

Appendix F: Technology enabled opening pilot: Interim Report

1. Background

This appendix sets out the results of a pilot project to test the use of technology enabled opening (Open+™) at Edgware Library. Open+™ uses technology to automate the mechanical processes involved in opening and closing a public library building. This includes switching lights and PCs on and off, locking and unlocking doors and arming and disarming alarm systems. The system works in conjunction with the library's existing IT services (library management system, PC booking system and self-service kiosk technology) to manage customer access and to facilitate basic library functions such as issues, renewals, returns and internet use. CCTV cameras linked to the Open+™ system record all activity undertaken during unstaffed opening hours.

To access the library during extended hours customers scan their library card and enter their unique personal identification number (PIN) into a keypad located at the library entrance. A series of automated announcements indicate to customers when the library is due to close and instruct users to leave the building.

Whilst use of the system is relatively new in the UK, Open+™ has been widely adopted throughout Scandinavia to extend library opening hours beyond those that can be staffed. Take up in the UK is increasing and a number of library authorities are investigating 'unstaffed access' as part of their future service models.

The following paper is an interim report into the pilot of Open+™ technology at Edgware Library. A full report will be available on completion of the pilot period.

2. Establishing the Pilot

2.1 Background

In October 2014, Council approved the establishment of a pilot scheme to take place at Edgware Library for a period of three months. This pilot began on 29 June 2015 and is currently on-going. During the pilot period the library opening hours have been amended as follows:

Monday

7am – 9.30 am (unstaffed) 9.30am – 5pm (staffed) 5.15pm – 10pm (unstaffed)

Tuesday

7am – 9.30am (unstaffed) 9.30am – 8pm (staffed) 8.15pm – 10pm (unstaffed)

Wednesday

7am – 9.30am (unstaffed) 9.30am – 5pm (staffed) 5.15pm – 10pm (unstaffed)

Thursday

7am – 10am (unstaffed) 10am – 8pm (staffed) 8.15pm – 10pm (unstaffed)

Friday

7am – 9.30am (unstaffed) 9.30am – 5pm (staffed) 8.15pm – 10pm (unstaffed)

Saturdays

7am – 9.30am (unstaffed) 9.30am – 5pm (staffed)

Sundays

10am – 2pm (unstaffed) 2pm – 5pm (staffed)

2.2 Parameters of the pilot scheme

The following principles have underpinned the pilot scheme:

- Open +™ hours have been offered outside of existing staffed opening hours
- Access to services during extended Open +™ hours available to adults and older teens with parental permission. Children under 16 must be accompanied by an adult.

2.3 Services Available

The following services are available during extended hours:

- Access to the library space, including downstairs study tables
- PC access
- Wi-Fi internet
- Issue, renewal and return of library items
- Payment of fines
- Photocopying and printing (including payment)
- Collection and placement of reservations
- Newspapers and magazines
- Access to e-books and e-audio books for download

A customer user guide has been created to assist library users and to help them find and access resources whilst there are no staff on site. A feedback form and post box have been provided to facilitate communication between customers and staff and to enable library users to bring staff attention to any technical problems or any difficulties experienced in finding or accessing resources.

2.4 Access to technology enabled opening

Any customers wishing to use the library during extended hours have been required to register first. A field is then flagged in their library account which interacts with the door technology when they scan their barcode and enter their PIN. Unregistered customers are refused entry (the doors remain closed). Young people between the ages of 16 and 17 years old are required to obtain parental permission prior to being able to register for the service.

At the end of every staffed session all customers are required to leave the building and those who have registered for extended hours can then swipe themselves back in. This ensures that only registered customers are in the

building during extended Open+™ hours. All customers are provided with a user guide highlighting issues of personal safety and providing information about what to do in the event of an emergency. An emergency telephone is provided alongside comprehensive use of CCTV.

The use of some areas of the library, including public toilets and the upstairs reference room, is restricted during extended opening hours.

3. Outcomes

3.1 Registrations

The cumulative number of customers who have registered to access Edgware Library during extended hours (as at 31 August) is 513 (as represented below):

<i>Library</i>	<i>15-Jun</i>	<i>22-Jun</i>	<i>29-Jun</i>	<i>06-Jul</i>	<i>13-Jul</i>	<i>20-Jul</i>	<i>27-Jul</i>	<i>03-Aug</i>	<i>10-Aug</i>	<i>17-Aug</i>	<i>24-Aug</i>	<i>31-Aug</i>
<i>Burnt Oak</i>	2	5	6	10	12	16	19	20	20	24	35	41
<i>Childs Hill</i>	2	2	2	2	2	3	3	3	3	3	4	5
<i>Chipping Barnet</i>	2	2	3	4	4	4	7	7	9	12	15	16
<i>Church End</i>	3	6	6	7	7	8	8	9	11	11	12	13
<i>East Barnet</i>	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	2	2	7
<i>East Finchley</i>	2	2	3	3	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
<i>Edgware</i>	39	52	59	72	100	123	143	164	178	194	209	223
<i>Golders Green</i>	4	5	6	6	8	13	13	14	15	15	16	16
<i>Grahame Park</i>	4	4	4	4	5	5	6	7	10	12	12	12
<i>Hendon</i>	2	6	10	18	23	41	46	60	66	72	75	78
<i>Mill Hill</i>	7	9	11	12	13	16	18	22	27	31	36	41
<i>North Finchley</i>	2	2	2	2	4	4	4	6	14	16	19	26
<i>Osidge</i>	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	6	6	6	6	6
<i>South Friern</i>	3	3	3	3	4	4	4	4	11	18	23	25
<i>Cumulative Total</i>	72	99	117	145	188	243	277	327	376	420	468	513

3.2 Use

Use of Edgware Library during extended hours (as at 30 August) is represented overleaf:

Week commencing	Visitor count	Book Issues	PC use	Wifi use
29-Jun	30	8	8	21
6-Jul	32	11	7	9
13-Jul	52	14	47	16
20-Jul	88	64	48	18
27-Jul	111	65	45	19
3-Aug	78	52	37	20
10-Aug	106	82	43	21
17-Aug	107	76	30	30
24-Aug	132	120	56	24
Total	736	492	321	178

It should be noted that the above table does not capture every customer activity. In addition to book issues, PC and Wi-Fi use, library customers have also been accessing the library to read, study and to consult newspapers. A full survey of library use by activity will be provided in the final report.

At the 30 August, 23% of visits to the library during extended hours have been made between 07:00 and 09:30am, 9% on Sunday mornings, with the remaining 68% of visits taking place during the evening sessions. An hourly breakdown of library visits can be seen below:

	7-8am	8-9am	10-11am	11-12pm	12-1pm	1-2pm	5-6pm	6-7pm	7-8pm	8-9pm	9-10pm	Total
MON	6	16					107	18	24	13	4	188
TUE	4	24								41	7	76
WED	7	28					56	26	30	17	6	170
THU	3	24								43	7	77
FRI	6	29					30	26	21	16	8	136
SAT	0	21										21
SUN			25	10	15	18						68
Total	26	142	25	10	15	18	193	70	75	130	32	736

The final report will contain a more detailed analysis of usage.

3.3 Customer Feedback

To date there has been just one comment form received relating to use of the library during extended hours. This is reproduced below:

"This is the only library which accommodates students who need later opening times. X was very helpful and informative and I am so pleased that I managed to find a suitable library with satisfactory facilities, very pleasant staff, and a nice atmosphere. I will definitely use this library regularly"

3.4 Incidents

Evidence from the pilot indicates that customers have behaved respectfully with regards both to the library space and to each other. To date there have been no

incidents of theft or inappropriate behaviour in the library during extended hours and customers have resolved any minor issues amicably.

There have been two short periods where the service was unavailable due to technical difficulties. One involved the unlocking of the outer library gate, with the latter due to a minor software problem. Both issues were easily resolved and have not reoccurred.

4. Cost

In order to accommodate the Open+™ system, some significant changes were required to be made to the both the physical fabric of the building and the supporting electrical installations. This was necessary to ensure the building was able to be properly secured when Open+™ mode was initiated, and to make sure that security doors and monitoring equipment were installed to make users feel safe.

The total cost of the building and IT upgrades totalled £99,131. In addition, Bibliotheca were selected to provide the Open+™ system. This cost an additional £32,372.

The total cost of implementing Open+™ at Edgware therefore totalled £131,503 (excluding project management costs).

5. Interest from other local authorities

During the pilot period, the Library service has hosted visits and received enquiries from other local authorities in London and elsewhere. This suggests that technology enabled opening will become a feature of modern public libraries across the country.

6. Conclusion

Technology enabled opening has allowed for library services to offer extended hours. Over 500 library users have registered to use the service and so far, there have been over 730 visits to the library using this service. Registrations show that demand for the service is not solely centred in Edgware, suggesting that this technology could be successfully deployed in other libraries. The pilot period has demonstrated so far, that customer behaviour has not differed significantly between staffed and technology enabled opening hours. The technology enabled opening hours has successfully demonstrated that this is a viable approach to making libraries more available. The pilot will continue in Edgware throughout the further period of consultation.