

# Library usage soared by 12 per cent last year

Halton Hills Public Library saw a dramatic increase in its usage last year compared to 2004.

Library director Jane Diamanti said after tallying circulation statistics for 2005, library staff were thrilled to

discover usage had gone up by 12.6 per cent. The town's population last year jumped by 4.4 per cent

"We have not had that kind of double digit increase in at least 15 years," said Diamanti.

Usage had been on the increase over the past five

years, but by nowhere near as much as it was in 2005.

In 2001, usage was up 3.7 per cent, in 2002 it increased by 2.4 per cent, in 2003 it was up .7 per cent and in 2004 it jumped 8 per cent.

Diamanti said last year all categories at the library saw an increase in usage. The DVD section saw the biggest increase at 125 per cent, CDs were next with 63 per cent, and books on tapes at 24 per cent. Print material usage increased by 7 per cent.

Diamanti credits the increase to a variety of steps library staff took over the past couple of years.

She said in 2003 the library did a lot of weeding of older material in poor condition that wasn't being used, then followed that up with collection development of more current and relevant material. For example, the library has bolstered its consumer health, technology and science, and travel collections.

"We tend to buy a lot of classics on DVDs, you wouldn't likely find at video stores," said Diamanti.

She said the library has also changed the way that patrons access the CD and DVD collections. They are now accessible directly to the public, in the past staff had to retrieve them for the patrons.

Diamanti said the library has also been taking a retail-style approach to displaying some of its books, putting them with the covers facing out on the ends of shelves.

She said library staff has also been doing all they can to raise the library's profile in the community.

"We're trying to get out in the community more," said Diamanti.

Use of the library's catalogue has also skyrocketed, with people discovering how to review items and place holds on line at [www.library.hhpl.on.ca](http://www.library.hhpl.on.ca).

There has also been an increase in the library's electronic resources, such as on-line magazine databases, local history databases and the list of favourite fiction organized by genre.

Diamanti said attendance at the library's children's programs was also up by 5 per cent last year. The library's Internet stations were also well used, with 1,600 more sessions over the previous year.

She said the library is currently attempting to build its collection to meet the public standard of two items per capita (for every person in the community), and are currently slightly below that at 1.9 items.

The challenge the library faces, however, is funding and space.

—By Lisa Tallyn, staff writer

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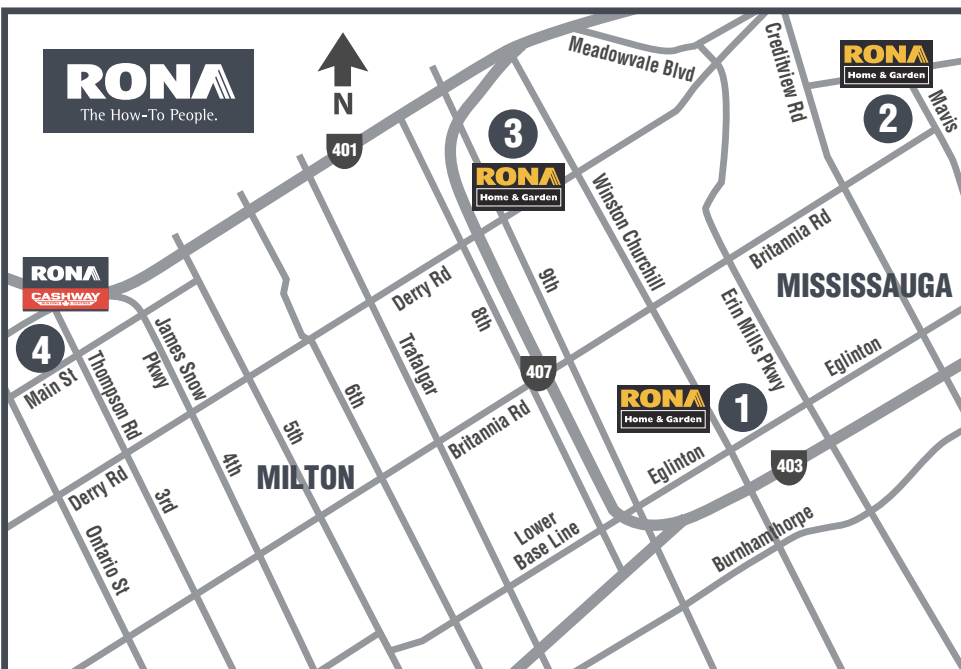
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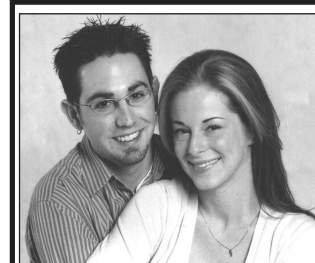


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Christine Otto of Halton Hills Public Library (right) checks out books for Lisa Weisbrot and her three-year-old son Jason Tuesday. Library usage soared by nearly 13 per cent last year. Photo by Ted Brown



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