



SMARTPHONES AND LIBRARY APPLICATIONS

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Abstract:

Traditional libraries struggle to keep up with the rapid growth of information and meet the needs of new patrons in today's information-driven world. Users of libraries have a pressing need to have all of the necessary information about the library in a short amount of time. Handling traditional printed brochures containing library information is time-consuming and difficult. Nowadays, the majority of library users use smartphones that can do a variety of things. As a result, the library can make use of this technology to create mobile applications that contain information about the library and upload them to their website for free download by mobile users. Users may gain from this by being able to quickly and easily access the necessary information at any time and from any location.

Keywords: Library, Application, Smartphone, Broacher, Information dissemination.

Introduction:

Today's modern era belongs to information and computerization and this age of information is ever expanding to new horizons. A similar trend is seen in libraries, the known knowledge bank. Libraries are in existence since old age. But the changing trend in information has inevitably transformed the old traditional libraries into hybrid libraries, then automated libraries, and now digital or virtual libraries. But in all these lives libraries are always user centered. All the developments in the library have been taking place considering the user requirement. Nowadays libraries also are trying to give maximum facilities to users and library applications are one of the important parts of these efforts.

Comparison of Library Broacher and Library Application:

In our country, till today the most common way of providing information about the library, its resources, and new facilities made available for the users is library broacher which is bulky, difficult to handle, and time-consuming. The emerging and promising way of information dissemination is digitalized form of information that facilitates the user by speedy search of the required information and gets rid of heavy and bulky booklets. Library applications can be considered as an advanced version of library websites that categorically assist the users to get access to library information almost anywhere and anytime as per their convenience using their mobile handsets. The detailed features of these information gateways are described here.

1. Drawbacks of Library Broacher:

The traditional way of providing information about libraries to users is

library brochures. Mostly the library brochures are available in print form and are as shown in Fig.1 (1)



Fig. 1 Library broacher in print format

Libraries publish these Broachers every year and provide to users. These Broachers contain printed information about the library viz. total books in library Information about library staff Facilities provided by the library and future facilities to be made available for users, information about journals, E-books, CDs., new arrivals, and information about various sections like book ordering, stack section, a processing section, circulation section, periodical section, archival section, and newspaper section. These brochures also contain information about library timing, membership fee, fine charges and reading room facility and its charges for benefit of users.

The major drawbacks of library brochures are that it is difficult to handle a lot of time to search for required information. It is also difficult for users to retain and use, therefore they need to take these Broachers from the library frequently or need to consume the library, about the required information of library. It is also possible that all users may not far to read there long the Broachers.

2. Limitations of the library website:

To make available the information about the library to the users some of the libraries offer their personal websites on the internet. The typical website of the library is shown in Fig. 2. (2)

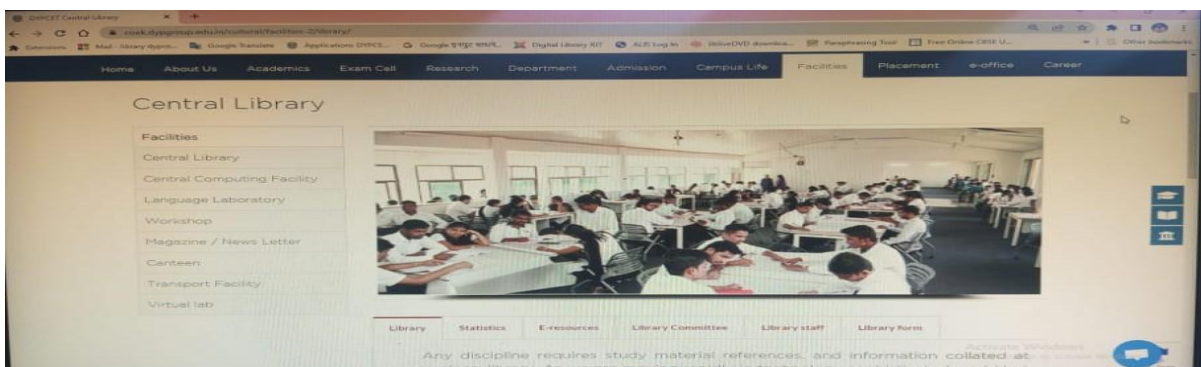


Fig.2 Library website

Many libraries have dedicated websites. These websites are updated on a weekly, monthly, or yearly basis. Users can get the required and much-updated information about the library in a more convenient way as compared to printed brochures. But this also has some limitations. The major limitation in using this website is that users must have computer and internet facilities as well. The user cannot have this internet access. Hence it is difficult for him to get information about the library otherwise.

3. Advantage of Library application to be used with mobiles:

The best solution for the difficulties encountered by the library users to access library information through printed brochures or library websites is to design one mobile application that contains all the information about the library and to upload it on the library website with a facility for users to free download this application.

Users of the library can take advantage of on-site workshops and library tours through the use of a mobile application. Audio and virtual tours can be made in a short amount of time and help staff save time by reducing the amount of time they spend assisting new users in settling in and explaining the library's services by the use of mobile applications. Through smartphones, the WorldCat Mobile application pilot lets users search for and locate books and other materials that are available in their local libraries. (3)

It will not be much exaggeration to say that today mobile has become as necessary as food, clothes and shelters for the people. Nowadays many people use modern mobile like android phones, and smartphones, which are equipped with various facilities. These mobiles have

several facilities and are also smart and speedy as compared to old mobiles. For these mobiles, various applications are made available for free and are user-friendly and simple to use for users.

The most popular and widely used platform in mobile applications in the present day is Android. This facility is made available by almost all leading companies on their latest Version of mobiles. It has been used for many applications like the Internet, navigation, GPRS, social communications applications like what's App, Facebook, Games, and product promotions. Even political parties are using this platform using their applications to reach out to maximum people and the general election of 2014 in India has demonstrated this in an effective way.

Many applications launched by the public sector are available on smartphones, for example, Indian Railway Application through which we can set information about journeys, railway timetable, journey route, tickets fare, and information about the train on the website.

Also, such library applications can be useful for users. The application shall contain information about library books, staff, different sections in the library, and information about various stacks- The application can categorically describe on the home page the contents like general information about the library, information resources, and a notice board displaying information about various programs organized by library and information regarding the recruitment, etc. The information can also be classified that can be made available suitably to the Registered users and Guest users. The application may incorporate this facility. The application can be designed and made available to users on the website for free

download. The users can get download this application on mobile and can set this information and retain them permanently through the application. The users can save their time to a great extent by this and can have updated information through their application. Also, as there is no requirement of the internet for using this application unless for downloading through the website, the users can use this application to access this information anywhere and anytime without using the internet.

Conclusion:

Today libraries are transformed into digital libraries. Nowadays, various smartphones are available that have facilities for using several user-friendly applications. This technology can be used for library users to make available the latest updated information in minimum time to replace the traditional printed brochures. Presently, 99% of library users have mobiles and therefore it is easy to provide services to these users through

mobiles' Libraries also can make use of this Android platform for designing applications of their content to reach their users.

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