Emerging Technology

I chose to examine mobile technologies out of interest in the recent dramatic surge in their popularity and the consequential implications for information services.

Mobile device usage is now significantly higher than desktop device usage, and continues to grow. According to the *New Media Consortium Horizon Report: 2015 Library Edition*, "by 2020, it is expected that 80% of all adults in the world will own a smartphone" (p. 18). The proliferation of mobile technology has had a profound impact on how people access information and how they expect to use information services. It is critical for libraries to understand the evolving nature of this information behavior in order to remain relevant to their patrons. Information professionals should respond to the trends in mobile technology by delivering content and services through mobile platforms.

Responsive design is a concept that allows interfaces to adapt to the device that is being used. Information organizations must monitor client usage of their Internet services to identify trends. Through continuous analyses of operating systems and devices being used by patrons, information professionals can detect how patrons interact with web-based library services. Responsive design techniques should be applied to ensure that library services are delivered effectively. Library web applications employing responsive design techniques adjust to the size and capabilities of the device used by each and every patron. (Breeding, 2015, "Mobile Technologies")

Many libraries are targeting mobile development as part of the strategic planning process. The *NMC Horizon Report: 2015 Library Edition* cites the University of Alberta Libraries strategic plan for 2012-2016, which addresses the trend toward mobile technology. Strategic questions consider new modes of content and service delivery and

the priorities of users. Initiatives include assessments of user groups and their expectations regarding web apps and mobile technologies. Preference is given to mobile-friendly interfaces or apps that connect users to library materials and services (University of Alberta Libraries, n.d., p. 24).

Through user assessment and strategic planning, libraries are implementing action plans to address the challenges of the changing environment of information services. Due to continuous advancements in mobile technologies, it is essential for information professionals to adapt services and content to the evolving expectations of patrons. Libraries that do not assess trends in mobile information behavior and modify their services accordingly risk redundancy.

References

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