

**Review of 24/7 opening in Loughborough University Library between the 9<sup>th</sup>  
January 2014 and the 29<sup>th</sup> January 2014**



**Graham Walton, Jeff Brown and Emma Walton**

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## Executive summary

Loughborough University Library building had a major refurbishment in 2013 which resulted in significant improvements. The refurbished building was open for the first time for 24/7 between the 9<sup>th</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup> January 2014. Data from swipe card access (introduced when the Library reopened at the beginning of the 2013/ 2014) was used to inform this review about how postgraduate (taught) and undergraduate students used the Library over this period. On average, there were 2024 visits per day to the building with a total of 7997 students making 65081 visits. The key emerging trends are:

- The Library was used constantly by students overnight but the numbers did decline towards the end of 24/7 opening
- There was a clear pattern of usage over the 24 hours period with numbers building up during the morning, peaking in the afternoon and then decreasing throughout the rest of the day
- Thursdays were the busiest days and Saturdays were the least busy
- The heaviest levels of use were at the beginning of 24/7 opening
- 1 in 5 visits lasted at least 4 hours
- 16% more enquiries from students were received over the same period in 2014 compared to 2013

Overall, the 24/7 January 2014 opening went well with the only major issue being around the negative impact of the *Spotted in the Library* Facebook page. This review has enabled the Library and University to identify actions that will ensure the high quality student experience provided by the Library over 24/7 opening will be maintained.

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## **Introduction**

In 2013, Loughborough University Library underwent a major transformation which resulted in a wide range of improvements including enhanced study environment, increased number/ variety of study spaces and also improved access to ICT. At the same time, the Library introduced swipe card access for health and safety reasons which has provided detailed and management data on how the Library building is used.

Throughout the year, the Library building is well used with the occupancy increasing during the examination and revision periods in January and in May/June. In January 2014, the Library was open 24/7 for the first time since it was refurbished. This coincided with the University taking a co-ordinated approach with regard to the availability and location of other learning/study spaces across the campus and in the Library. It was therefore seen as appropriate to review how the Library has been used by undergraduate and postgraduate (taught) students over the 24/7 opening period (9<sup>th</sup> to 29<sup>th</sup> January 2014).

## **Methodology**

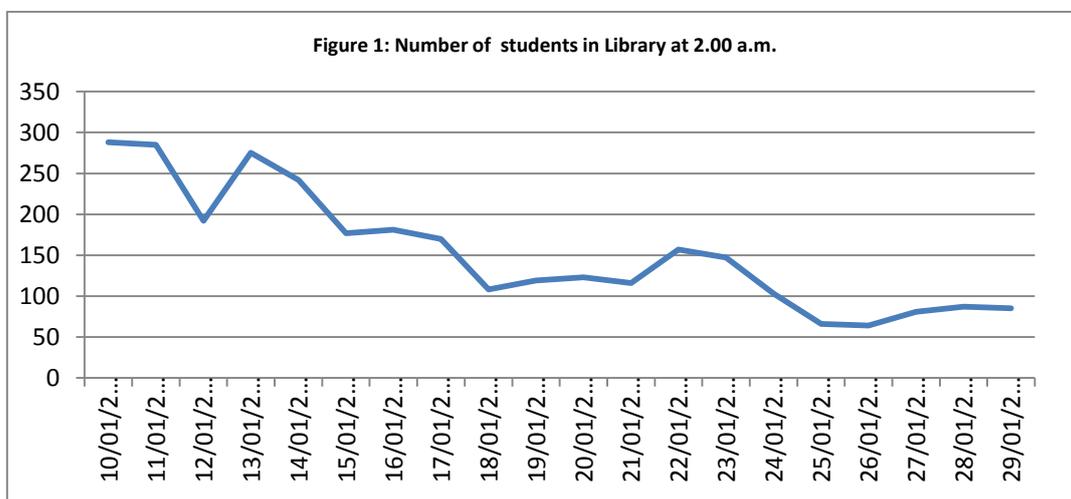
The swipe card access data regarding Library use was explored to establish how the building was used by undergraduate and postgraduate (taught) students between the 9<sup>th</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup> January 2014. This included the timing of visits, length of stay, total occupancy, arrival/departure and night time use. Further information was gathered by exploring the number of enquiries made by students in the Library.

## Results and discussion

In terms of general use, the Library was heavily used by a large % (but not all) of the student population between the 9<sup>th</sup> January and the 29<sup>th</sup> January 2014.

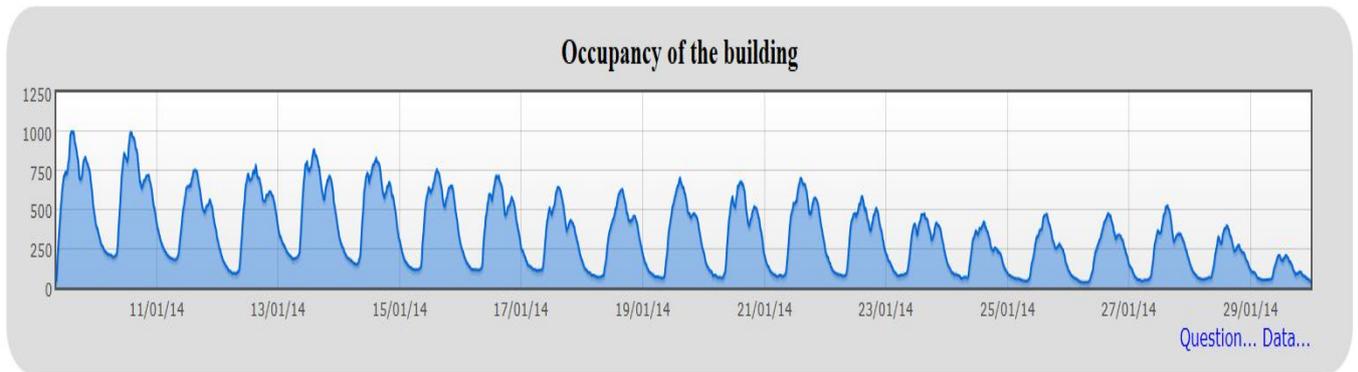
- 7997 students made a total of 65081 visits
- busiest day was Thursday 09/01/14 with 2969 people visiting
- busiest weekend day was Sunday 12<sup>th</sup> with 2179 individuals using the Library
- On average, 2024 students visited the Library each day.

There were students in the building continually throughout the whole 24/7 opening period. The number in the Library at 2.00 a.m. ranged from between 288 to 64. The numbers gradually declined as 24/7 opening progressed (Figure 1) but having 85 people in the building at 2.00 a.m. on the last night of 24/7 opening represents a reasonable occupancy level.



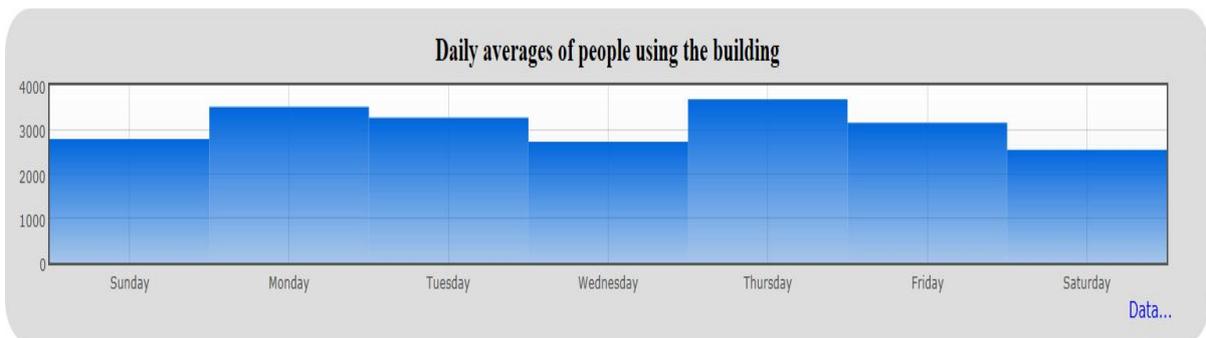
A very obvious pattern of use became apparent with numbers building up during the morning, peaking in the afternoon and then gradually going down throughout the rest of the day (Figure 2).

Figure 2



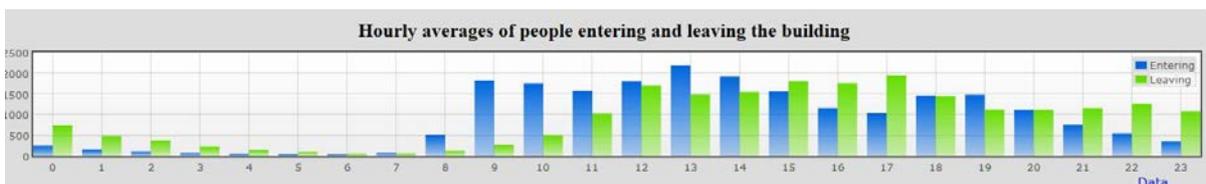
The variation in number of visits by day was not significant but Saturdays had the fewest (around 2800). The busiest day was Thursday which had on average nearly 4000 visitors (Figure 3).

Figure 3



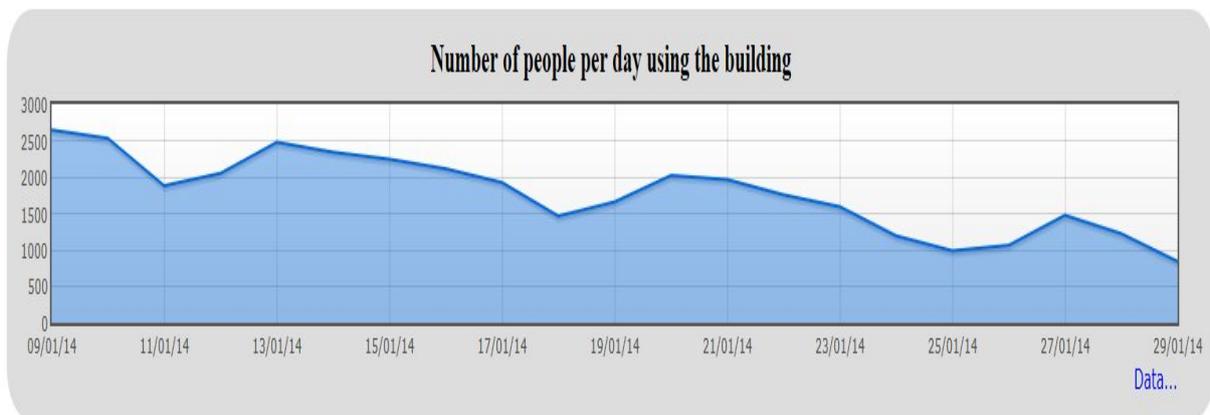
People arrived and left the Library constantly over 24/7 opening (Figure 4). Most arrived in the morning and left in the afternoon.

Figure 4



Over the 24/7 opening period, the first few days were the busiest. There are fewer people in at weekends with numbers going down as 24/7 opening drew to a close (Figure 5). There were still nearly 1000 students visiting on the last day.

Figure 5



Around 20% of people who visited the Library were in the building continuously for 4 hours minimum (Figure 6).

Figure 6



There were 16% more enquiries made by students in the Library in January 2014 compared with the same period in 2013 (Figure 7).

Figure 7

<b>ENQUIRIES</b>	2014	2013
Reception Desk	1337	308
Information Desk	3078	3498
Level 1 (inc Shelves Enq's)	543	633
Level 2 (inc Shelves Enq's)	929	920
Level 4	438	
<b>Total daytime</b>	<b>6325</b>	<b>5359</b>
Weekends	1217	1194
Evenings	1659	1532
Ask a Librarian	181	14
<b>Total enquiries</b>	<b>9382</b>	<b>8099</b>

## Conclusion

The refurbished Library building performed very well in its first period of 24/7 opening in January 2014. Various strategies put in place ensured that the high quality student experience was maintained and enhanced. These included:

- Employing a security guard to monitor the exit gate which ensured that the count figures were relatively accurate and that congestion was minimised around the entrance area.
- Ensuring the building was kept clean by employing additional cleaning staff throughout the period.
- Working with Facilities Management on the co-ordination of study spaces across campus

The most problematic issue was the appearance of the Facebook *Spotted in the Library* page. Due to its content, this page apparently deterred students from coming

to the Library and some comments were extremely offensive. There were some minor problems with noise on Level 4 and occasionally on Level 2 but these were not significant.

The following actions will be taken forward as a result of this review :

1. The Library will consider starting 24/7 opening from the Monday in January 2015 when students first return back. This would mean reducing the number of 24/7 days in May 2015 if there is no extra funding.
2. The Library and Facilities Management will continue collaborating in advertising informal learning space across the campus over the exam/revision period
3. Constant monitoring will be undertaken by the Library to ensure it does not exceed its maximum occupancy. Existing processes to deal with this possibility will be continued and developed.
4. Campus Living will be approached by the Library to open the Library Cafe longer, especially during the weekends. This is justified by the significant length of individual visits to the Library.
5. Employing a security guard on the reception desk would assist with any congestion issues and also free up Library staff time to support students elsewhere. The Library will take this option forward in 2014.
6. Employing additional cleaners has been a success and the Library will work with colleagues in FM to ensure this continues.
7. The Library will collaborate with the Chief Operating Officer and Marketing and Communications to minimise the future negative impact of such issues as *Spotted in the Library*. This will be in place before the May 2014 24/7 opening.