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MOBILE APPLICATION SERVICES IN LIBRARIES

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ABSTRACT

Mobile technology is seeing an increasingly wide range of uses in our daily lives. Mobile devices make our lives more convenient by providing access to useful information such as weather forecasts, train schedules, bank accounts, and other services. They keep us connected with family, friends, and coworkers through e-mail, text messaging, and access to social networking applications. And they expand capabilities for teaching and learning, providing access to rich multimedia resources and student-centered mobile applications. Libraries have to make an effort to provide their services though mobile phones. It will help libraries in the providing better services to their existing remote users. In this paper discusses about the advantages of mobile technology in libraries, Prerequisites for Implementing Mobile Based Library Services mobile applications and library services through mobile technology.

***Keywords**: Mobile Technology, Mobile Applications, Mobile Notification Services.*

1. INTRODUCTION

ICT has significant impact in library and information services. The ICT has forced the libraries to rethink and remodel their sources and services with the recent trends of technologies along with the changing needs of their users. Now a day's Libraries digitalized their collection to provide multiple and wide range of access through web. The mobile technology has made communication and information sharing very effortlessly and timely. The dependency on computers are decreasing and interest of people shifting towards mobile technology because they are more handy, easily data handling, speed of access multi use, etc. Libraries are social institutions, connecting people with people and people with information. They are increasingly no longer just

physical places. As most library users owning a mobile phone, and increasing numbers of these being smart phones, it is time for libraries to take advantage of mobile technology.

2. MOBILE TECHNOLOGY VERSUS LIBRARIES

Mobile Technology has now come up with "Libraries in Hand" trend. Our librarians are in move to determine how these devices are affecting information access and ensure that they are communicating with patrons and providing web content in the most appropriate and effective ways. Our Librarians must be prepared to take this challenge and put his efforts to increase the market and demand for mobile access to personalized facts and information anytime, anywhere on one's own handheld device. Since Mobile handled devices truly are personal devices, search histories and physical locations can be harnessed to produce more accurate, individualized information and services. Users on the go don't want to wait for list of web results, they want answers to their question at once thus find mobile search different from regular web search. More and more library users are using their cell phones or other mobile devices for much more than talking and texting. Many patrons are searching and browsing the web, reading magazines and books, and generally doing things that recently used to do by computers. Libraries today are covering most of the technologies given by mobile industry like PDA's , Blackberry, iPod, Cell phones, Ultra Mobile PC's and mobilizing library contents in a portable form suitable for small screen and delivering short services in the form of contents/ information with device's multiple searching features. Librarians will need to become proficient in using these devices to enable users to access them anywhere from anyplace.

3. ADVANTAGES OF MOBILE TECHNOLOGY IN LIBRARIES

3.1 Ability to Access Information: Access is the primary benefit of mobile technology. Information access from anywhere at any time will be of great help for users who cannot visit library in person and provides a constant link to required information resources.

3.2 Time Saving: 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.

3.3 Endless Possibilities: Though its capabilities are already vast, mobile technology is growing rapidly. There is ample room for improvement and innovation to help you better serve your

users. Libraries every opportunity to expand your levels of efficiency and productivity through technology

3.4 User-friendly Aid: 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 these features are pre-installed on mobile devices or option for data plan packages.

3.5 User Participation: Libraries can enrich OPAC by allowing users to incorporate user created content like notes or images uploaded by users.

3.6 Personalized Service: Personalized service helps users to interact with library staff to seek specific information or reference away from library.

3.7 Location Awareness: Mobile communication enables libraries to offer location-based services/content through global positioning system (GPS) capabilities. Libraries can guide the users to the location of specific document or service through maps and navigational tools.

3.8 Access to Print-disabled Users: Mobiles communications help providing services orally to vision-disabled and physically handicapped users.

4. PREREQUISITES FOR IMPLEMENTING MOBILE BASED LIBRARY SERVICES

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:

4.1 Digitized information base

4.2 Information products designed for an e-platform

4.3 Electronic information service delivery

4.5 Design of electronic access systems.

5. LIBRARY SERVICES THROUGH MOBILE TECHNOLOGY

Library is a service centre where librarians provide services to satisfied library users information needs. To fulfill the fourth law of library science, librarians introduced many ICT based library services in the library so that they can save the time of users. In continuation to this attempt, the following library services may be providing through mobile technology

5.1 Alert or Notification services: Library can provide alert services to their users regarding bringing new books to the notice of users for suggestion, intimation of latest arrivals, due date, renewals, outstanding fines, issue return notifications and regarding other things related to the libraries and their host institutions in the form of quick SMS and MMS. Such notifications can be generated with the help of integrated library management software.

5.2 Access to e-resources: Today e-books, e-journals are very popular and many publishers are creating e-books, e-journals, etc which are compatible with the mobile devices so that users can easily access and read them.

5.3 Browsing services: Libraries provide range of e-resources to their users, with the help of their smart phones they can easily search the library database and get their needed information. Users can easily search library OPAC to know the status of available resources.

5.4 Reference services: The library can easily provide reference services through mobile phones in the form of SMS, MMS, e-mails, etc. these tools offer mobile customers all of the benefits of virtual reference services without being tied to a website. Librarians can provide instant answers, and links to articles/references in real time.

5.5 Learning services: Users are very versatile in using their mobile phones and various mobile applications. Mobile phones are best for e-learning concept. Academic libraries can easily provide e-resources through mobile technology to promote e-learning, distance learning and many other research activities. Mobile phones make ILL/document delivery services faster and cut-down the time to request/visit different libraries and complement the geographically remote users.

5.6 Library guide: Library guide, instruction/induction and orientation programs have been quite significant in bringing the nonusers can access library guides and library tutorials from their smart phones.

5.7 Personal space: In the personal space users can make their profile, manage their online resources, categories their resources, check loaned items on their account, due dates, overdue charges, send requests, manage their friends, send and receive e-mails or notifications, etc.

5.8 Document supply: Users can get non-print materials and other multimedia contents from their smart phones.

5.9 QR codes: QR stands for Quick Response codes in the form of two dimensional bar codes which contains any alpha numeric information and mainly known as mobile tagging. Libraries can use QR codes to label books, Journals, audio/Visuals; off prints add QR codes in web OPAC and other places.

6. FUTURE OF MOBILE APPLICATION IN THE LIBRARIES

More and more changes are expected within four to five years in the field of mobile technology and its application to the libraries, the day is not far when we will use phone to read barcodes or RFIDs in the library and OPACs will develop GIS sensitivity and be able to communicate with users through their mobiles for library services. We will expect having large component of asynchronous voice messaging including threaded discussions using e-mail technologies that will help the staff in providing ready reference service leaving behind texting and SMS. Timed e-mail as well as mobile e-blogging can well enhance the usage mobiles in future. Mobile web 2.0 applications for social networking for library community should be realized that enables discussions, blogs, wikis and other features beneficial for all library growth. Privacy and copyright should be matter of concern in future due to the availability of web contents 24x7 and possibilities of its damage and loss in the computer and also mobile searches by all the individuals without any authentication or identification, as it is going to be the fastest growing application in the next five years even today It is already a major feature of Apple iphones user. The librarian has to understand fully the capabilities and potentials of the mobile technology and its use in libraries in near future by providing the quality based services matching with the needs of the user.

7. CONCLUSIONS

There is a growing influence of mobile technology in Libraries, especially as network access becomes more affordable and reliable, and mobile applications have seen mainstream acceptance in teaching, learning, and research purpose. Mobile libraries have to grow, and this requires greater collaboration between academic, industry, corporations and government. In the current scenario, mobile libraries have the potential to proliferate and we will witness a situation in which the mobile will definitely be used as a tool to spread learning process.

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