Library services/resources and handheld mobile devices

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Abstract
Handheld mobile devices have become part of our everyday lives and they are used for various activities: communication, business, entertainment but also for finding information.

Strong contribution to this trend was given by the emergence of smartphone which encompass many features and operates almost like a small computer.

Due to such advanced capabilities, new kind of users has appeared who expect information at any time and on any place. They use mobile devices for meeting different informational needs including the needs for educational and academical contents, therefore libraries has started to take them into account by customizing library resources and services for mobile devices friendly display.

In order to get an insight in users' opinion on library resources/services on handheld mobile devices, online survey was undertaken. The survey was focused on small screen mobile devices with screen size up to 7 inches (17.1 cm) which are the most used in public spaces.

Objectives were to establish which types of small screen mobile devices are used and to find out is there a tendency for using academic and educational contents on such devices. Also, what library resources/services and to what extent respondents consider as the important ones for mobile friendly customization.

Data collection was obtained by online questionnaire with 10 questions. Questions were mainly multiple-choice and close-ended but respondents were also able to make comments which gave us an additional and valuable insight into their mindset. The questionnaire was created by LimeSurvey tool, and for mobile optimized version SurveyMonkey.com service was used too. We received 295 questionnaires, out of which 285 were taken into account. The survey was anonymous.

The survey found that the largest number of respondents (58%) own smartphone/tablet/phablet, and the most represented model is Samsung Galaxy.

Considering the small screen mobile devices features top three daily used were: phone calls (88%), texting (72%) and checking of e-mail (63%).

From the obtained results it can be concluded that small screen mobile devices are, to some extent, used for educational, academic and informational purposes (reading of e-books and e-journals, education, data checking, searching internet and searching of handy information), but non academic purposes still dominate (texting, reading e-mails, phone calls, taking pictures).

Overall 64% of the respondents has expressed need for mobile friendly customization of library resources/services.

Based on the survey findings it can be concluded that users are following current trend of using small screen mobile devices and they are interested in mobile friendly library services and resources.

More and more libraries in the world decide to accept the challenge of meeting the mobile users’ needs. Although Croatian libraries still do not offer their own mobile friendly services and resources, (however some commercial mobile friendly databases are available), they will surely soon find themselves faced with the same challenge.

Keywords: handheld mobile devices, small screen mobile devices, smartphone, mobile friendly library services/resources

REFERENCES

Curriculum Vitae

Ivana Pažur is a senior librarian at Rudjer Bošković Institute's Library. She holds a Masters Degree in Library and Information Science from the University of Zagreb. In 2004 she received the „Eva Verona“ award for young librarians who show special dedication in their work, innovation and promotion of the library profession.

Her research interests cover the topics on usage and acceptance of library services and resources through new media and technologies. She is particularly interested in users' education, usage of electronic resources and application of new technologies and services in the promotion and improvement of library services.

As a member of the Croatian Library Association she works as the chief editor of Croatian Library Association Electronic Series.