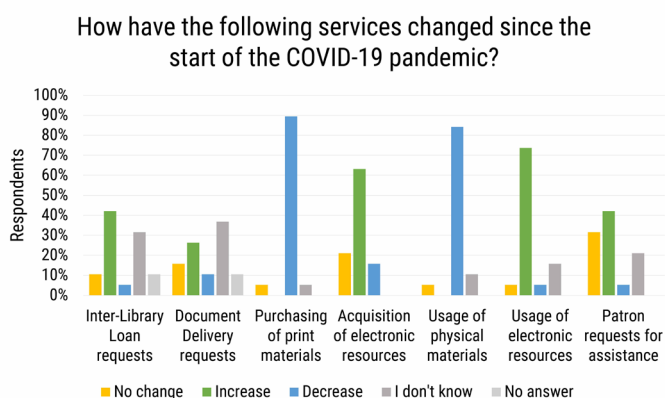


COVID-19 Impacts on Libraries

We invited library staff to participate in a short ad hoc survey to better understand the impacts of COVID-19 on libraries. The majority (89%) of survey respondents were from university or college libraries, and 10% of respondents were from either government libraries or special libraries (5% of respondents each).

Library Services

The largest change in library services since the start of the pandemic has been a decrease in purchasing and usage of print and physical materials, with 90% of respondents reporting a decrease in the purchasing of print materials and 84% of respondents reporting a decrease in the usage of physical materials. Most respondents reported increases in the usage and acquisition of electronic resources (74% and 63% respectively). In addition, 42% of respondents reported increases in inter-library loan requests and just over one-quarter of respondents reported an increase in document delivery requests. Furthermore, 42% of respondents reported increases in patron requests for assistance, including a noted increase in requests for and participation in workshops and tutorials.

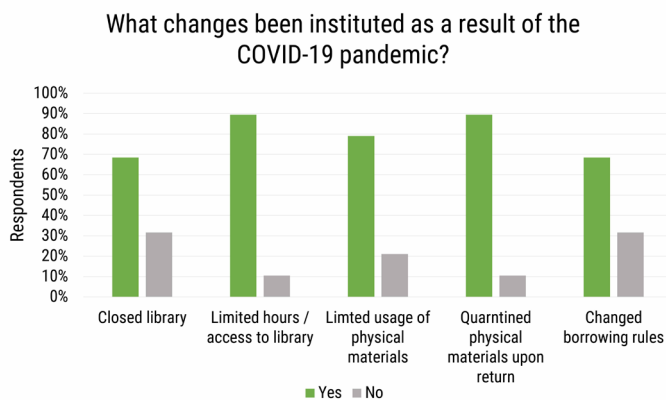


Credit: AGI; data from AGI's COVID-19 Impacts on Libraries Survey

Other changes to library services included the creation of short video tutorials to assist patrons with accessing services and with library outreach, and increase in time needed to plan remote instruction, closure or limitations to special collections, virtual reference labs, and archives, and limited onsite reference assistance.

Facility Impacts

Facility impacts were reported by most respondents, with the most commonly reported impacts being limited hours and access to the library building, the quarantining of physical materials upon return, and limited usage of physical materials. Other facility changes implemented as a result of the pandemic included new delivery options, including digitization of print materials on demand, and implementation of a paging system that routes calls from library branches that are closed to the main library branch location which is open.



Credit: AGI; data from AGI's COVID-19 Impacts on Libraries Survey

Other impacts to libraries related to the COVID-19 pandemic range from budget stresses, staffing impacts, and technology impacts. Budget impacts included restricted budgets resulting in reduced purchasing and processing of physical materials and digital textbooks, and also hiring freezes, staff

quarantines, furloughs and layoffs. Staffing impacts included restricted on-site staffing which has resulted in backlogs of cataloging and archiving of materials and feelings of inequitable conditions among staff. In addition, respondents reported reduction in the use of student employees, as well as the need for staff to be flexible in assuming different roles and to adapt to working from home with online technology applications. Technology impacts include hardware and software issues for staff who are working from home and reduced levels of communication among staff. Other impacts included concerns over the ultimate disposition of library and physical collections space.