

# Assessment on a Dime: Low Cost User Data Collection for Assessment

Eric Dillalogue and Michael Koehn

Volume 15, Number 3, 2020

URI: <https://id.erudit.org/iderudit/1088765ar>

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.18438/ebliip29582>

[See table of contents](#)

Publisher(s)

University of Alberta Library

ISSN

1715-720X (digital)

[Explore this journal](#)

Cite this article

Dillalogue, E. & Koehn, M. (2020). Assessment on a Dime: Low Cost User Data Collection for Assessment. *Evidence Based Library and Information Practice*, 15(3), 2–20. <https://doi.org/10.18438/ebliip29582>

Article abstract

**Objective** – This article describes the construction and use of a low cost tool for capturing user demographics in a physical library.

**Methods** – At the Health Sciences Library of Columbia University Irving Medical Center, we created the Tap In/Tap Out tool to learn about the demographic details of our library visitors, such as their status, school affiliation, and department. The Tap In/Tap Out tool was implemented twice for two weeks in 2013 and 2017, with users voluntarily tapping their campus ID when entering and leaving the library. We checked campus ID numbers against university databases to fill in demographic details of the library users.

**Results** – We constructed the Tap In/Tap Out tool using a Raspberry Pi and RFID card readers mounted on a foam board poster and placed near the library entrance. Participation in the Tap In/Tap Out tool ranged from 5-7% of the library gate count numbers during the survey periods. Though low, this participation provided a useful indication of user demographics that helped to strengthen library discussions with university administration. The 2013 survey results, which showed that the library space was actively used by students from all the constituent Medical Center schools, were used to support funding justifications. The 2017 survey results, which showed continued library usage, were used to illustrate the value of the library to the Medical Center community.

**Conclusion** – The Tap In/Tap Out tool was inexpensive to implement and provided more information about library visitors than gate counts alone. Findings from the Tap In/Tap Out results were used to demonstrate library usage and justify funding. We describe how other libraries might create and implement the tool to capture greater levels of detail about the users visiting their spaces.





*Research Article*

**Assessment on a Dime: Low Cost User Data Collection for Assessment**

Eric Dillalogue

Assistant Director of Operations

Kislak Center for Special Collections, Rare Books and Manuscripts

University of Pennsylvania

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, United States of America

Email: [edillalo@upenn.edu](mailto:edillalo@upenn.edu)

Michael Koehn

Director for Library Operations

Augustus C. Long Health Sciences Library

Columbia University Irving Medical Center

New York City, New York, United States of America

Email: [mdk2126@cumc.columbia.edu](mailto:mdk2126@cumc.columbia.edu)

**Received:** 6 May 2019

**Accepted:** 27 Mar. 2020

© 2020 Dillalogue and Koehn. This is an Open Access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons-Attribution-Noncommercial-Share Alike License 4.0 International (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/4.0/>), which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly attributed, not used for commercial purposes, and, if transformed, the resulting work is redistributed under the same or similar license to this one.

DOI: 10.18438/ebliip29582

---

**Abstract**

**Objective** – This article describes the construction and use of a low cost tool for capturing user demographics in a physical library.

**Methods** – At the Health Sciences Library of Columbia University Irving Medical Center, we created the Tap In/Tap Out tool to learn about the demographic details of our library visitors, such as their status, school affiliation, and department. The Tap In/Tap Out tool was implemented twice for two weeks in 2013 and 2017, with users voluntarily tapping their campus ID when entering and leaving the library. We checked campus ID numbers against university databases to fill in demographic details of the library users.

**Results** – We constructed the Tap In/Tap Out tool using a Raspberry Pi and RFID card readers mounted on a foam board poster and placed near the library entrance. Participation in the Tap In/Tap Out tool ranged from 5-7% of the library gate count numbers during the survey periods. Though low, this participation provided a useful indication of user demographics that helped to strengthen library discussions with university administration. The 2013 survey results, which showed that the library space was actively used by students from all the constituent Medical Center schools, were used to support funding justifications. The 2017 survey results, which showed continued library usage, were used to illustrate the value of the library to the Medical Center community.

**Conclusion** – The Tap In/Tap Out tool was inexpensive to implement and provided more information about library visitors than gate counts alone. Findings from the Tap In/Tap Out results were used to demonstrate library usage and justify funding. We describe how other libraries might create and implement the tool to capture greater levels of detail about the users visiting their spaces.

---

## Introduction

Assessment is an important function in any library for evaluating usage, resource effectiveness, staff efficiency, and myriad other elements for internal and external purposes. Though assessment is a constant point of discussion today, it is not a new initiative for libraries. In 1976, the Association of Research Libraries laid out the need to assess all aspects of the library because “concern has increased for determining library output or effectiveness – how well the library actually meets users’ needs. This concern relates to the library’s responsibility to serve, with limited budgets, groups widely diversified ... [and] by the need to further justify activities to the parent institution, to evaluate possible new services, and to predict and influence change” (p. 1).

Traditionally, libraries have used gate counts as one way to assess space use – how many patrons entered or exited the space at a given time on a day. Though this data provides insight into the level of library foot traffic – with characteristic spikes for testing periods and dips during breaks – the data does not include information on *who* used the space. As Nackerud, Fransen, Peterson, and Mastel (2013) note, there are

important questions that go unanswered if all we know are numbers: “Who are these students? What colleges do they represent? Does the library reach a majority of students in some measurable way?” (p. 140). Of particular interest to libraries are the demographic details of visitors: their university affiliation, status, school, department, and/or program. These demographic details allow libraries to demonstrate value to the wider campus through assessment efforts.

However, gathering patron demographic information can be difficult. Some libraries have ID-swipe gate systems that consistently record demographic information, but libraries without this gate functionality face a technological hurdle. To address this issue, we have developed a tool called “Tap In/Tap Out” to acquire patron demographics at the entry and exit points of the library. We will discuss the technical aspects of setting up a Tap In/Tap Out tool, the data we collected, and how we used that information.

The purpose of this article is to present a low cost user information capture tool that can be adapted for assessment in many types of settings. We discuss the tool’s use in a pre-

renovation environment, with the acquired information used to demonstrate library usage across five health sciences schools and to make a case for funding, and in a post-renovation environment to explore current user demographics. Though there are some limitations to the Tap In/Tap Out tool, we believe it provides an innovative method to assess library usage at the point of entry. This paper describes how to create and implement the Tap In/Tap Out tool so other libraries that lack the technological infrastructure or financial means to install swipe-card entry gates can capture greater levels of detail about the people using their spaces.

### Literature Review

A common way to assess and compare library usage is to count the number of users who visit a library, most often done with gate counts at the entry point(s). Whether using mechanical turnstiles or infrared beam-counting gates, gate counts “remain one of the most widely accepted methods for measuring facility use” (Stewart, 2011, p. 539). Typically, commercial providers supply gates that combine methods of tracking library materials (e.g., books) and counting people.

But gate counts with any device only provide information on how many users enter or exit a space and do not include information on who the users were nor how long they stayed in the library space. The lack of patron details has been partially addressed in newer gate technologies that require a user to swipe their ID for access, allowing the library to count the number of visitors and, when connected to a database of patron information, access additional demographic details on those visitors (Jones, 2011). For example, Scarletto, Burhanna, and Richardson (2013) were able to determine the demographics of users visiting the library during overnight hours by capturing swipe-card entries at the library’s entrance and sending “identification numbers of users during the study period ... to the University Research,

Planning and Institutional Effectiveness (RPIE) office for associated demographic data relating to department, major, grade point average, class standing, international status, home campus, ethnicity, and gender” (p. 373). Using that information, the library had a more informed view of their overnight users.

However, swipe-card entry gates are expensive and not feasible for all libraries. To address the need for more user information to assess library usage, some libraries are using alternate demographic data collection methods to get a better understanding of their spaces and users. For example, Dotson and Garris (2008), employed building surveys to measure usage of their library’s physical resources. These surveys were used to “examine exactly what physical resources people are using” and to “use that information to make improvements to existing resources, services and spaces” (p. 11). Nackerud, Fransen, Peterson, and Mastel (2013) were able to capture unique patron identifiers via computer log-ins and circulation transactions, combining that data with other points of patron access, to analyze user demographics and determine which students were (or were not) using the library. For example, using this method they found “that 77 percent of undergraduate students and 85 percent of graduate students made use of the library during the Fall 2011 semester” (p. 142). And for those undergraduate students who did visit, Nackerud et al. found that they “consistently had higher semester GPAs than students who made no use of the library” (p. 140). And Lux, Snyder, and Boff (2016) used touch-based surveys loaded on iPads to capture patron demographics and reasons for coming to the library. The authors found that graduate students and faculty used the library to either study individually or to access library materials; whereas undergraduate students primarily visited to study alone or as part of a group (p. 112). Similarly, there are studies that include observations and seating sweeps, but these do not provide details on who the users are in the

space; hence, those studies are not included here.

Any collection of user data also raises privacy concerns. As the American Library Association notes, “users expect ... to have their personally identifiable information and library-use data protected and kept private and confidential ...” and “libraries should collect and store only personally identifiable data required for specific purposes that are disclosed to the users” (2002). Privacy has been described as a “tightrope” along which we walk and requires “a type of judgment call by a library staff member or administrator which pits the mission and goals of the library against user privacy” (Coombs, 2004, p. 495). There is a wealth of thoughtful literature on privacy in libraries and we will not explore it all here, but we do address data collection issues with regards to the Tap In/Tap Out tool in the Methods section.

We find that Jones’ statement from nearly a decade ago is still true, that there is an “absence of literature describing tools for analysis of and practical use for swipe-card data, particularly in informing library decisions ...” (2010, p. 12). This paper adds to the literature on swipe-card data by presenting the Tap In/Tap Out tool. This tool bridges the gap between the raw numbers from an infrared beam gate counter and the detailed user information from a swipe-card entry system, while keeping costs and staff involvement low.

### **Background/Aims**

As do many libraries, the Health Sciences Library at Columbia University struggled to understand the populations who used its space. As the primary provider of study space on the Columbia University Irving Medical Center (CUIMC) campus, library staff could determine that most library space users were students. Beyond that, assumptions were made about the demographics of users in the space (status, school affiliation, program, etc.) based on staff observations and anecdotal evidence, but these

assumptions were not backed up by quantitative evidence.

Space is a highly valued commodity at CUIMC. The library lost square footage at several points in its history. For example, a renovation completed in 2009 converted more than 20,000 sq. ft. of library stacks space into classroom space. The library needed to demonstrate that students, faculty, and staff of all programs used the library’s remaining physical space. This would allow the library to advocate for enhanced maintenance of and upgrade to these spaces, which had seen only minor updates since the building was completed in 1975.

Other libraries at Columbia University installed entry gates activated by the University’s RFID badges, gaining useful demographic information about the users entering their spaces. Rather than just a raw gate count, these libraries had a wealth of demographic information. Users could be identified by their university affiliation (student, faculty, or staff), their school or department, and their enrolled program. In addition, time of day data was available for each entry. This additional level of detail allows those libraries with swipe card entry gates to get more information than just a gate count – they can understand how users from different university departments or programs use their spaces and how the makeup of users changes over time. These data points help to strengthen library decision making and the case for funding.

Administrators at the Health Sciences Library examined the library’s setting and determined that, aside from the financial costs of implementing swipe-card access entry gates, the logistics of the library’s location created challenges as well. The library was located immediately behind entry gates for the Hammer Health Sciences Center, so there was no security benefit added through entry gates. In addition, since space users had swiped into the building just seconds before entering the library, staff thought space users would be frustrated by the need to swipe in again, especially given the

challenges users were having with the existing gates.

But the basic concept of swipe-to-enter provided a starting point. The library already had RFID card readers in use for circulation transactions at the service desk. If similar readers could be coupled with an inexpensive data collection device, it might be possible to produce similar demographics to other libraries' entry gates at a much lower cost. The Raspberry Pi (RPI) single board computer seemed like an ideal candidate for our data collection needs.

To avoid frustrating users of the space, data collection had to be voluntary and time limited. The resulting data would be a sample, but it would be an indicator of usage patterns in the space, and the information returned would be far more detailed than the library's existing gate count data. Staff realized that the same methodology could be used to also collect exit data, providing length-of-stay data. Thus the Tap In/Tap Out tool was created.

## **Methods**

We designed the Tap In/Tap Out tool as a type of survey data collection device. Specifically, this tool was created to take a snapshot of the number and types of patrons entering and exiting the library during a short sampling period. That Tap In/Tap Out tool follows the concept of a "survey" defined by Cohen, Manion, and Morrison (2007) as a method to "gather data at a particular point in time with the intention of describing the nature of existing conditions ..." (p. 205). Participation was voluntary. We were not seeking statistical significance in collecting the information, but rather data representative of use and demographics, providing more details than existing gate counts or patron in/out numbers. We used historical gate count information, academic calendars, and staff knowledge to choose the two weeks for surveying, selecting a

time in the middle of the semester that avoided any school breaks or testing days. The study was conducted twice, once in 2013 (pre-renovation of the library) and once in 2017 (post-renovation). In addition, each iteration included two rounds of data collection, once in the spring and once in the fall semesters. The exact dates in 2013 and 2017 were different due to the academic calendars in those years.

The study was designed as a management study of the library's patrons, rather than as a research study to develop generalizable knowledge. As such, it is not human subject research and did not require IRB approval (Columbia University, 2012). Information on the purpose of the study, use of information collected, and contact information for additional details were posted at the point of participation. (See Appendix A for posted text.) Patron participation was voluntary. Staff were instructed to encourage participation during the study, but patrons could, and often did, enter and leave the library without participating. This intervention was the extent of participation by front line staff, fulfilling the goal of low staff involvement.

Several factors were considered when examining the risk of disclosure of collected data. ID card numbers and date/time data stored on RPi could only be linked to an individual through secure university databases. Access to these databases is restricted to employees with a legitimate business need. The work to link the ID card numbers to user demographics was performed on secure endpoints as required by university policy. At no time was demographic data stored on the RPi. Data on the RPi computers was protected by standard Linux login security. Theft was not considered a significant threat, given the low value of the hardware and constant surveillance of the space. Given these factors, it was determined that accidental or malicious disclosure of collected data represented little to no harm to participants in the study.

### *Experimental Setup*

The library used two RPi single-board computers and two RFID card readers compatible with the University's ID system. Both RPis were running the latest build of Raspbian Linux available at the time. For the 2013 study, the library used first generation model B RPis, which lack Wi-Fi capability. Because the RPi has no real-time clock, network connectivity (via wired Ethernet) was required for accurate timekeeping. For the 2017 study, we used third generation RPis with built-in Wi-Fi connectivity.

One of the goals of this project was to minimize the costs associated with technology and supplies. The total bill of materials was just over \$170 (see Appendix B for a breakdown). We were able to use RFID card readers from our spare stock, otherwise these would have cost approximately \$160.00 each. The above hardware would have sufficed for the 2017 rounds of data collection, but we elected to update our hardware to gain Wi-Fi networking. For the 2017 project, we spent a similar amount, less the cost of the foam core board.

The RFID card readers are USB human interface devices, appearing to the RPis as a keyboard. When an ID card is placed on the reader, it reads the card number and outputs it as a series of digits, followed by the enter key (similar to an individual typing the number and pressing enter).

One RPi was designated "IN" and the other was designated "OUT" for collecting library entry and exit data, respectively. Both RPis were configured to turn off the graphical interface and to auto-login on the first virtual terminal (/dev/tty1) to the "cardstats" user, which ran a script, written in Perl, to collect the 9-digit card number along with date and time each time a card was read, and write it to local storage. If the script were to crash or exit, the account would

log out, and the auto-login process would re-start it.

The library produced a poster, printed on foam core board, with graphics indicating which RFID reader was "IN," which was "OUT," and mounted the RFID readers to the board with tape (Figure 1). In addition, the poster contained information about the purpose of the project and how the collected card data would be used (see Appendix A for the poster text). To maximize impact, the library designed a reminder poster that could be seen easily as users entered or exited the library.

The poster was placed on a tripod in a conspicuous location near the entry of the library, near power, and, for the 2013 study, near Ethernet ports.

Each time the survey ran for just over two weeks, to allow 14 full days of data collection. To protect against accidental data loss, card data was copied daily to a secure location. During the 2013 study, staff used scp to retrieve the data daily. For the 2017 study, a nightly job ran to copy the data to a Windows share via Samba.

### *Data Analysis*

Data collected was saved in a tab-delimited, plain text file, with the first column containing the card number, the second column an ISO 8601 date and time statement, and the third column a directional indicator (IN or OUT). (See Appendix C for an example of the raw data.) After collection, data was transferred to a secure endpoint for further analysis.

For the 2013 study, data was analyzed using a custom Perl script (Appendix D). During this study period, the library closed daily before midnight. Therefore, any IN taps without a corresponding OUT tap at the end of the day represented instances where the users had

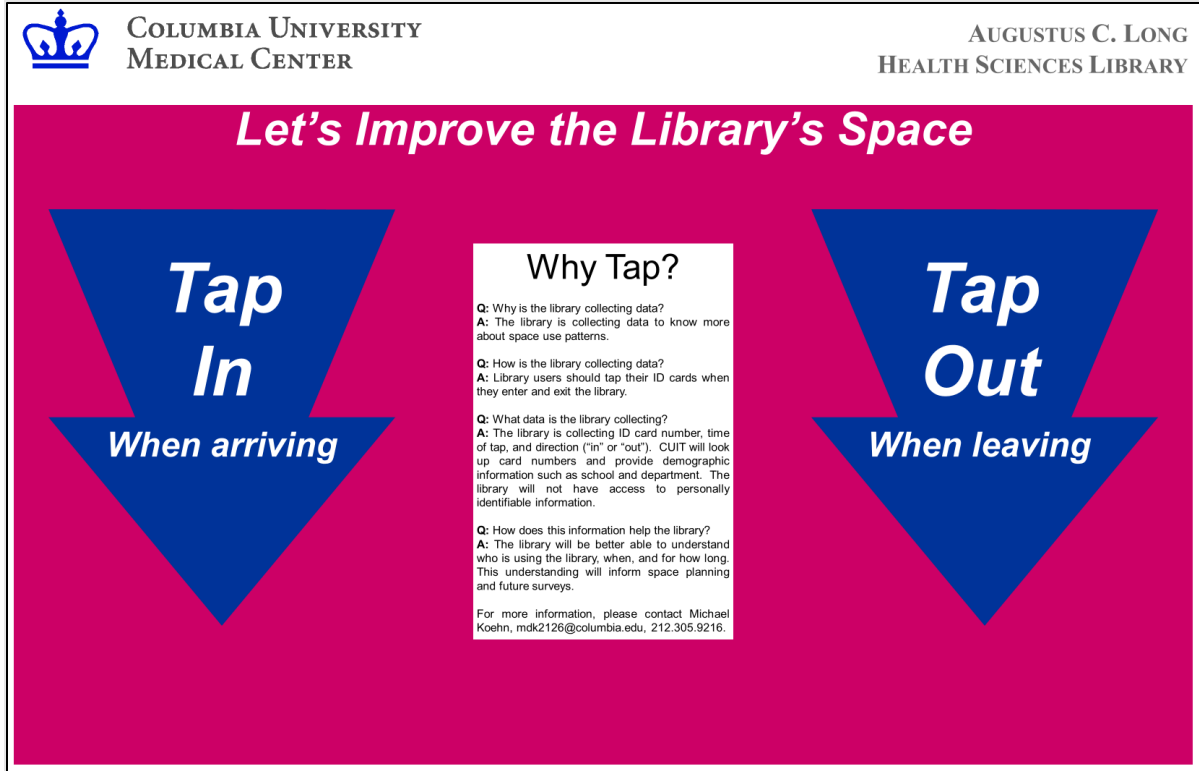


Figure 1  
Poster design for Tap In/Tap Out on one board.

tapped in, but not tapped out. (See Appendix C for an example of merged data.)

After collecting all card data, the list of card numbers was sent to an analyst at Columbia University Information Technology (CUIT), who matched the card numbers against the University's ID Management database. CUIT returned the list with added affiliation information, including role (student, faculty, or staff), school, division, department, and academic program. (See Appendix C for example demographic data.)

The 2017 study involved some adjustments to the data analysis process. The change to the library's hours to a 24-hour space required the ability to compare data spanning two days. It was no longer possible to determine who had left without tapping their ID as we did in the 2013 study. To resolve this issue, we used a sliding six hour window based on the tap in

time to look for any exit taps. If no matching exit was found within the six hour window, we assumed the user left the library without tapping. We chose the six hour window based on the duration of visit information from the 2013 study, where only one user exceeded four hours in the library and none exceeded six hours.

### Results/Outcomes

The primary use of the Tap In/Tap Out data has been to quantitatively demonstrate to university administration the continuing value of library space to the Medical Center community. The data strengthened the library's case for increased investment in library spaces. We found the two most useful reports for administration to be a tabular count by department (Appendix E) and a pie chart of library visits by school (Appendix F).



Response rates to the Tap In/Tap Out surveys were low – 5% of the gate count in both 2013 surveys and the fall 2017 survey, 7% in the spring 2017 survey – but provided a useful snapshot of patron demographics. The response rate was calculated for each day in the study period and remained within a 4% to 6.5% daily range. While we acknowledge that the information collected was not representative of all library users, it was still useful for management purposes to indicate usage and justify funding.

Results from the Tap surveys confirmed that the Health Sciences Library was actively used by students from each of the four main CUIMC schools – the College of Dental Medicine, Joseph L. Mailman School of Public Health (MSPH), School of Nursing, and College of Physicians & Surgeons (now Vagelos College of Physicians and Surgeons, VP&S) – as well as by the cross-campus students from the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences and by students enrolled in programs at the university's Morningside Heights campus. The results also showed taps from faculty and staff. Since there had been a perception that the library was only a student space, this was useful hard data.

For those who tapped out, we were able to extrapolate the duration of their stay. For the 2013 study, approximately two-thirds of taps recorded were part of a matched pair, meaning we could determine the length of a user's time in the library. Analysis showed that 44% of respondents spent less than a half-hour in the library during their visit. The second largest group (about 30%) were those who stayed for at least one and up to three hours. This data supported anecdotal staff observations that a number of library users mainly came to access a computer or printer, and then left shortly thereafter. But it also showed that we also had users who spent more time in individual study or on collaborative projects.

The 2013 study was used to determine the level of use from each of the health sciences schools.

We found that, in both the spring and fall semesters, students from each of the CUIMC schools visited the library in roughly proportional numbers in comparison to each school's campus enrollment. The largest school by enrollment, the Mailman School of Public Health (MSPH), were also the users who tapped the most. The finding that MSPH users were the largest library user population was a bit of a surprise. For many years, the working assumption had been that the Vagelos College of Physicians & Surgeons (VP&S) students were the largest library user population. In addition, the duration data indicated that the space had to support both quick, in-and-out uses such as printing, as well as extended study sessions.

At the time of the 2013 study, the library had started planning a major renovation of its main reading room, but it had no source of funding for the improvements. The demonstration that students from all of the CUIMC schools used the library space allowed the library to tap into funding earmarked to benefit students of all of the constituent schools. Recognition that MSPH students were our largest community, along with knowledge that the MSPH curriculum focused heavily on small group cooperation pointed toward the need for spaces accommodating such groups. Finally, duration data led us to design spaces suitable for both quick, in-and-out type visits, and for long study sessions.

The 2017 study results were used to examine the extent of library use (post-renovation) by students from each of the schools, as well as to compare with the 2013 results to assess if our patron base had changed. Comparing the same periods for both survey periods, one of the most significant findings was that the VP&S students, one of our largest groups of users, had decreased in the number of taps by 11 percentage points for the spring semester and 13 percentage points for the fall. This decrease was expected, as VP&S had completed construction of a new medical education building in the interim, but it was a welcome confirmation of

the effect of this change and a reassurance that the medical students had not completely abandoned the library, as was feared.

### Limitations

The primary limitation of the Tap In/Tap Out tool is that the data is a self-selected sample. The study only captures a brief period of time and participation is voluntary. Staff encouraged users to participate, but it was observed that not all users swiped their IDs. As shown in the comparison of taps with gate count, participation was low. To overcome this, more active staff involvement in soliciting users to tap their IDs could help to increase participation rates.

A second limitation is related to the concept of a “visit” to the library. Users of the Health Sciences Library space will interrupt their study time to access facilities outside of the library, such as restrooms and the café. If users return immediately after leaving, is this one visit or two? The correct answer to this question likely depends upon the intended case use for the collected data. However, it is possible to process the data and screen for an “OUT” tap followed closely by an “IN” tap so as to remove these brief exits and re-entrances.

A third limitation is the requirements of the Raspberry Pi computer. As a data collection device, the RPi performed admirably for such an inexpensive device. As noted above, the lack of built-in Wi-Fi capability in the first generation RPi dictated some logistics of design and placement, which was resolved when we obtained a newer, Wi-Fi capable, version of the RPi. The need for electricity continues to constrain placement. In addition, as it is a general purpose computer, configuration requires staff with knowledge of the Linux operating system and general programming that some libraries may not possess. However, the Raspberry Pi online community includes a wealth of helpful tutorials to configure and operate the computer. Academic institutions

with a computer science program could also potentially borrow the expertise of students.

### Conclusion

*The Tap In/Tap Out tool met the design needs of the library*

Our goal in creating the Tap In/Tap Out tool was to create a low-cost method of collecting more details about the people using the library space. The Tap In/Tap Out tool met our design needs because the Raspberry Pi computer system and auxiliary items were low cost (under \$200) and allowed us to gather more demographic information on our users, such as their status, school affiliation, and department. The tool was also voluntary and required little interaction from library staff.

*The Tap In/Tap Out tool allowed us to gather useful demographic data to inform decision making*

The data we collected with the Tap In/Tap Out tool helped to flesh out the quantitative information we were collecting about library space use during gate counts and to back-up or refute staff observations about space use. The tool was a way to compensate for a lack of card-swipe entry gates and the demographic detail those gates can provide. The Tap In/Tap Out tool allowed us to gather similar demographic information about the users visiting the space, such as their university affiliation, status, school, department, and/or program. The 2013 and 2017 surveys were used to assess library space visits by users from each of the Medical Center schools, make informed justifications for library funding and renovation, and to help show that the library is a vital element to the campus community.

*The Tap In/Tap Out tool data was persuasive to university administration*

The primary use of the Tap In/Tap Out data was to quantitatively demonstrate to university administration the continuing value of library space to the Medical Center community. The 2013 survey results helped to demonstrate that students from all of the CUIMC schools used the

library space. This allowed the library to tap into funding earmarked to benefit students of all of the constituent schools. The 2017 survey findings helped to demonstrate to university administration that there was continued use by members from each CUIMC school.

*The Tap In/Tap Out tool is a possible option for other institutions looking to gather more detailed user information*

Institutions that want to know more than the number of people walking through their doors, but who do not have the technological or financial means to implement swipe-card entry gates, could use the Tap In/Tap Out tool as a low-cost solution for gathering user information. As implemented, there are some limitations due to the voluntary nature of participation, but more active involvement by library staff in encouraging participation could overcome this. Setting-up the tool is possible at most institutions, requiring only minimal technical knowledge of the Linux operating system and a suitable programming language.

## References

American Library Association. (2002). *Privacy: An interpretation of the Library Bill of Rights*. Retrieved from <http://www.ala.org/advocacy/intfreedom/librarybill/interpretations/privacy>

Association of Research Libraries. (1976). User statistics and studies. *SPEC Flyer*, 25, 1-2. Retrieved from <https://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/000689858>

Cintron, J., Courtier, D., & DeLooper, J. (2017). Testing three types of Raspberry Pi counters. *Code4Lib Journal*, 38. Retrieved from <https://journal.code4lib.org/articles/12947>

Cohen, L., Manion, L., & Morrison, K. (2007). *Research methods in education*. (6th ed.). Routledge.

Columbia University. (2012). *Institutional Review Board standard operating procedures*. Retrieved from [https://research.columbia.edu/sites/default/files/content/HRPO/IRB\\_SOPSuperseded\\_v4.2\\_Nov2.12.pdf](https://research.columbia.edu/sites/default/files/content/HRPO/IRB_SOPSuperseded_v4.2_Nov2.12.pdf)

Coombs, K. A. (2004). Walking a tightrope: Academic libraries and privacy. *The Journal of Academic Librarianship*, 30(6), 493-498. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.acalib.2004.08.003>

Dotson, D. S., & Garris, J. B. (2008). Counting more than the gate: Developing building use statistics to create better facilities for today's academic library users. *Library Philosophy & Practice*, 1-13. Retrieved from <https://digitalcommons.unl.edu/libphilprac/208>

Jones, J. L. (2011). Using library swipe-card data to inform decision making. *Georgia Library Quarterly*, 48(2), 11-13. Retrieved from [https://scholarworks.gsu.edu/univ\\_lib\\_facpres/21](https://scholarworks.gsu.edu/univ_lib_facpres/21)

Lux, V., Snyder, R. J., & Boff, C. (2016). Why users come to the library: A case study of library and non-library units. *The Journal of Academic Librarianship*, 42(2), 109-117. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.acalib.2016.01.004>

Nackerud, S., Fransen, J., Peterson, K., & Mastel, K. (2013). Analyzing demographics: Assessing library use across the

institution. *Portal*, 13(2), 131-145.  
<https://doi.org/10.1353/pla.2013.0017>

Sanders, M., & Hodges, C. (2014). An overnight success?: Usage patterns and demographics of academic library patrons during the overnight period from 11 p.m.-8 a.m. *Journal of Access Services*, 11(4), 309-320.  
<https://doi.org/10.1080/15367967.2014.945121>

Scarletto, E. A., Burhanna, K. J., & Richardson, E. (2013). Wide awake at 4 AM: A study of late night user behavior, perceptions and performance at an academic library. *The Journal of Academic Librarianship*, 39(5), 371-377.  
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.acalib.2013.02.006>

Stewart, S. (2011). Building measurements: Assessing success of the library's changing physical space. *The Journal of Academic Librarianship*, 37(6), 539-541.  
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.acalib.2011.09.002>

## **Appendix A**

### **Tap In/Tap Out Poster Text**

Why Tap?

Q: Why is the library collecting data?

A: The library is collecting data to know more about space use patterns.

Q: How is the library collecting data?

A: Library users should tap their ID cards when they enter and exit the library.

Q: What data is the library collecting?

A: The library is collecting ID card number, time of tap, and direction (“in” or “out”). CUIT will look up card numbers and provide demographic information such as school and department. The library will not have access to personally identifiable information.

Q: How does this information help the library?

A: The library will be better able to understand who is using the library, when, and for how long. This understanding will inform space planning and future surveys.

For more information, please contact the Library at [hs-library@columbia.edu](mailto:hs-library@columbia.edu)

**Appendix B**  
**The 2013 Tap In/Tap Out study bill of materials**

| <b>Product</b>                   | <b>Unit price (\$)</b> | <b>Quantity</b> | <b>Total (\$)</b> |
|----------------------------------|------------------------|-----------------|-------------------|
| Raspberry Pi model B             | 35.00                  | 2               | 70.00             |
| RPi case                         | 7.35                   | 2               | 14.70             |
| RPi power supply                 | 7.00                   | 2               | 14.00             |
| 8GB SD flash drive               | 10.75                  | 2               | 21.50             |
| Printed foam core mounting board | 50.00                  | 1               | 50.00             |
| <b>TOTAL</b>                     |                        |                 | <b>170.20</b>     |

## Appendix C

### Sample of Data Collected

#### Sample of Raw Data

| Card Number | Date/Time           | Direction |
|-------------|---------------------|-----------|
| XXXXXX365   | 2013-04-22T08:30:30 | IN        |
| XXXXXX985   | 2013-04-22T08:33:10 | IN        |
| XXXXXX121   | 2013-04-22T08:36:06 | IN        |

#### Sample of Merged Data

| Card Number | Date/Time IN        | Time IN  | Date/Time OUT       | Time OUT | Duration of visit (minutes) | Duration of visit HH:MM:SS |
|-------------|---------------------|----------|---------------------|----------|-----------------------------|----------------------------|
| XXXXXX379   | 2013-04-25T08:37:16 | 8:37:16  | 2013-04-25T08:44:12 | 8:44:12  | 6.93                        | 0:06:56                    |
| XXXXXX839   | 2013-04-25T09:06:00 | 9:06:00  | 2013-04-25T09:34:37 | 9:34:37  | 28.62                       | 0:28:37                    |
| XXXXXX324   | UNKNOWN             | UNKNOWN  | 2013-04-25T09:39:40 | 9:39:40  | UNKNOWN                     | UNKNOWN                    |
| XXXXXX991   | 2013-04-25T21:04:48 | 21:04:48 | UNKNOWN             | UNKNOWN  | UNKNOWN                     | UNKNOWN                    |

## Sample of Demographic Data

| SECURITY ROLE          | ACAD LEVEL | SCHOOL CODE | SCHOOL NAME                                   | DIV CODE | DIV NAME     | ACAD DEPT CODE | ACAD DEPT NAME           | PROG CODE | PROGRAM NAME                      |
|------------------------|------------|-------------|---|----------|--------------|----------------|--------------------------|-----------|-----------------------------------|
| CUIMC FT Support Staff | P          | SPUB        | THE JOSEPH L. MAILMAN SCHOOL OF PUBLIC HEALTH | PH       | PUB HEALTH   | HPM            | HEALTH POLICY MANAGEMENT | PMHPM     | HEALTH POLICY AND MANAGEMENT      |
| CUIMC FT Student       | U          | SNUR        | SCHOOL OF NURSING                             | RN       | NURSING-UGRD | NURS           | SCHOOL OF NURSING        | RNETP     | COMBINED BS/MS PROGRAM IN NURSING |
| CUIMC FT Student       | P          | COPS        | COLLEGE OF PHYSICIANS AND SURGEONS            | PT       | PHYSCL THRPY | PHYT           | PHYSICAL THERAPY         | PTDPT     | PHYSICAL THERAPY                  |
| CUIMC FT Student       | G          | SNUR        | SCHOOL OF NURSING                             | NP       | NURSING-GRAD | NURS           | SCHOOL OF NURSING        | NPWOMH    | WOMEN'S HEALTH                    |



**Appendix D**  
**Perl Script**

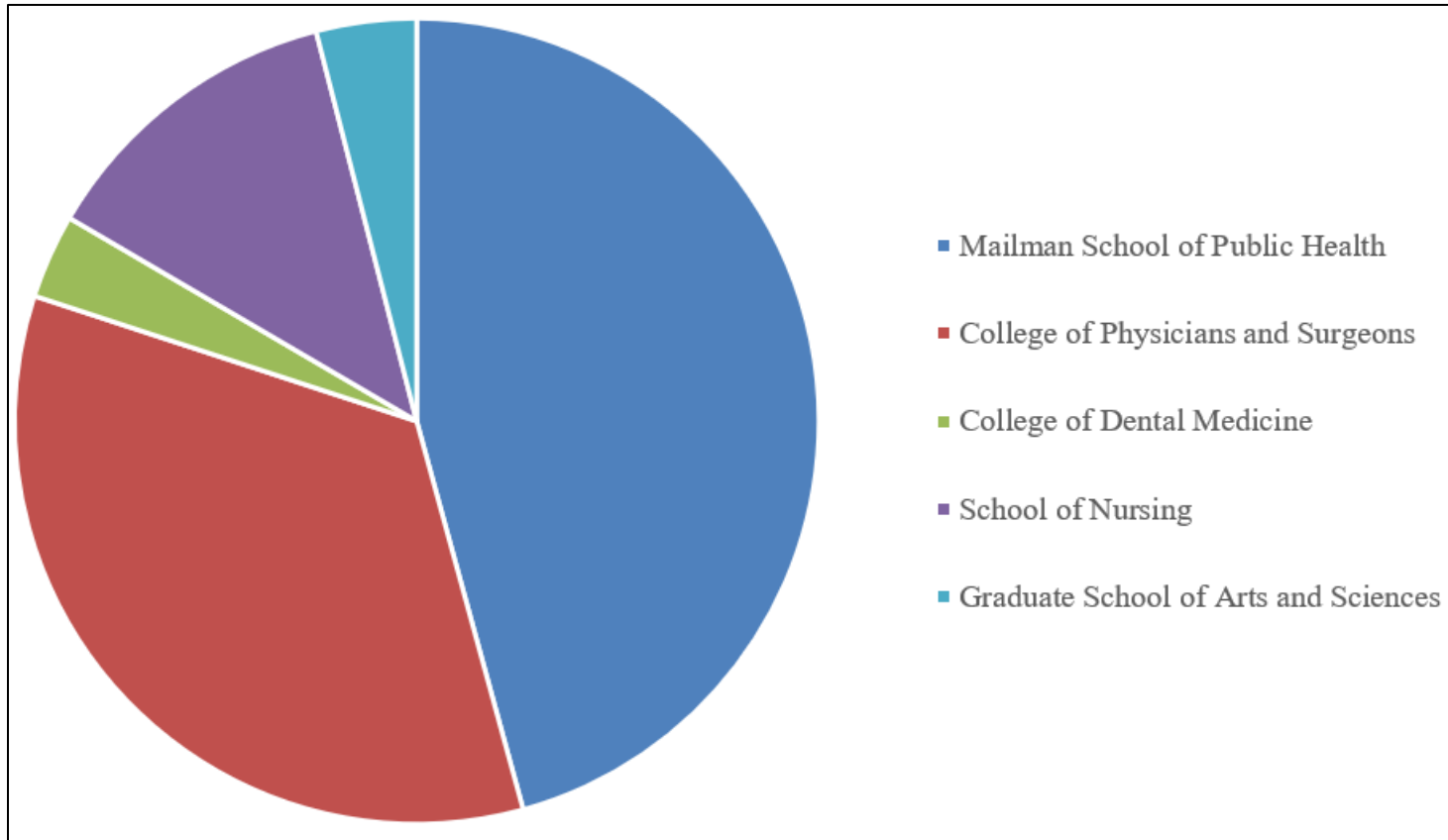
- 1) Combine the IN and OUT files for each date.
- 2) Sort the combined files for a single date in ascending order by timestamp.
- 3) For each IN record, save the card number and the time.
- 4) For each OUT record, check previous INs to see if there's a corresponding entry.
  - a. If yes, calculate duration of stay and output card number, entry and exit times, and duration, write the result to file, and clear the saved IN entry.
  - b. If no, set IN time and duration to UNKNOWN and write the result to file.
- 5) At the end of processing, write out any unmatched IN entries, setting OUT data and duration to UNKNOWN.

## Appendix E

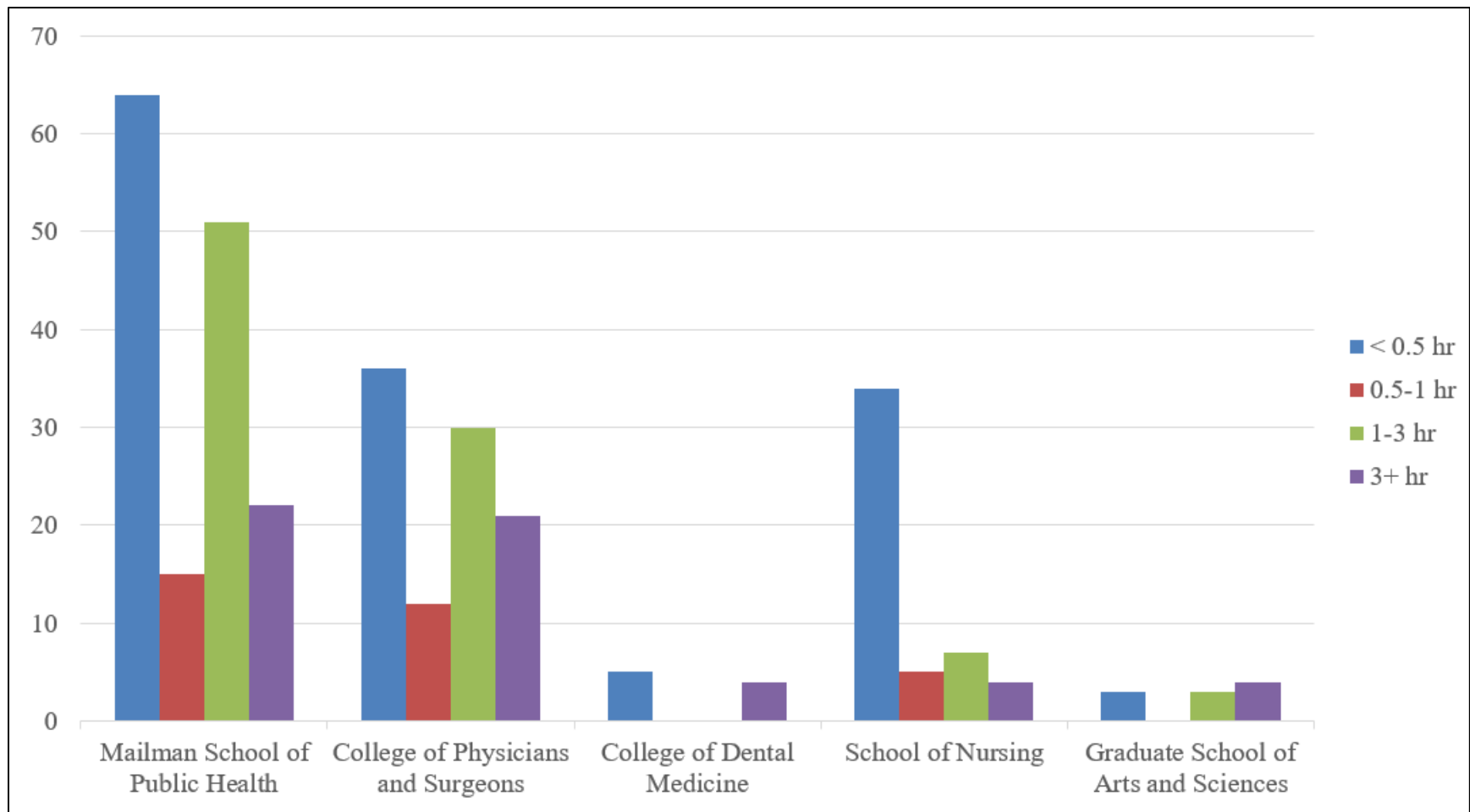
### Count by Department

|   | SUN  | MON  | TUE  | WED  | THU  | FRI  | SAT  | Total |
|---|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|-------|
| COLLEGE OF DENTAL MEDICINE                                |      |      | 7    | 4    | 6    | 2    | 2    | 21    |
| COLLEGE OF PHYSICIANS AND SURGEONS                        | 17   | 27   | 32   | 30   | 32   | 18   | 17   | 173   |
| HUMAN NUTRITION   |      | 5    | 1    | 2    | 2    | 6    |      | 16    |
| MEDICINE  | 10   | 14   | 15   | 14   | 17   | 11   | 11   | 92    |
| OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY                                      | 1    |      | 1    | 2    | 1    |      |      | 5     |
| PHYSICAL THERAPY  | 6    | 8    | 15   | 12   | 12   | 1    | 6    | 60    |
| COLUMBIA COLLEGE  |      | 1    |      |      |      |      |      | 1     |
| GRADUATE SCHOOL OF ARTS AND SCIENCES                      | 1    | 1    | 3    | 3    | 2    | 4    | 2    | 16    |
| SCHOOL OF CONTINUING EDUCATION                            |      |      | 1    | 1    |      | 1    |      | 3     |
| SCHOOL OF GENERAL STUDIES                                 |      | 2    |      |      |      |      |      | 2     |
| SCHOOL OF NURSING   | 4    | 9    | 21   | 11   | 6    | 3    | 4    | 58    |
| THE FU FOUNDATION SCHOOL OF ENGINEERING & APPLIED SCIENCE |      |      |      |      | 1    |      |      | 1     |
| THE JOSEPH L. MAILMAN SCHOOL OF PUBLIC HEALTH             | 15   | 46   | 41   | 47   | 36   | 23   | 11   | 219   |
| BIostatistics DEPT  | 2    |      | 2    |      | 3    |      |      | 7     |
| ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH SCIENCES                             | 1    | 3    | 1    | 1    | 1    |      | 1    | 8     |
| EPIDEMIOLOGY  | 7    | 23   | 15   | 23   | 16   | 12   | 7    | 103   |
| HEALTH POLICY MANAGEMENT                                  | 2    | 10   | 6    | 10   | 5    | 1    | 2    | 36    |
| POPULATION AND FAMILY HEALTH                              | 1    | 3    | 7    | 4    |      | 7    |      | 22    |
| PUBLIC HEALTH   |      |      | 3    |      | 4    |      |      | 7     |
| SOCIOMEDICAL SCIENCES                                     | 2    | 7    | 7    | 9    | 7    | 3    | 1    | 36    |
| (blank)   | 2    | 8    | 12   | 11   | 15   | 8    | 2    | 58    |
| Grand Total   | 39   | 94   | 117  | 107  | 98   | 59   | 38   | 552   |
| Gate Count  | 628  | 2425 | 2241 | 2344 | 1913 | 1428 | 572  | 11551 |
| Response Rate   | 6.2% | 3.9% | 5.2% | 4.6% | 5.1% | 4.1% | 6.6% | 4.8%  |

Appendix F  
Usage Charts



Usage Chart 1  
Library Visitors by School -- Spring 2013 (based on a 2-week sample)



Usage Chart 2  
Duration of Visit by School -- Spring 2013 (based on a 2-week sample)