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M-Services for Libraries: an analysis from the perspective of M-Service Providers in India

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The growing need of high mobility and staying connected is the prime driver for the Mobile use in world today. This is true for people from different age groups and occupation. The youth segment in particular comprises 30% of the total mobile handsets market requires high mobility and connectivity and the same is true for business and other professionals. This innate need coupled with availability of handsets and connectivity at affordable price points has triggered the growth of mobile use in India.

The mobile phone has evolved from a mere communication device to an access mode with an ability to tap a plethora of information and services available in the ecosystem. This is the reason why it is now being referred to as the 'fourth screen', after Cinema halls, Television and PC.

M-resources and M-Libraries Services have become the 'pull effect' from students and researchers asking for more than just basic telephony as a key driver for part of Mobile Value Added Services (MVAS). Today most of the students & faculty in universities and research institutions are seeking more from their communication device apart from just mobility and desire to stay connected. The academic fraternity and students are one of the prominent groups that have become increasingly reliant on mobile internet services over recent years. More and more students are now using mobile broadband and internet services for research, m-resources, m-educational literature and projects as well.

The growth of MVAS is based on 4 pillars- Access devices, Content, Technology and Infrastructure. The paper will analyse these 4 pillars and mobile network services in India with regard to the availability of mobile broadband, mobile service providers with regard to MVAS and the cost effectiveness for mobile users. The paper will also present data about the types of mobile content and applications available through different Mobile Service Providers and how it is used and valued by learners in different real life study contexts. This paper will also give an overview of the Mobile Web, its potential use with Web 2.0 tools (including screencasts, podcasts, vodcasts and YouTube) and how this is beginning to be employed to assist our education system and especially libraries.

Total Mobile Subscribers in India as on July 2010 reached to 652.42 million. Since its liberalization in 1991, the economy has registered an unprecedented growth and is valued at $100bn today, contributing significantly 13% of telecom share to the GDP. The paper will also discuss the growth of telecom sector which has shown a dynamic multiplier-effect on the entire economy of the nation.

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