

# Information on the palms: Mobile Applications to the Libraries (M-Libraries)

Selvam M.

Asst. Librarian, Sacred Heart College, Tirupattur, Vellore (Dt)

## Abstract

Mobile Technology changes the way people communicate. Mobile devices are immediate to the user which plays the role of relationship builders in the society. It is an effective tool to transfer information from one place to another even if it's a remote village where there is no transportation. Introducing Mobile technology into the library will enhance the library services to the user easily and responsively. This article explains the concept of Mobilized libraries and its services which is in a demand today.

## Keywords

M-Libraries, Short Message Services (SMS), M-OPAC, Mobile Applications, Mobile Operating System, Mobile Website

## I. Introduction

Libraries are changing its dimensions often by the technological revolutions from closed access libraries to wireless learning technologies. M-Library is a new face of the library in the modern era, which are superb at delivering different kinds of resources - streamed video and music, written and spoken literature, travel directions, games, sports scores, photos, and thousands more. The Mobile phones have now become equally important to the public like electricity, water and cooking gas. Mobile learning allows users to access information and learning materials through the use of wireless technology from anywhere at any time. The fundamental benefit of using wireless Mobile learning technology is to provide learning facility to the people who are living in remote locations and extend its services where there are no schools, teachers, or libraries.

## II. M-LIBRARIES: What Is It?

The term 'm-library' now refers to library services delivered to, or accessed from, mobile devices such as phones<sup>1</sup>.

M-Libraries are expanded as Mobilized Libraries, which are used "to deliver the library services and resources to the users via mobile and hand-held devices".

Mobilized Library refers "to the use of handheld devices such as PDAs, mobile phones, laptops and any other handheld information technology device that may be used for communicating, learning and delivering library services".

## III. Reasons to Implement Mobile Applications to The Libraries

Technology changes people's lives. The number of mobile phone subscribers in India has now reached to 867 million and it includes 87 million internet users. Growth and new innovations of Internet technology provides everything into the doorsteps on time so it's a time for libraries to change its dimension (to the doorstep) towards the modern era. Mobilizing the library routines will fulfill the technology gap which is in demand of library services.

**Convenience:** accessible from anywhere (bus, class, laundry room) to content including quizzes, journal entries, balance sheets, learning games

**Compatibility:** designed learning specially for mobile devices

**Portable:** Mobile devices are small and lightweight, and can be easily carried by anyone. Inside, outside, to the library, anywhere.

**Low Cost:** As compared to PCs, mobile devices are less expensive. (Note: PCs can usually accomplish many more tasks, such as spreadsheets, that are difficult to perform on a mobile device.)

**Special Needs:** Apps can handle special needs in a variety of manners: language, audio, video, colors.

**Instant delivery:** Contents can be delivered as soon as it is ready with greater speed.

## IV. M-Library Devices

Mobile devices are portable, flexible and integrated into a wide range of instructional activities, both in and out of the Libraries. These devices can be wrist-worn or carried, mobile phones, handheld computers and PDAs, web pads, pen tablet computers and laptops.

Mobile phones are evaluated based on its physical attributes (size, weight, screen size, resolution), hardware configurations (Processor Speed, Photos, Audio and Video Quality, Data Speed), Battery Life and Software Applications (Operating system). Among all other attributes, Software applications provide the popularity to the mobile phones (ex. Android OS, Windows OS). Mobile Applications are developed in different Computer Programming Languages like Pascal, C, C++, Java, Dot Net, HTML and Java Script and these applications are supporting different operating systems like iOS, Android, BlackBerry, webOS, Symbian OS, Tizen, Ubuntu Touch, and Windows Mobile.

## V. Users of M-Libraries and Its Services

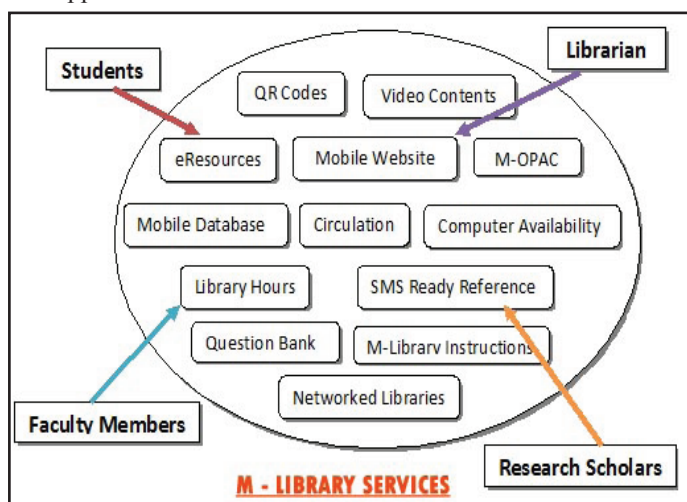
Libraries are mastering the mobile Web to bring patrons a new set of services and it has The users of M-Libraries are categorized in to five groups, Librarian and Administrator, Research Scholars, Faculty, Students and Guest users. M-Libraries offer various services based on the user category. Librarian and Administrator are the important service providers through designing a website, organizing website contents, developing library applications and maintaining the library database.

Other users like Faculties, research scholars and the students can access the following services from the mobile library applications,

- **Reference information** – A user can interact with the library staff through sms service to get the reference information.
- All **eResources** can be linked with mobile websites to access by the user from wherever they are.
- **MOPAC & Related web links** – Bibliographical information and related resources can be connected from this mobile

<sup>1</sup><http://arcadiaproject.lib.cam.ac.uk/m-libraries/index.html>

application.



- **Lectures : Audio & Video Study materials** – A user can watch and download the lessons, notes and other subject instructions from this application.
- **Library Site map** – this applications can help the new user / guest to get the location of the library and other infrastructure.
- **Computer Availability** – A user can check the availability of computers to access internet and online database.
- **Resources Availability** (Books, Journals, Dissertations) – This application helps the user to get the availability of the resources to lend. It also provides the details of the borrower and the due of the book

## VI. Challenges

Implementing mobile applications to the libraries are challenging task that includes creating a mobile website, developing the applications for the library functions, validating applications and maintaining the database. The other challenges are:

- **GPRS connectivity:** Accessing Library database or library information via mobile phone or through handheld devices should have internet connectivity.
- **Supportability:** Library applications should have to support by the Mobile phone Operating Systems.
- **Technical Supporting Staff:** It requires well trained staff to help the users.
- **Easy to Access:** Applications are to be developed user-friendly such as naming the applications, application Icons should be easily understandable. Guidelines shall be provided wherever it's needed. (Unnecessary navigations, multiple icon selections, too many links should be avoided etc.)
- **Speedy Delivery:** The contents of the mobile applications are to be delivered faster. It is one of the main considerations to use mobile applications to the library.

## VII. Conclusion

Creating mobile applications and mobile websites are allowing user to access the library services effectively. It is a time for Library professionals to understand the significance of the new technologies, to make a plan for implementing mobile services to the user by allotting funds, recruiting staff, communicating with other department faculties and library professionals to get the feedback of the new mobile services and related software to use in the library. Due to the financial considerations, If more free mobile applications were chosen over similar paid applications that would

be great support for the user to access it in their mobile devices whenever they need. This article explores the basics concepts of Mobile applications in the libraries and its valuable services to the user community.

## VIII. Acknowledgement

Sincere thanks to Dr. G. Amudha, Librarian at VHNSN, Virudhunagar for her guidance, continuous support and encouragement.

## Reference

- [1]. Kroski, Ellyssa. (2008). *On the Move with the Mobile Web: Libraries and Mobile Technologies*. *Library Technology Reports*. vol. 44, n. 5 / pp. 1-48.
- [2]. Richard Le and Thomas Duffy (2012). *50 Great Mobile Apps for Librarian*. *Internet Librarian 2012 Conference, California*.
- [3]. Rios, Gabriel R. (2006) *Emerging Mobile Technologies in Libraries*. *Dartmouth Biomedical Libraries October Conference 2006 : Cool Tools and New Technologies*.
- [4]. Vollmer, Timothy. (2010). *Library and Mobile Technology: An Introduction to Public Policy considerations*. *ALA Office for the Information Technology Policy, No. 3*.
- [5]. Andre Walsh, (2012). *Using Mobile Technology to Deliver Library Services Maryland: Scarecrow Press*.
- [6]. Dresselhaus, Angela and Flora Shrode (2012), *Mobile Technologies & Academics: Do Students Use Mobile Technologies in Their Academic Lives and are Librarians Ready to Meet this Challenge?*. *Information technology and libraries*. Pp. 82-101.
- [7]. Lippincott, Joan K (2010). *A mobile future for academic libraries*. *Emerald*. Pp. 205-213.
- [8]. Al-Senaid, Abdulrahman M. and Tauseef Ahmad (2013). *International Journal Of Scientific & Technology Research Volume 2, Issue 2, February 2013*. Pp. 216-220
- [9]. <http://www.usc.edu/libraries/services/mobile/>
- [10]. <http://libguides.mit.edu/content.php? pid=174869& sid=1481857>
- [11]. <http://librarianinblack.net/librarianinblack/2012/10/mobileapps.html>

