Exploring student engagement with mobile technologies at a regional university

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Abstract:

Mobilization of information in society is impossible to ignore. As information specialists, libraries cannot afford to be perceived as "missing the boat" in delivery of information or our clients may decide we are irrelevant to their needs.

How do we identify what aspects to adopt and promote? Are they worthy of our time and budget? These issues are particularly difficult for smaller Libraries who may lack staffing, expertise and resources.

Charles Darwin University is a remote and regional University. It is difficult for the Library to have confidence that it engages and meets the needs of those students who choose to study in external mode.

In the first instance, the Library Liaison team plans to trial using QR codes to deliver Library orientation activities to our internal and external clients in Semester one 2011. These two dimensional barcodes will be embedded into both the physical and virtual environment. New students will be encouraged to scan the image to access information about library services and resources.

Objectives

We propose to investigate our patrons' knowledge and use of mobile technologies, in particular QR codes, to gauge the interest and use of mobile technologies by our clients. We will investigate:

- the level of current interest
- any identifiable differences between those who choose to study internally and externally
- whether the implementation of these new strategies leads to greater contact between clients and Librarians.

Outcomes

Analysis of the project will assist CDU library in determining our financial and professional priorities regarding the use of mobile technologies in the CDU Library context. Delivery of our paper will provide other institutions, particularly similar smaller institutions, with an opportunity to use our experience when considering the implications of mobile technologies for their Library.