

ebrary: Expanding the Research Landscape with Mobile

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Inforum 2012: 18th Conference on Professional Information Resources
Prague, May 22nd – 24th 2012

Abstract

With ebrary's newly launched mobile app, researchers and students now have optimized online access to authoritative e-books and content uploaded with DASH!™ (Data Sharing, Fast), the ability to add their own personal research, and through the app, users can sign-in to ebrary using their Facebook user name and password.

Based on research from ebrary's 2011 Global Student E-book Survey, 60% of students said downloading e-books onto their mobile devices is "very important," which is a 16% increase over results from a similar survey ebrary sponsored in 2008. Additionally, ebrary ran a Download Survey with librarians to gauge the importance and accessibility of downloading content. Results showed that the majority of librarians marked the iPad as the most important device in accessing e-books offline, above laptops and desktops.

This presentation will explore the ways in which ebrary is constantly addressing and expanding its models and product services to support the continually growing research and technology landscape for both end-users and librarians.

Intro

In this fast-changing research and technology landscape there is now a greater demand from library patrons, customers and end-users for innovative products and services. With this in mind ebrary is constantly addressing and expanding its models to improve research experience and information resources through a variety of devices, and to provide value to libraries.

In January 2012 ebrary launched a dedicated iOS app for the iPhone®, iPad® and iPod touch®, providing a compelling research experience with access to content from multiple sources. The app was developed based on input from librarians and end-users and the results gathered from the Global Student E-book Survey.

ebrary Survey

While a number of hesitations may come to librarians' mind when looking at moving forward with a mobile strategy, there is a lot of data on the need alongside obvious advancements in consumer technology. In 2008 and 2011 ebrary sponsored the *Global Student E-book Survey* designed by librarians to better understand how students and researchers search, discover and use e-books. The online survey link was pushed out to students via librarians. In 2008, 6,656 respondents completed the survey across 76 participating countries. In 2011, 6,329 respondents complete the survey across 100 participating countries.

Based on the research data from both surveys, 58% of students declared downloading e-books onto their mobile devices as "very important". This is a 16% increase over results from the same survey ebrary sponsored in 2008. Similarly 45.1% of the students who completed the 2011 survey said they were "likely/ very likely" to research and access content via an app. These results signified the importance of specialized apps, with students preferring to use Facebook or Google.

Additionally, ebrary ran a *Download Survey* in 2011 with librarians to gauge the importance and accessibility of downloading content, addressing the changing technologies and expectations for offline e-book access. The survey was completed by 1,029 librarians with approximately 80% from academic libraries, 7% from public and 13% from corporate, government, school or other.

The survey addressed e-book reading devices and functionality, and asked librarians to rate their interest in offline systems. 73% expressed a high interest in Apple iPad access and a further 68% in iPhone access. Overall, the results showed that the majority of librarians

marked the iPad as the most important device in accessing e-books offline, above laptops and desktops.

ebrary asked for additional comments from the survey participants with many addressing the immediate nature of the need for offline, mobile reading. One quote from an anon librarian stated *'Students expect and demand ability to print, download, and use mobile devices'*.

The results from both of these surveys further validated ebrary's development of the mobile app and the in-demand need for mobile access.



The benefits of the app as an information resource in libraries

The ebrary app is designed to offer a unique and comprehensive research experience for users. Through the app researchers and students have optimized online access to authoritative e-books and content uploaded with DASH!™ (Data Sharing, Fast), the ability to add their own personal research, and through the app, users can sign-in to ebrary using their Facebook user name and password.

Based on data collected from the 2011 *Download Survey*, key desirable features and functionalities for offline access included searching for titles, zoom and scale and annotations.

The app features a table of contents that presents the most occurrences of their search term and offers a number of ways to search and navigate. 33% of librarians stated that searching for or within a title was the most important feature. When using the document offline, users can copy and paste with an automatic citation.

The app will work with any ebrary library product, including titles acquired through third party vendors, allowing users complete access to their e-book database anyplace, anytime. Just as ebrary has provided a wide range of business models and purchase options for librarians who purchase-books, investment in new apps and offline reading capabilities provides researchers a wide range of choice in how they access and utilize content. To further this ideal even more, the app can opens up to students' and researchers' proprietary content, enabling a complete research experience. While being able to access DASH! content, view your library's e-books, and have PDFs of study guides, reports, etc. all in one place, ebrary is enabling researchers to truly work more efficiently.

The *Global Student E-book Survey* asked students which social media sites they were most likely to use to share information with peers, with 71.2% stating they would use Facebook. Of which 48% would use Facebook to research or access content via an app, and a further 21.2% would use Goggle to access content. With social media and apps surging, ebrary recognizes their growing importance in the future of research.



Future app developments

The 2011 *Download Survey* highlighted librarians interest in an offline Android app, with 58% stating a high interest in an android app. ebrary is continually developing their products to suit the users demands and changing technological needs, therefore we will release the new Android app to the market in the summer of 2012, providing further mobile information resources for libraries. More information surrounding the Android app will be available at that time.

Conclusion

By looking at the converging factors of consumer technology's evolution and students' and researchers' adapting to those marketplace changes, one can see how ebrary's iOS app was a necessity. As a company, ebrary strives to continually expand the research landscape and keep pace with the needs and expectations of our ultimate customer: the end-user. We will continue to solicit information from researchers, librarians, and faculty alike so that we can strive to provide the most suitable, efficient research solution.