

Smart Phones and Library Services: an Evaluative study at Reva Institute of Technology and Management Library and Information Center

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Abstract:

The purpose of this paper is to determine how students at the Reva Institute of Technology and Management would like to interact with the library services using their mobile devices and to assess how best Library management can construct a library mobile application to suit the requirements of the young users of Library and Information Center at Reva Institute of Technology. With the increase of mobile technology availability and the demand for accessible mobile content, it is imperative that libraries examine how they can provide services to their patrons within this medium in order to continue to provide valuable services. Mobile technologies are constantly changing, so continuous assessment in this area is of importance.

Keywords: Engineering library, User studies, Smartphone, Mobile library services, Reva Institute of Technology and Management Library and Information Center students,

Introduction:

In the past libraries were confined to books, manuscripts, journals, and other sources of printed/recorded information collections. However, Internet, World Wide Web and ICT tools have transformed, traditional libraries into digital and virtual ones where users can access the vast and variety of information remotely, using various computer information technologies. The most recent technological innovation could be libraries providing services anytime, anywhere on mobile devices and mobile internet services. In addition, mobile technology enables flexibility for library services as well as real time access to up-to date information. When considering the idea of providing library services on mobile gadget, library managers should remember that the traditional library website provides access to different library services such as: the catalog, databases, information about forthcoming events and programs, location and help. A real time library service on mobile as applications should also consider whether library would like to include all these services in the mobile version of the library or if should address only some of them. Several studies have investigated this issue and reported that mobile site offers patrons a catalog, journal searching, information about library collections and services, videos about the library and links to mobile reference web sites. They concluded that the library web site can be adapted to the limited power, memory, small screen size, and bandwidth of mobile devices, and that size screens can present services that are easy to read, navigate, as well as offer timely information. However, the services could be chosen to reflect the special needs of the library's users. For example, if the library serves graduate & undergraduate students, the mobile site should include reference and technology services, but also basic searching features.

A Mobile library site that included location-based information, search the catalog function, text and e-mail features and the ability to view the staff directory. Examining the status of services on mobile devices to date reveals that few libraries appear to have considered the great impact and implications mobile devices are having on the user community. Also consumption and utilization of digital information resources has increased considerably. However studies have indicated that students were most interested in library services on mobile devices only when there is a need or an immediate benefit to them.

Methodology:

Design/methodology/approach - A survey was designed to gather user requirement/feedback from the Reva Institute of Technology and Management Library and Information Center student community on their use of mobile devices and which are the library resources and services they prefer to get on their mobile devices. This survey also attempts to better understand how engineering libraries

can change their mode of providing effective services on mobile phones. A questionnaire was administered to both post graduate and under graduate students of Reva Institute of Technology and Management Library and Information Center.

Data analysis and Interpretation:

The Reva Institute of Technology and Management Library and Information Center conducted a survey of student community to find out requirement of students to get library services on their mobile. This survey was open to all students, which included Post Graduate students and Under Graduate Students. Its purpose was to discover how students were currently using their mobile devices and how they might like to use their hand held gadget to access library's resources and services. A total of 200 participated in the survey which consisted of six questions.

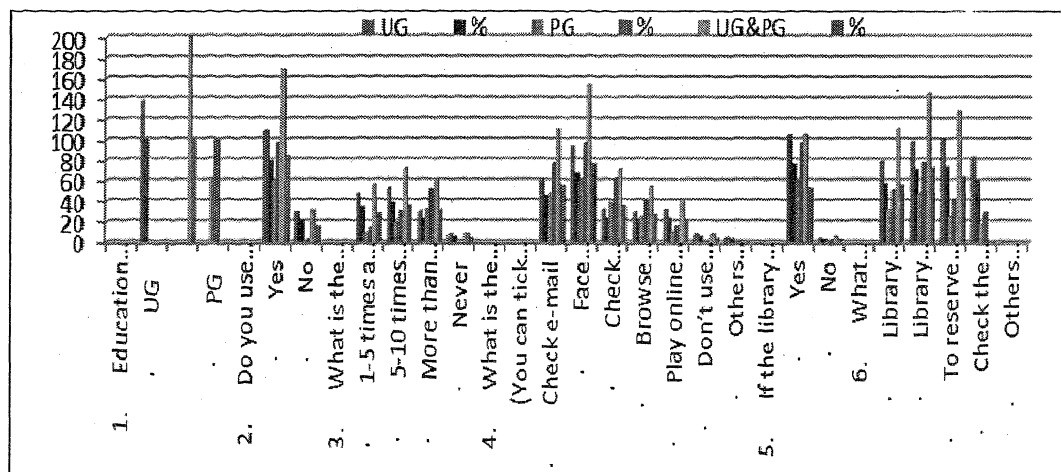
The survey found that 100% of students that responded to the survey had a Smartphone and 43% of them used their mobile phone to access the web. The survey indicated that the library catalogue was the most popular resource chosen to become mobile enabled.

Questionnaire is given in Annexure 1.

Data collected has been tabulated as follows:

| | UG | % | PG | % | UG&PG | % |
|---|-----|------|----|------|-------|------|
| 1. Education Details | | | | | | |
| • UG | 138 | 100 | | | | |
| | | | | | 200 | 100 |
| • PG | | | 62 | 100 | | |
| 2. Do you use Smart Phone? | | | | | | |
| • Yes | 109 | 78.9 | 60 | 96.7 | 169 | 84.5 |
| • No | 29 | 21 | 2 | 3.2 | 31 | 15.5 |
| 3. What is the frequency of using Internet in your smart phone? | | | | | | |
| • 1-5 times a week | 47 | 34 | 9 | 14.5 | 56 | 28 |
| • 10 times a week | 53 | 38.4 | 19 | 30.6 | 72 | 36 |
| • More than 10 times a week | 30 | 21.7 | 32 | 51.6 | 62 | 31 |
| • Never | 8 | 5.7 | 2 | | 10 | 5 |
| 4. What is the purpose for which you access internet on your Mobile? (You can tick more than one option) | | | | | | |
| • Check e-mail | 62 | 44.9 | 48 | 77.4 | 110 | 55 |
| • Face book/twitter access | 93 | 67.3 | 60 | 96.7 | 153 | 76.5 |
| • Check information about sports, current news, Quick facts etc., | 32 | 23.1 | 39 | 62.9 | 71 | 35.5 |

| | | | | | | |
|---|-----|------|----|------|-----|------|
| • Browse internet for Educational Purpose etc. | 29 | 21 | 25 | 40.3 | 54 | 27 |
| • Play online Game | 32 | 23.1 | 10 | 16.1 | 42 | 21 |
| • Don't use the internet | 8 | 5.7 | 0 | 0 | 8 | 4 |
| • Others please specify..... | 5 | 3.6 | 0 | 0 | 5 | 2.5 |
| 5. If the library services offered in mobile option would you prefer | | | | | | |
| • Yes | 105 | 76 | 60 | 96.7 | 165 | 82.5 |
| • No | 4 | 2.8 | 2 | 3.2 | 6 | 3 |
| 6. What Library services would you like to be able to access on your Mobile phone? | | | | | | |
| • Library transaction details | 79 | 57.2 | 32 | 51.6 | 111 | 55.5 |
| • Library Materials Search | 98 | 71 | 48 | 77.4 | 146 | 73 |
| • To reserve the library books | 102 | 73.9 | 26 | 41.9 | 128 | 64 |
| • Check the e-resources (e-book, e-journals, e-question paper etc.,) | 83 | 60.1 | 18 | 29 | 101 | 50.5 |
| • Others please specify..... | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |



Out of 200 respondents- to the survey 138 were UG's and 62 are PG students. The results of the survey showed that a large portion of the students (84.5%) use smartphone. An average of UG 109 (78.9%) and PG 60 (96.7%) use the smartphones in their daily life. The frequency of using internet in the smartphone 0-5 times a week is the option for UG 47 (34.05%) and PG 09 (14.5%) students. 5-10 times a week is indicated by UG 53 (38.4%) and PG 19 (30.64%), more than 10 time a week UG 30 (21.7%) and PG 32 (51.6%) making it the largest group. However, there are few students who have never accessed internet through their mobile and their number is UG 08 (5.7%) and PG 2 (3.2%).

There could be various purposes for accessing internet on the Mobile. It could be to check e-mail and there are UG 62 (44.9%) and PG 48 (77.4%) respondents using for this purpose. Options like Face book/twitter access UG 93 (67.3%) and PG 60 (96.7%), Check information about sports, current news, Quick facts etc., is the purpose for UG 32 (23.1%) and PG 39 (62.9%). Browse internet for Educational Purpose etc. is answered by UG 29 (21%) and PG 25 (40.3%). There are few who play online Game and there number is UG 32 (23.1%) and PG 10 (16%). However, there are few students who have said that they don't use the internet. There number amounts to UG 8 (5.7 percent) and PG 10 (16%).

When the respondents were asked, if they would like to have library services on their mobile gadget, an average of UG 105 (76%) and PG 60 (96.7%) students wished to use the library services. However, there were UG 4 (2.8%) and PG 2 (3%) who are not ready to use if library provides services through mobile device.

Next question was to know, what was their exact requirement in terms of Library services on smartphones. UG 79 (57%) and PG 32 (51.6%) students are ready to use the Library transaction details service if provided. Secondly, UG 98 (71%) PG 48 (77%) students are ready use the Library Material search. Thirdly, there are UG 102 (73.9%) and PG 26 (41.9%) who would like to use this facility to reserve books. Finally there are UG 83 (60 percent) and PG 18 (29%) students who wish to check the e-resources services if provided by library.

The survey contained an open comment box in which many positive comments were received regarding the development of library services through their mobile phones. PG students have felt that this will be very good idea to have library services rendered through mobile phones. . Students use the phone more than a computer just because it is much more convenient. A mobile version would be nice. If the library were to launch mobile services, that would be great and student would use them any/all the time.

Conclusion:

There are always dangers in generalizing results from one small study at an individual institution. However, the aim of this survey is to design a framework for digital library services adoption and acceptance in mobile phone frame work. Through the survey, it shows that although the mobile phone services have not yet been implemented by the respective library, the responses indicated that the respondents were willing to utilize the library services through their mobile phone units. The widespread use of mobile phones among students might have also lead to the positive opinion and perception on its application in the library related services.

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