
NEEDHAM, Gill, ALLY, Mohamed (eds.) *M-libraries: libraries on the move to provide virtual access*. London: Facet Publishing, 2008.

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This book comprises a collection of articles based on the 2007 First International M-Libraries Conference. The scope is truly international and reflects the interests of the delegates from 26 countries. The main themes of the book are:

The ubiquity of mobile devices: mobile phone ownership in particular is within reach of most individuals in both urban and remote areas. Typically Net Gens (those born between 1982 and 1991) swap easily between multiple electronic devices, such as mobile phones, MP3 players, digital cameras and laptops.

- Technological advances: larger storage and processing capability on mobile devices makes them more viable while location aware services (GPS) are becoming increasingly available.
- Cloud computing: we are moving from a PC centred, to a network centred computing environment. Many electronic services such as e-mail, messaging, document creation, multimedia storage, presentations and calendar services will be delivered through the cloud.
- User expectations: demands for anywhere anytime access to information is increasing. People on the move are looking for answers to questions rather than looking for specific items such as books or journals.
- Content: changing attention patterns affect mobile usage, services including m-library services have to atomise content into snippets, thumbnails, abstracts or tags. This chunked content can be more easily delivered to mobile devices. Sharing social objects such as photos, movies and music that are available for download, adaptation and mixing with other materials is becoming the norm, thereby personalising the data. User's online behaviour is being analysed and used to rank and recommend material based on shared interests.

The articles are grouped into four parts which address these themes from a variety of perspectives: the changing landscapes in terms of mobile technology and information; mobile technology for development; current initiatives, innovations and challenges of the use of mobile technology in libraries; and current practice, case studies and projects.

It is evident from the book that mobile services that are already being offered include mobile catalogues, library information, reference services and campus directories. A number of libraries are using text messages for renewals and reservations. Libraries are also making and hosting content intended for mobile devices such as podcasts and videos.

A variety of research projects are described in the book, some are advanced although many are only in the early stages of development. Projects to support distance education through m-learning; exploring the potential of delivering information literacy materials; the use of mobile phones to provide administration

and academic support to teachers; services to support community-based health workers in developing countries; learning English as a second language.

Libraries are investigating the needs of various different users - students, public library users, students working in the field, students on placement. Mobile technology is not just for the young - NetGens and subsequent generations are growing up, and consequently, a highly IT-literate user community is evolving that will expect a library to provide a wide range of services using mobile technologies. Lifelong learning needs to be considered.

The book is fully indexed, and clearly laid out with underlined section headings, which make it easy to home in on particular topics. The references and/or lists of urls at the end of each chapter also provide useful points of departure, while the short biographical summaries of the contributors emphasise the extent of the expertise on offer here.

One of the key messages in this book is that Information Professionals need to manage and create new types of content, tools, services and environments for today's mobile users. Strategic planning must therefore include anywhere anytime access to this content.

Support needs to be provided both in terms of accessing the resources and in using the devices and Information Professionals need training in order to help users utilise using mobile devices.

The overlapping themes and the nature of a collected volume inevitably means that there is some repetition of content. Overall though this book provides a wide ranging and thought provoking survey of contemporary theory and practice in the burgeoning world of m-libraries.

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