

# Just a Click Away: The Role of Available Mobile Technologies at NU Library

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## ABSTRACT

Purpose of the study. Libraries have a decent chance to broaden innovative library services to users. With the assistance of emerging mobile technologies, libraries can now provide speedier access to services with just a click away. Given the convenience provided by these mobile technologies, it is indeed material for libraries to not just explore the benefits of these technological innovations, but also to educate people how to maximize their use. The Nazarbayev University Library (NUL) has been exploring these technologies for quite some time now. As such this study aims to provide a review of the distinctive mobile technologies available at the NU Library. It also intends to identify the benefits of these technologies as perceived by students during the Library Road Show-2018. Moreover, the study seeks to determine possible ways to promote these mobile technologies to patrons to maximize its use.

Methodology. A random survey was conducted among the participants during the “Library Road Show 2018” held at the atrium of the Nazarbayev University last 2018. The event showcased the different technologies available in the library. Ten questions were asked to random participants who visited the event and made use of the available mobile technologies available at the library such as Prestigio and Jet Book. The questions revolved around the use of these technologies and users’ perceptions about them. Based on these perceptions and other observations, the researchers were able to determine possible ways to promote these mobile technologies to maximize use.

Findings. Based on the survey conducted, it was found out that not all participants knew how to make use of the available technologies available at NU Library. In addition, most of them were not aware that these mobile technologies were already available for use at the library. Moreover, the majority of the participants appreciated the value of these mobile technologies even without the knowledge that these mobile technologies are actually available at the library.

Practical applications. This paper aims to describe the available mobile technologies at NU Library. Since an increasing number of services that help

patrons in their research needs were provided by the library, this study will provide a glimpse of these technologies and its use. In addition, this study will help the library in coming up with possible ways to promote these technologies to the NU community.

Conclusion. Libraries use several tools and techniques to disseminate information to their community. Marketing and promotion of these services to maximize its use is important. Based on the study, there were a number of mobile technologies available for use for the library patrons such as Overdrive and Prestigio among others. The use of technology as a tool in delivering services to patrons is essential to provide efficiency and convenience without sacrificing the quality of service. Promoting these technologies through exhibits and events like library roadshows, gamifications, and others will be a great help in increasing and maximizing its usage.

**Keywords: mobile technologies, NU library, mobile applications**

## INTRODUCTION

Libraries have a decent chance to broaden innovative library services to users. With the assistance of emerging mobile technologies, libraries can provide speedier access to services with just a click away. Given the convenience provided by these mobile technologies, it is indeed material for libraries to not just explore the benefits of these technological innovations, but also to educate people how to maximize them.

Nowadays, libraries provide numerous ways to extend library services to its clients (Lippincott, 2010). With the help of mobile phones, libraries can create new administrations and give speedier access to its gathering. Libraries have constantly embraced new innovations to aid their goal of giving customers powerful and opportune access to required data. Patrons need simple and moment access to pertinent data, putting weight on Library and Information Science (LIS) experts to thoroughly consider meeting their data needs. The improvement of portable innovation has brought about the move of scholarly condition from conventional to versatile learning settings. This paper depicts portable innovation applications in library and information administrations. It also imagines the eventual fate of portable library innovation.

Mobile library services have changed the way traditional libraries deliver their services. These mobile services have also altered the relationship between libraries and clients as well as privacy settings. A shift from “d-learning” (distance learning) to “e-learning” and now from “e-learning” to “m-learning” has emerged and changed Indian education (Sharma & Sahoo, 2014).

Mobile technology indeed provides flexibility in terms of communication, collaboration, security, and information sharing. In addition, it also offers portability and mobility through unique learning venues. Libraries use mobile technology in various service innovations such as m-learning, mobile instruction, webinars, reference services and catalog searching (Nagarkar, 2011). Mobile technologies

can be of great help in enhancing user interaction as users would be able to access a wide array of digital resources and library services in their fingertips. (Khumbar & Pawar, 2014). In addition, a number of publishers are already making their e-books accessible to users through mobile devices. Digital resources and databases such as e-journals, films, and images are also made available through mobile applications which can be downloaded from their own mobile devices or through mobile devices loaned from libraries (Azino & Okechukwu, 2019).

The Nazarbayev University Library (NUL) has been exploring these technologies for quite some time now. The library uses advanced information technologies to make it open to the working environment for its supporters. The library collections are available in open access and are seen by techniques for RFID advancement with the opportunity to use a self- advantage corner for the stream, the two parts which amazingly increase the probability of using the library gathering. Additionally, a computer laboratory with 250 «thin client» PCs is arranged in the library, empowering understudies to use a virtual work territory and sign into any PC. Aside from this, Wi-Fi is available in the library and around NU to make it possible for anyone to use their own specific electronic devices.

NU students can borrow e-readers (Prestigio and Jet book) for two weeks and renew at the Circulation Desk. Librarians create different activities with them, and users can download five to ten e-books and films with similar book titles. Librarians may also offer students to compare movies with e-books, or listen to audiobooks and discuss them. With this, librarians can recommend titles for reading. The library also provides electronic multilingual dictionaries in Kazakh, Russian, Turkish, English and Chinese.

Most users viewed the library as “mobile” as it has a website, an online catalog, libguides, e-resources, e-books, e-readers, wi-fi and other mobile technologies which automatically and quickly customize library processes. Dissemination of information can be done through the use of mobile devices (Kumbhar & Pawar, 2014). Prestigio’s destination is much wider and is likewise closer to a multimedia player. On the color screen, users can read books and also watch videos, movies, photos in slideshow mode while listening to music, via the stylish headphones that come with it. A special stand cover allows the user to place the device on a surface and use it as a digital photo frame, video player, and e-reader

## **THE LIBRARY ROAD SHOW**

Kicking off in 2011, the Library Road Show is an event that showcases the different technologies available in the library through exhibits and activities. Library users are encouraged to take part in this event by exploring and using these technologies.



Image 1 Librarians assisting students during the Library Roadshow 2018.

During the Road Show, librarians provided brief descriptions and demonstrations on the use of these technologies in the library and research experiences. The event also aimed to increase the awareness of the academic community in terms of:

- number of researches and their performances;
- most used databases, print books, board games;
- top library patrons;
- NU theses & dissertations, open access and institutional repository;
- library services for comfortable studies and research such as reserved books, book delivery service, and recommend a book service;
- print and e-resources on women scientists and the NU women research output;
- approaches on searching for research needs through the Ask-A- Librarian service;
- featured e-readers; and
- microform collection and equipment.

Academic libraries (such as the NU Library) are putting their best effort to provide convenience to users at their fingertips. Events like the Library RoadShow provide insights on the different mobile applications and services available in the library. This study aims to provide a short review of the distinctive mobile technologies available at the NU Library. It also intends to identify the benefits of these technologies as perceived by students during the Library Road Show 2018. Moreover, the study seeks to determine possible ways to promote these mobile technologies to patrons in order to maximize its use.

## METHODOLOGY

The study employed a descriptive approach to present a review of mobile technologies at Nazarbayev University Library. A random survey was conducted among the participants during the Library Road Show 2018 held at the atrium

of the Nazarbayev University. The event showcased the different technologies available in the library. Ten questions were asked to random participants who made use of available mobile technologies in the library such as Prestigio and Jet Book. The questions revolved around the use of these technologies and perceptions about them. Based on these perceptions and other observations, the researchers were able to determine possible ways to promote these mobile technologies to maximize use.

## FINDINGS

### *Review of the Mobile Technologies Available at the NU Library*

Nowadays, libraries are working in a client-focused, innovation-based system, with individualized-esteem administrations. The Internet and systems administration of libraries encourage data to be readily available. Experts in the field of Library and Information Science (LIS) are testing the waters by exploring and introducing a number of various technologies that can be used in delivering mobile library services. This innovative approach encourages and empowers librarians as well as library clients to maximize the use of technologies. Exploring the benefits of these services also entail encountering various challenges. Given the utilization of these mobile technologies as a means of providing library services through portable innovation, libraries are still in the initial stages of development (Sharma & Sahoo, 2014).

This paper aims to describe the available mobile technologies at NU Library. Since more and more services were provided by the library to help patrons in their research needs, this study will likewise provide a glimpse of these technologies and their use. In addition, this study will help the library in coming up with possible ways to promote these technologies to the NU community.

OverDrive is an online platform that provides the best reading experience for downloading e-books. Since 2017, NU Library has been using Overdrive. It allows users to download 15 books at a time for 21 days. There are no renewals however, as users need to check the books out again once the loan has expired. It has a separate borrowing system from print materials and other platforms such as EBSCO and Proquest. The Overdrive application is extraordinary, and its interface is smooth, clean and natural. Users tend to utilize book recordings. Playback is smooth and adjusts across gadgets. Acquired books are effectively found on the client's «bookshelf».

### *On the Awareness on the Availability of the Service*

During the Library Road Show 2018, the researcher asked random students about the experience of patrons on available reader devices such as Prestigio and Jet Book. Based on the survey conducted, it was found that not all participants knew how to make use of the available technologies available at NU Library. In addition, most of them were not aware that these mobile technologies were already available for use at the library. The majority of the participants appreciated the value of these mobile technologies even without any idea that these mobile technologies are actually available at the library.

A random survey was also conducted among librarians who provide researchers basic knowledge on how libraries offer mobile access as a service, their succeeding mobile implementation plans, and their perception on the use of these technologies to patrons. An initial plan was also presented to the librarians allowing them to use this in selected library services as a start-up. The result of the random survey gave the researchers some understanding on the perception of NU students on the use of mobile devices for various library services.

Few students used e-readers with 3.2 percent, while 7.4 percent indicated a daily use of their own e-book readers. The researchers view the «own handheld device» category as an important segment of the mobile technology market and deemed it the reason why students mostly used tablets, laptops and their Kindle devices (Dresselhaus & Shrode, 2012).

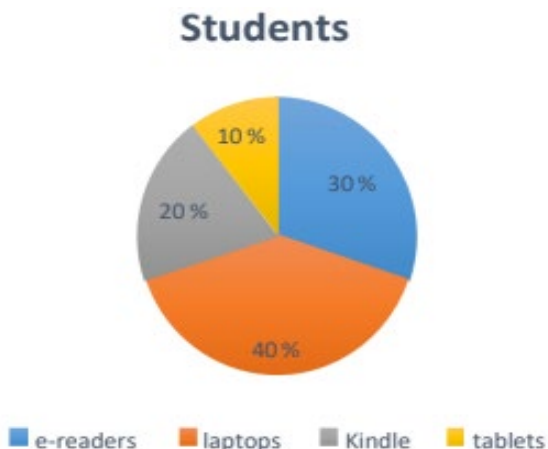


Figure 1 The number of students who were aware of the availability of the service in the library

### *On the Use of Mobile Technologies*

Approximately 32 students and alumni were surveyed to identify the degree of the usage of handheld devices, the purpose of use, and their interest in library mobile access. This is done with the goal of drafting an action plan in support of the survey results. The researcher also took advantage of the students' library mobile access demands and awareness (Dresselhaus & Shrode, 2012). Taking into account the survey results, this gives the library an idea on how to develop more mobile library services in response to the needs of students (Cummings, Merrill, & Borelli, 2010).

The researchers also checked the number of e-reader users for the past five years. As presented on the chart below, 2017 got the highest number of users (260) while 2018 got the lowest number of users (144).

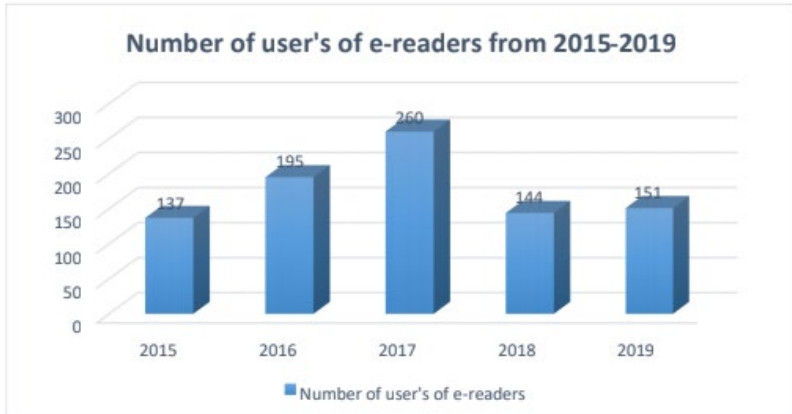


Figure 2 The number of users of e-readers

Students were also asked regarding their borrowing duration of various handheld devices. The researchers decided to focus on access rather than ownership to accommodate various instances (Dresselhaus & Shrode, 2012). Responses showed that 69.3 % of students used an e-reader for two weeks while 21 % of students used the devices for almost a month.



Figure 3 Number of students and their perceived borrowing duration

The need for acquisition of skills on the use of mobile technologies raised awareness for the library staff. Libraries are putting their best foot forward in promoting their services through mobile devices. Creating tailor-fit library services to various clients is indeed a challenging task but nonetheless is an opportunity to improve library services (Kumbhar & Pawar, 2014).

## CONCLUSION

It is no doubt that libraries use several tools and techniques to disseminate information to their community. Marketing and promotion of these services to maximize its use is important (Azino & Okechukwu, 2019). Based on the study, there were a number of mobile technologies available for use (such as Overdrive and Prestigio, among others). The use of technology as a tool in delivering services to patrons is essential to provide efficiency and convenience without sacrificing the quality of service. Promoting these technologies through exhibits and events like library roadshows, gamifications, and the like will be a great help in increasing and maximizing usage.

In addition, academic libraries are encouraged to give convenient access to applicable data, keeping in mind the end goal to address the issues and analysis. One of the primary prerequisites is that establishments coordinate these data necessities with the innovation particular needs and requests of patrons. With the emergence of technology, libraries can make use of various tools and techniques to disseminate information. Promotion of libraries should also be considered. For this purpose, the use of technology is very essential. Mobile technology has become a boon to libraries. (Azino & Okechukwu, 2019, and the application of mobile technology in library services is definitely necessary.

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