ANLTC/SWETS RESEARCH AWARD 2012

Strategic mobile library development: the place of library apps and the options for creating them

AGI/LIR Symposium on Mobile Technologies
22nd November 2012

UCD Library

University College Dublin, Belfield, Dublin 4, Ireland

Leabharlann UCD

An Coláiste Ollscoile, Baile Átha Cliath, Belfield, Baile Átha Cliath 4, Eire

Basics

- €2,000 grant given to us, award every other year

- Josh Clark and Ros Pan = Outreach Unit, part of Planning and Administration Team

- One area look after is the UCD Library website including mobile website

- Related to Library IT team, mobile catalogue and presence in University mobile app

- Fits into UCD Library Mobile strategy, just one part that can inform that over next year, lead on that Head of Library IT

- Timeline November 2012 – early October 2013

- Designed practitioner based research, into an area that we are not well informed about

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Broad context and issues that we want to explore

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**An Coláiste Ollscoile, Baile Átha Cliath,
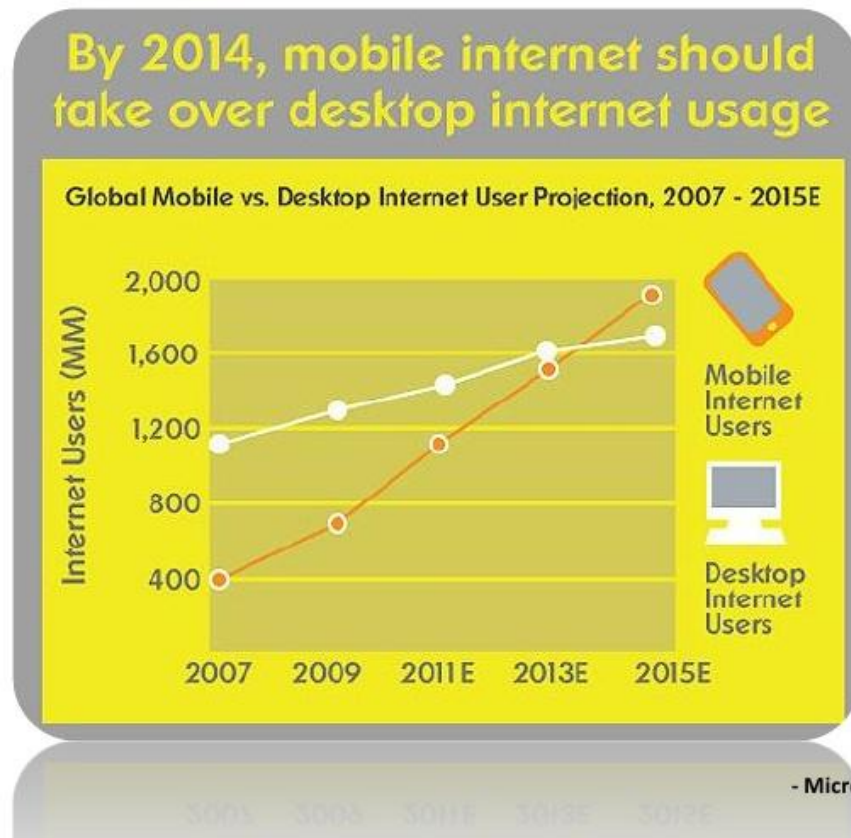Belfield, Baile Átha Cliath 4, Eire**

Overall context statement

- **Context:** UCD Library has a number of mobile offerings for users. UCD has a mobile app for users. Given that more users will access internet via mobile than desktop device by 2014 on current estimates, the library needs to consider how it delivers its mobile offering and the place of apps in that strategy

Context: what to invest in mobile?

- Constant talk of use of internet via mobiles overtaking desktop use by 2014

Context: what to invest in mobile?

- Suggestion that mobile will become the default delivery platform for library service, resources, information, web content

- Small evidence base UCD has shows that IN FACT at this point in time use of library service via mobile is low.

  – Use of any of our web pages via a mobile device incl iPad around 3-6% of visits
  – Use of pages designed for mobile small screen average 5% but some individual pages reaches 15%
  – Use of Youtube video channel via mobile around 6%

- On the one hand need to think ahead, on the other resources are very stretched, difficult issue overall

- Another difficult choice: should try to get wider presence in the University app or go it alone?

Context: what to develop specially for mobile?

– Stick with the general purpose Library app or mobile interface, various surveys and reports cover range of services and functions

Ellyska Kroski presentation on Slideshare Mobiles to Go

Context: what to develop specially for mobile?

- We are also quite interested in getting beyond that into the more specialised app or mobile offering

- Alternative or complement to the general library app

- Suggestions of sort of thing, various stand along offerings

  - Cultural Heritage treasures from Special Collections and Digital Library – Treasures of the British Library style of thing Value-added exhibition type

  - Research Support application. UCD have unit now doing research support, could offer here information on IP, OA, bibliometrics, data management, GIS and mapping, repository etc plus contacts, live reference and so forth Specialist Info and Reference type

  - E-Learning application. Tutorials, guides, videos etc for the mobile user Tutorial, eLearning portal style

Context: how to develop for mobile?

- Assuming decide to invest in mobile and have ideas on what you want to develop, question is HOW? Varied opinion about APPS which is our main top here. NEED TO EXPLORE THIS.

- Increasingly mobile device is fine with standard desktop website, adaptive design websites that re-size etc, no need to do anything special at all for mobile

- Yes do need something but the best route is to develop mobile websites rather than mobile apps: we look at 100s of websites, not realistic to think that every one can develop apps – not a sustainable model, flash in a pan

- In so far as going for apps, aim for apps multi-platform, mobile web apps with HTML5

- Just carry on and do one app for ios, one for android and so on, very common now… native apps

JISC Observatory report Delivering web to mobile, Mark Power

A few quotes about these issues..

"It's nonsense and unmanageable installing an app for every site you visit, every newspaper and magazine you read and every place you shop"

"apps are hot, carrying a caché websites lack"

"Shortly before the New York Times launched its experimental HTML5 web app, Facebook returned to native apps"

"Everyone thinks they're the centre of the universe and their publication is deserving if an icon on every iPhone. I hate to break it to you, but you're not"

.net magazine, Dec 12

Context: how to develop for mobile?

- – What skill set you need to develop an app

- – What is the cost to get something done by a third party

- – What can be achieved with web-based application builders that claim can do decent app with no programming required

Context: where are things at in Ireland & beyond?

- – Who has mobile website, mobile catalogue, presence in university app, library app?

- – What is awareness level, what are the plans?

- – Best practice in internationally, case studies – won't have time for exhaustive review

- **Goal:** To gain full understanding of the current development of the mLibrary, the amount of development/interest in mobile app as one option, and understanding and some practical experience in using various approaches to such development by means of developing demos

- **Scope:** The scope of the project encompasses desk research and conference attendance, visits and/or survey, development of demonstrator apps, report writing and presentation.

- **Out of scope:**

- Visits beyond Europe

- Live apps for real life usage

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**The project plan:
will be challenged to fit this in, so
adopting project management
approach, try and stick to timeline**

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Very rough timeline into 3 segments

Phase 1 Nov-Jan

- Desk research as the initial project stage: literature and conference report review covering both the current state of play, future plans and technical and semi-technical literature on development options, leading to a shortlist of development options to be taken forward

Very rough timeline into 3 segments

Phase 2 Jan-Feb

- Establish the Irish state of development and extent of working models in Ireland via website exploration, phone interviews, mini-surveys and similar remote methods

- Visit:
  - select university libraries in Ireland and select IoT, should any emerge from investigation as being particularly engaged with the mLibrary and mobile app agenda.
  - a few examples in the UK that may emerge as front-runners in this field.

Very rough timeline into 3 segments

Phase 3 Mar-June

- Some demonstrator app development in the latter stages of the project on select platforms by way of comparison of necessary skills and time requirements, and results achievable. The ability to deliver this with the small grant provided will depend on sourcing a platform during investigations that enables app development with limited skill and time resources required, and could be a web-based solution, or a simplified programming approach. We may also be able to call upon colleagues in other University units to collaborate with us, both in scoping up the content of the apps and in developing

Deliverables & Milestones

- **Deliverables:** a report; a range of demonstrator library apps; a conference presentation; a published paper

- **Milestones :**

- 05 Nov 2012 commence project

- 31st May 2013 interim project report (funder requirement)

- 07 Oct 2013 final submission of report and other demonstrator deliverables etc to ANLTC funders (funder requirement) *and for ourselves....*

- *31 Oct 2013 internal consideration of anything want to mainstream from the project*

- *31 Dec 2013 done any conference presentations, papers etc want to do on the project*

Work packages summary

- *Work package 1: The preparation and project information organisation*

- *Work package 2 Reading up on all areas: desk research& conference information gathering*

- *Work package 3: Flesh out knowledge of what goes on in Irish libraries*

- *Work package 4: The demonstrator apps*

- *Work package 5: Writing and delivering*

- *Work package 6: Closure and Exit Strategy*

Work Breakdown drafted for each work package

Work package 4: the demonstrator apps

DELIVERABLES FROM THIS WORK PACKAGE

- A set of demonstrator apps available, online in stores where possible
- A final report section written on each approach covering skills required, costs, the app developed and pros and cons and experience and content limitations

TASKS

Preparing for demonstrator development

- Explore at early stage the viability of computer science students developing demonstrator apps as software projects during their course
- Decide in relation to budget a range of 3 or 4 demonstrators to get developed or develop ourselves
- Decide if aiming at small screen and/or the iPad market
- Cost this up and purchase any software and subscribe to any services required
- Skill up as required for any development being done by ourselves
- Interface with Julia/Evelyn about a niche app for Special Collections or UCD Digital Library
- Interface with Julia/Peter about niche app demonstrator in research area, spec coll areal, teaching and learning area. Peter is keen to develop an augmented reality library tour and this could make a very good stand alone app perhaps?
- Interface with Samantha about a generic demonstrator app and what functions to try and include in it
- Write up the ideal specification for each application demonstrator that is going to be developed, including the external pulling of data into the app etc

Develop the apps

- Do any that we are developing ourselves
- Pay to get external one(s) done – specification prep. – mini plan for that on its own if goes ahead
- Write up the development process for each app, pros and cons, issues and advantages, time taken, what could not be achieved with each platform
- Test all the apps with select library staff to get reaction
- Try them out with users at a Roadshow type of event and see what they think about them, likely use of them etc

Finally....

We are looking for interested parties:

- Feel that they have achievements or knowledge in this area and willing to share it

- Interested in area generally, have plans or ideas

- Agreeable to visit for group discussions around the topic

- Interested in helping with demonstrator apps

Let us know now or e-mail

outreach@ucd.ie