

Chapter 19

Application of Mobile Technologies in Library Service Delivery

Oluwatoyin Oyeyemi Obinyan
Ambrose Alli University, Nigeria

ABSTRACT

With the rapid advancement in technology in the last two decades, mainly because of the advent of the internet, the world no longer works the same. The advent of wireless networks and more recently mobile devices such as smart phones, tablets, etc. following the internet, contributed a lot their applicability in library's operations. As contained in extant literature, mobile devices have become a very important part of communication not only for telephone service users but also for the internet users. The two main reasons behind success of mobile technology is the benefits such as mobility and ubiquity served by mobile devices. To this end, the chapter explores the application of mobile technology on service delivery in libraries, the advantages and disadvantages. Also highlighted were the skills required by the librarians in incorporating mobile technologies to library services.

INTRODUCTION

Good and ethical orientation gives birth to positive ideas which can lead to transformation of the community and her environment (Adedeji, Aderibigbe and Onyibor, 2003). Such transformation over the years has led to discoveries and technological inventions of which computers, internet and mobile devices or technologies are one. With continuous creative research and invention, internet came into being with unique flexibility that arose from end-to-end design hailed by Lessig (2000) cited by Sawhney and Lee (2005) as the architecture of innovation. Guided by the end-to-end principle as enunciated by Sawhney and Lee (2005) citing David (2001), the designers of the Internet sought to keep the core network 'dumb' and place the intelligence at the end users. The network was reduced to a delivery system that merely routed packets from one point to another, application development was left to the users or the 'ends'. This open design, which allowed for the emergence of unanticipated applications such as email and the

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World Wide Web, gives the fringe group opportunities to conjure up new modes of communication that continue to surprise us.

There is no gainsaying the fact that advancement in technology as it relates to the internet has continue to astound the world which no longer works the same as a result. Friedman (1995) argued that globalization in the 21st century is like no other, because technology empower people in an unprecedented way. The advent of wireless networks and more recently mobile devices such as smart phones, tablets, etc. following the internet, contributed a lot to make mobile technology come into existence (Neupane, 2012). According to Neji (2014), mobile technology hold great promise for enabling libraries to provide enhanced services. In the thinking of Neupane (2012) earlier stated that today mobile phones are becoming an integral part of everyday life and are changing the way one connects and interacts with the world. In this changing scenario, Mobile Technology will be of great help to libraries towards strengthening their relationship and providing enhanced user oriented services to existing users. Computer technology has created a revolution with new advances, new ideas and new users for machines that once were considered useful for handful of tasks and industries. Thus with the scope and ubiquity of computer technology libraries and librarians need to remember that effective and relevant library services are driven by user needs.

This submission calls for a rethink for libraries and librarians in the twenty first Century globalizing world. This coupled with the recorded monumental transformation in information and communication technologies comes the challenge(s) of the adoption of mobile technologies to remodel the age long services libraries have been known to provide users. To improve and democratize access to information from basic research and applied research brought about in contemporary times by the growing use of mobile technologies/ICT calls for epistemic review of library schools' curricula. In this connection, LIS profession must be able to make significant and recognizable footprints in the digital environment while adequately meeting information needs of users. In addition, the hypertextuality of the Internet as Miltra (2005) had argued, makes the empowerment of the twenty first library and information science practitioners particularly significant for developing countries.

To this end, Obinyan's (2014) developmental trajectory model could be use to underpin the wide-spread use and deployment of mobile technologies to empower and assist library and information science professionals in developing countries to seamlessly integrate their traditional value adding professional knowledge into the provision of library services to users seeking information for development in a globalizing world. This in essence is to intensify the importance and serviceability of the library line of work far beyond the twenty first century. Without prevarication, mobile technology will be of great help to libraries and provide enhanced user experience. Creative application of mobile technologies to library services is a significant step in the direction of ensuring robust user experience and satisfaction; particularly so as libraries nowadays are functioning in a user centered, technology based atmosphere, providing individualized value services (Roy & Kumar, 2017) mobilizing library content in a portable form suitable for small screen.

Seeholzer and Salem (2011) also add that students expressed more interest in using their mobile devices to interact with library sources and services than expected. They wanted to use their smartphones for searching databases and the library catalogue, as well as staying informed by the library staff. California Digital Library (2010) found out that mobile users use the library services to find known materials or quick pieces of information and they were already using online databases and catalogues on their mobile devices. Respondents were in favour of accessing the library catalogue from mobile phones in addition

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