

Record: 1**Title:** Information on the Go.**Authors:** Tenopir, Carol**Source:** Library Journal; May 1 2009, Vol. 134 Issue 8, p20-20, 1p**Document Type:** Article**Subjects:** Association of College & Research Libraries
Pennsylvania State University
Wireless Internet
Conferences & conventions
Meetings
Library associations
Information technology**Abstract:** An overview of the efforts of libraries and publishers to redesign and format content in response to the growing prevalence of handheld devices and to introduce new services that maximize the potential of these devices is provided.**ISSN:** 03630277**Accession Number:** 502977288**Database:** Education Source**Section:** ONLINE DATABASES**Information on the Go**

Cell phone ubiquity is yesterday's news: now, between PDAs, iPods, ebook readers, tablet PCs, and other handheld devices, all of us are rarely without full-fledged information instruments at our fingertips.

So how do libraries and publishers fit into all of this? They're busy redesigning and formatting content while introducing new services to make the best use of handhelds. Nowhere was this more apparent than at the 2009 Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL) meeting in Seattle, March 12-15.

Information anywhere

Significant collections specifically designed for handheld devices are becoming available, including Safari Books, Google Books, and Amazon Kindle content for the iPhone. Publishers in the library market and other content providers adding mobile-specific portals include Factiva, Hoover's, PubMed, Westlaw, and OCLC WorldCat.

The WorldCat pilot is particularly interesting, as it makes use of GPS technology to help users find a nearby library that has the material they searched via WorldCat Mobile.

The latter works with a variety of mobile phones and devices, and because typing may not be convenient on such devices, it uses "multiprefix incremental search," displaying results as just a few letters are typed in (for more info, see InfoTech).

Ebook readers

Libraries are using handhelds in a variety of ways. As described at one of the ACRL presentations, tests are under way at Penn State University (PSU) using 100 Sony Readers donated by Sony.

Information literacy librarian Anne Behler is testing ebooks in a number of situations. They can be used right in the library, checked out with leisure reading titles loaded on them, or distributed to supplement instruction with preloaded books tied to specific assignments.

Roving reference

PSU is also experimenting with roving reference and other mobile-enabled endeavors. According to Emily Rimland, information literacy librarian, it's efficient to deploy librarians equipped with handheld devices because the PSU library is so large and encompasses multiple floors. Roving reference librarians help patrons find items in the stacks; others assist with faculty liaison activities and help students with one-on-one library instruction. The test was inspired by the iPhone, but technical issues with PSU's wireless network caused librarians instead to test small computers like the Sony VAIO and Fujitsu Lifebook.

The PSU experiment revealed that there was no favorite device but that there were a number of potential problems. Testers found that spotty phone connectivity and unreliable wireless networks can lead to significant issues. In addition, web site displays don't always work well on the small screen, and some of the devices were too small to enter information easily.

On a positive note, the library search widgets preconfigured to search specific sources and/or topics worked very well on handhelds, since users don't have to do much navigating or typing on a small screen.

Mobile panoply

A pilot project from the University of Houston, TX, culminating this spring involves the use of the iPod Touch—essentially, the iPhone without the phone-by subject liaison librarians. Robin Dasler, Veronica Arellano, and Miranda Bennett presented their project at an ACRL poster session. The librarians use the wireless feature for blogs, chat reference, YouTube help videos, WorldCat access, and other free applications. They find the Touch convenient for notes and calendar functions. In the future, they hope to use the device for roving reference and virtual office hours.

Many other libraries are using handheld devices for a variety of purposes. "M-Libraries" from Library Success: A Best Practices Wiki provides dozens of links to libraries worldwide that offer mobile services, including instant messaging for overdue and renewals; portable-ready audio, video, and ebook collections; self-guided library tours; mobile catalog interfaces; and mobile instruction.

As more and more libraries discover mobile best practices buttressed by increasing support for mobile content from publishers, the possibilities for mobile devices only increase. Look to the examples listed here for inspiration, and go forth with information on the go.

LINK LIST

Amazon Kindle for the iPhone
bit.ly/KindleoniPhone

Factiva
mobile.beta.factiva.com

Google Books

books.google.com/m

Hoover's
hooversmobile.com

OCLC Worldcat
worldcat.org/m

PubMed
pubmedhh.nlm.nih.gov.nlm

Safari Books
m.safaribooksonline.com

Westlaw
wl-w.com

RESOURCES

Library Technology Reports: Mobile Web
bit.ly/techsourcemobile

"M-Libraries" from Library Success
bit.ly/libsuccessmobile

7 Things About Handheld Devices
bit.ly/PSUhandheld

PHOTO (COLOR)

~~~~~

By Carol Tenopir

Carol Tenopir ([ctenopir@utk.edu](mailto:ctenopir@utk.edu)) is Professor at the School of Information Sciences, University of Tennessee, Knoxville

---

**Source:** Library Journal, May 1 2009, Vol. 134 Issue 8, p20, 1p  
**Item:** 502977288