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Mobile Based Library Services

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Abstract

The uses of internet through mobile phones and smartphones increasing rapidly day by day. So libraries have to make an effort to provide their services through mobile phones also it will help libraries in the direction of building a good relationship and providing better services to their existing remote users. This paper deals with the use and application of mobile technology in the libraries, their benefits, creation of websites, and mobile application and library services through mobile technology.

Keywords: Mobile Technology, Mobile Application, SMS Notification on Services, Mobile Document Supply, E-Resources

Why Mobile Libraries?

The underlying assumption that drives these ambitious projects is that people have always had a need for information and a desire for literacy. The importance of library services, in particular, has been proven in international comparative surveys that rank the educational achievement of countries according to various indicators such as test scores, teacher qualifications completion rates, etc. According to UNESCO, the factors that distinguished high-performing countries on these tests were large school libraries, large classroom libraries, regular book borrowing, frequent silent reading in class, frequent story reading aloud by the teachers and more hours spent teaching the language. To debate the worth of information or the need for knowledge is less useful, however, than to bring awareness to an old but underused and understudied innovation, and that is the purpose of this article. Additionally, new technologies are expanding the potential for mobile libraries to offer more than just books and periodicals, but also the Internet and computers. With the new technology comes new information for new needs, such as training or retraining for teachers and health care workers.

Types of Mobile Library Services

As well as investigating demand for mobile library services at Shipley College, one of the central research aims of this project is to explore what type of mobile services should be considered. This section will examine the types of services available and will consider issues such as implementation and the pros and cons of each service.

Table 1: Summaries These Main Points

	What is it	*Pros*	*Cons*	*Implementation*
SMS Reference	Delivery of an enquiry service via SMS	Suitable for responding to quick information requests; can be sent and received with a basic phone	Popularly of SMS may be falling	Using a standard mobile phone or a web-based SMS portal.
Chat Reference	A synchronous reference service using instant messaging	Provides instant support to customers whatever their location; allows a more informal means of communication between libraries and their users.	Increased workload for staff members to run a virtual reference service alongside a physical reference service; replies expected immediately.	Numerous software options available, including free instant messaging platforms such as Google Chat.
QR Codes	A two-dimensional barcode that can be read using a Smartphone camera	Links the physical with the virtual world; saves time-no need to type out URLs	Onus is on user to download a QR code reader; lack of awareness of what QR codes are	Can be created for free using a QR code generator.

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Mobile Websites	A website optimised for viewing on mobile devices	Enables a better viewing experience of websites accessed on a small screen	Contains more limited information than a standard website; usually less stylish than a mobile app	Expertise needed, although a basic mobile website can be cheap and relatively easy to create using a mobile style sheet.
Mobile Apps	A software application designed to run on mobile devices	Tend to have more functionality than mobile websites, and look more attractive	Use is limited to particular devices; users have to choose to download them	Can be expensive to create due to level of expertise needed; may have to be outsources

Mobile Library Services

In view of the capabilities and developments in mobile technologies and their advantages enumerated above, libraries can design and provide the following specific services on mobile devices, compliance with the information security policies and standards of the parent organization.

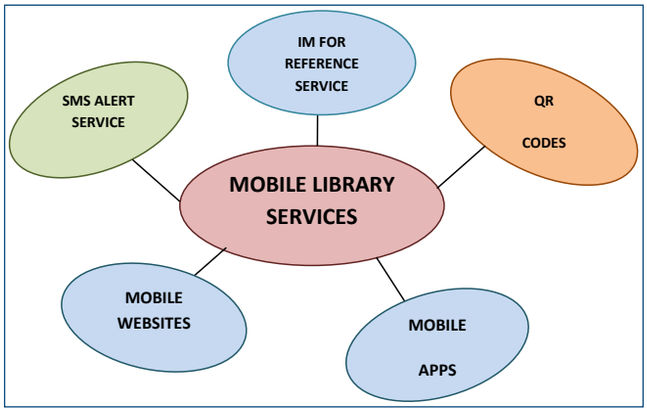

Fig. 1: Mobile Library Services Briefly Discuss

SMS/Texting (Alert Service)

Through the Text messaging library professionals should alert the users for new book notice, informing availability of reserved documents for collections, appraising about which/when books are overdue, library circulars-journals subscribed, change in timing, information about important events, etc. Such alert notifications can be generated automatically using integrated library management system software.

Following are possible ways to send SMS from libraries:

- Few Library automation software provides the option to send SMS alerts for reserved items, due items to Users. For example, Libsys 0.7 version allows libraries to send SMS and emails to library users.
- Plug-ins integrated with library email system to enable email to SMS messaging.
- To send SMS to collect the requested books.
- Reminding the user if, the book is due in his/her account; informing the user about the exact fine.
- Acknowledging the user about the renewal of a book.
- OPAC service.
- Users may request the opening and closing hours of the library.

Instant Messaging for Reference Services

Mobile devices can use for instant answers like definitions, meanings and other information from digital libraries and web. While the institution has its own IM network, library can also use web-based free instant messaging services from Google, American online, and Way2sms etc.

QR Codes

QR codes are two-dimensional matrix barcodes that can be scanned with a camera phone and link to external content, such as a website, email or a phone number (Walsh, 2012, p. 66). QR codes do not require much technical expertise to create and can be generated online for free (Lamb & Johnson, 2013). QR codes create a link to the virtual world. They can connect print and electronic journals (Wash, 2011) and create a tie between physical and virtual book collection (Ford, 2013). Semenza, Coury and Gray (2012) described a project where dummy books were created and labeled with QR codes, which then linked to e-book collection. The authors reported a significant increase in the use of e-books compared to the same period in the previous year (Semenza et al., 2012, p. 49). A similar project was undertaken at the University of Exeter's Forum Library. However, feedback from the

students indicated that mobile phone screens were too small for reading an e-book, although it was suggested that it would be considered in the future with a large screen mobile device (Green, 2013, p. 37). However, smartphones are improving all the time, and the Samsung Galaxy Mega, for example, has a 6.3 inch screen, blurring the lines between smartphones and tablet computers (BBC News, 2013).

Mobile Websites

Increasingly, mobile technology is being used to browse the internet, and Power states that in the near future, mobile devices will surpass desktop PCs as the most common means of accessing the internet (2012, p. 1). Ofcom discovered that "Younger users are more likely to use a mobile phone than a computer for almost all the digital communication methods asked about" (Ofcom, 2013, p. 7). According to the Open University, mobile websites benefit the growing number of people whose only access to the internet is via their mobiles and therefore increases an organization's chances of retaining a more mobile-orientated clientele. A number of universities have created websites and apps which are optimized for mobile viewing. As well as creating mobile accessible resources in-house, it will be important to consider the mobile-friendliness of external resources when making purchasing decisions.

Mobile Apps

An alternative means of offering mobile-optimized content is the creation of a mobile app. Like mobile websites, the features of an app should be determined by user Feedback. The University of Stirling's Information Services department discovered, following a student satisfaction survey, that email was one of the most requested features of a university app (Wilson, 2013, p. 189). Unlike mobile websites, which are designed to work across different devices, apps are created for a specific platform only, and the focus can be on making the content as slick as possible.

Benefits of Mobile Library

Mobile Library benefits a lot of people, young or old. For those who cannot access larger libraries in the city, the mobile library brings to them the benefits of library services. We can borrow books, read books and enhance our reading capabilities. For students, housewives or seniors, housewives, or seniors who love books, or for those who just want to have a glance at old and new books, they get the chance to do so with mobile libraries.

User-Friendly Interface

Familiarity with their own devices and technology helps the users in accessing information quickly and does not require orientation and training. Mobile users are using the facilities on mobile phones like SMS, instant messaging, web browsing e-mail effortlessly to communicate; Most of the features are pre-installed on mobile devices or option for data plan packages.

Customized Service

Customised service helps users to interact with library staff to seek specific information or reference away from the library.

Ability Easy to Reach Information

Information easy to reach from anywhere at anything will be of great help for users who cannot visit the library in person and provides a constant link to required information.

Saving Time

Users need not record information about resources while browsing and searching library resources or wait at library transaction counter to renew/reserve books and hence the time of the user is saved.

User Involvement

Libraries can reach OPAC by allowing users to incorporate user-created content like notes or images uploaded by users.

Location Awareness

Mobile communication enables libraries to offer location-based services/content through GPS capabilities. Libraries

can guide the users to the location of specific document or service through maps and navigational tools.

Prerequisites for Implementing Mobile-Based Library Services

The Mobile technology is unlikely to be able to supply the necessary service on its own, but needs to be integrated with digital technology. The following prerequisites were identified:

- Electronic information service delivery.
- Library need to acquire the required hardware and software after market.
- Library must provide physical and virtual environment for using mobile devices and accessories.
- It is a prerequisite to optimize library OPAC, website, and databases for mobile devices and introduce new services wherever possible.

Creating Mobile Web Sites, OPACs and Applications

Android Developers: Resources for creating Android applications. Includes developer's guide tutorials, and videos.

- *Air Pac (Innovative Interfaces):* Air Pac offers a mobile version of the Innovative Interfaces (III) library catalogue. Includes features such as cover images, integrated library locations with Google Maps software, request and renew items, and more.
- *Boopsie:* Specializing in public and academic libraries and universities, Boopsie can deliver mobile applications that are compatible with all web-enabled phones.
- Creating an iPhone Optimized Website using JQTouch. Freelance Web Designer and Developer Mathew Leak outlines one way to create an iPhone friendly version of a website.

Conclusion

Mobile Technology has become a very important part of our lives nowadays. Mobile phones were developed primarily for communication purpose. Mobile phones have gained importance in both the developed and developing countries. The mobile phone is a device that enables users to communicate, connect, transact and innovate. Mobile devices and mobile technologies have the potential to facilitate the teaching and learning process in great way. Mobile applications can support learning by making library resources more omnipresent, by bringing new users to the library through increased accessibility to the library resources, and by creating a new way to enhance connections between patrons and libraries. This increased use of mobile phones provides an untapped resource for delivering library resources to patrons. The mobile web is the next step for libraries in providing universal access to resource and information.

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