

Needs Assessment in M-Library Services of Academic Libraries in Thailand

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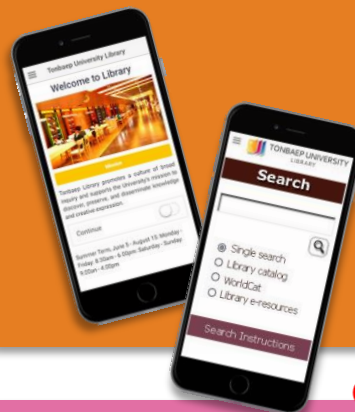
INTRODUCTION

Nowadays in Thailand, 96 % of the population are using mobile phones with 64% being a smartphone. The smartphone usage is growing by 15% each year. Smartphones can function like a portable computer that allows unlimited access of information. Academic libraries in Thailand have recently started to provide information services through mobile technology, called "M-library" which refers to the delivery of library services via small-sized portable devices with cellular communication. Therefore, it is necessary to assess the need of library users on library services provision through mobile technology.



OBJECTIVE

This research examines the needs assessment in m-library services among undergraduate students of academic libraries in Thailand for overall satisfaction and 4 aspects: library public relations, information searching, circulation services and facilities.



METHODOLOGY

A quantitative research was conducted. The samples of 500 students were purposively selected from the population of 1,422,024 undergraduate students in academic year 2016. The research instrument includes questionnaires evaluated by 5 experts for content validity of questions with IOC = 0.60-1.00 and 41 try-out undergraduate students with Cronbach's Alpha = 0.898. The data were collected with the help of 10 academic librarians.

Data were statistically analyzed through the arithmetic mean and standard deviation. The Modified Priority Needs Index (PNI_{modified}) informs the difference between the expected condition (I) and the current condition (D). It was used to prioritize the order of library users' needs assessment.

FINDINGS

It is shown that 4 types of needs are prioritized as follows:

- Other library facilities (PNI_{modified}=0.236),
- Library public relations (PNI_{modified}=0.231)
- Search (PNI_{modified}=0.218), and
- Circulation service (PNI_{modified}=0.187), respectively.

The most needed services are:

1. New/good book recommendation (PNI_{modified}=0.305),
2. Access to e-books on mobile phones (PNI_{modified}=0.302), and
3. Access to newsletters via QR code (PNI_{modified}=0.294).

TABLE 1 Needs Assessment of M-Library Services among Undergraduate Students

M-Library Services	(I-D)/D	Priority
1. Library Public Relations	0.231	(2)
1.1 About us	0.221	12
1.2 Open hours	0.164	26
1.3 News & Events	0.203	16
1.4 Services and facilities guides	0.202	17
1.5 New book suggestion	0.305	1
1.6 Feedback	0.249	7
1.7 Information via QR code	0.294	3
2. Information Searching	0.218	(3)
2.1 OPAC	0.194	21
2.2 Reserved books	0.202	18
2.3 E-books/E-journals	0.181	24
2.4 Database search instructions	0.206	14
2.5 Fulltext other source links	0.233	9
2.6 Book location	0.286	6
2.7 Book delivery	0.227	11
3. Circulation Services	0.187	(4)
3.1 Renewal	0.133	28
3.2 Book reserve	0.172	25
3.3 My account	0.137	27
3.4 Late notifications / late fees	0.184	23
3.5 Reserve book notification	0.194	22
3.6 Book loss report	0.204	15
3.7 E-book loan	0.302	2
4. Other Library Facilities	0.236	(1)
4.1 Reference service	0.197	19
4.2 Library location/Floor plans	0.196	20
4.3 Audio books	0.244	8
4.4 Social media link	0.212	13
4.5 Room reservation	0.228	10
4.6 Speech recognition	0.292	5
4.7 Automatic notification	0.293	4

CONCLUSION

Due to an increasing use of smartphones and change in library users' behavior on information, academic libraries are now starting to provide m-library services. The results revealed that overall the students were satisfied with the existing m-library services. Meanwhile, they need more cutting-edge services and functions of mobile technology. While the m-library services has been initiated in Thailand, this study helps academic libraries in designing the mobile platform services that match the students' needs.

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