cost (investment) to explain value in monetary terms. We selected a cost benefit analysis and ROI to demonstrate the derived value of course reserves.

Cost Benefit Analysis: calculates the benefit of course reserves by multiplying the number of circulations of course reserve materials by the value of each book. So in our case:

the number of circulations in 2011/2012	23,230
x	x
cost of each course reserve material	\$50
=	=
the value of this service to our stakeholders	\$1,161,500

Return	\$1,161,500
x	x
Investment (= 1100 items in Course Reserves x 50 + staffing/supplies)	\$101,020
=	=
Percentage ROI (= Return / Investment)stakeholders	1049%

PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS

Our findings indicate that course reserves is an essential service for students. Course reserve books circulate at almost the same rate as the general collection. There could be several reasons for this: students are using e-resources, especially articles; faculty are requiring articles to support research assignments; and/or faculty are not assigning research assignments. If students are generally able to complete coursework using e-resources and course textbooks, we should support their research needs by placing a greater emphasis on the resources they actually use.

- **How the collection budget is spent should be re-evaluated**
 - Monograph budget should be reorganized to direct more funds towards required textbooks
- **Our policy towards textbook purchases needs to be re-evaluated**
 - Textbooks are purchased when requested by faculty; the library can work with the bookstore to ensure required texts are automatically being purchased.
- **Marketing to faculty and students**
 - Books are only placed on course reserve by request from faculty; promoting course reserves should be a higher priority
 - As more faculty use and promote course reserves, more students will be aware of the service
- **Loan policies of course reserves to be improved/ re-evaluated**
 - Increasing the number of textbooks purchased per course, depending on enrollment
 - Offering students various loan periods for the same textbook (e.g. 3-hour loans, 24-hour loans)
- **Exploring eReserves as a viable alternative to having a physical collection**
 - Allocate part of the monograph budget to the purchase of an eReserves management system

QUOTES

Student quotes:

"Course reserves can be very useful. But a three-hour checkout limits the usefulness... for popular texts, it may be worth doubling up and extending to a one-day checkout. I've never been assigned a homework set that could be completed, with readings, in under three hours."

"There are not enough textbooks for many courses in course reserves ... Most people can never access the books unless they come very early and camp outside the library. I would really appreciate it if the library could increase the number of textbooks on reserve."

Library administrator quotes:

"We feel that these are just good for the "year" and often, the professors want us to have multiple copies. This is not our mandate. Our mandate is to buy research books that will help our undergrads and grads with their research needs."

"I do not think we will eliminate course reserves in the next 3-5 years. However the format and delivery system will undoubtedly change. Whereas 5 years ago the physical items were predominant, today it is the e-format. We have to adapt to the technological and market changes to attract the best faculty and students."