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# Investigation of clients' perception of accessing library catalogue via mobile technology

Abstract

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The paper reports on an investigation into the perceptions of the University of Johannesburg's (UJ) undergraduate students with regard to accessing the library catalogue via mobile technology software called AirPAC. AirPAC is a wireless e-catalogue that allows users to view documents on alternative devices such as mobile phones and personal data assistants (PDAs). Users can search the catalogue, read full text articles and books, and renew their loans and request books from their mobile phones. Access to a computer or the internet remains a challenge for many students in South Africa; however, access to mobile phones is more universal. Hence AirPAC becomes a relevant tool for assisting users in accessing the Library's catalogue. This new innovation is an important step in establishing service-oriented technology that will enhance learner support. The primary reason for this investigation was to discover whether mobile technology is really fulfilling the mission of taking the library to the people by understanding the perceptions of its clients. It further seeks to discover – whether mobile access to the library catalogue and electronic collections improve learner support by the library? The results of this investigation will assist the leadership of UJ Library and Information Centre (UJLIC) in evaluating its investment in AirPac and its concomitant actions. The success of the product will not only depend on the perceptions of the students, but also upon the commitment of the UJLIC leadership in implementing the product. Hence, the researcher interviewed a representative of the UJLIC leadership in an attempt to determine their vision for the future development of mobile technology services for library clients. The investigation was conducted over all four campuses of UJ. Data was accessed by distributing closed questionnaires using the simple random sampling method. The number of questionnaires distributed was proportionate to the size of the undergraduate student population on the various campuses. The research population was limited to undergraduate students who physically visit the Library. This selection was based upon expediting the research.

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