Theme – Challenges and strategies involved in embracing mobile innovation for libraries

Title:

Anyone can do it: Building, developing, and maintaining a library mobile website without specialist knowledge

Abstract:

Many previous presentations and articles have described how libraries can develop their own innovative mobile websites in-house. However, for libraries that lack the required expertise and resources, the creation of a mobile website from scratch is a daunting proposition. Yet in an environment where users increasingly expect mobile versions of online services as a matter of course, all libraries must find a way to provide attractive, functional mobile websites to meet these expectations.

One strategy to overcome this challenge is to make use of vendor-provided solutions. These can take care of many technical challenges relating to mobile site development, leaving librarians free to concentrate on site content. The proposed paper will present the experience of Hong Kong Baptist University Library in implementing a mobile website using one such product (Mobile Site Builder by Springshare). While emphasis will be placed on the time and resources saved in taking this approach to building a mobile website, the costs of sacrificing total control over the design of the mobile website will not be neglected.

The discussion will be enriched by the presentation and analysis of extensive usage data gathered via another vendor tool - Google Analytics. The tracking code for this product was installed prior to the mobile website launch. From the resulting comprehensive dataset, numerous insights into our users and their experience using the mobile website can be extracted. These include the relative popularity of different mobile devices amongst our users, the frequency of visits, the average time spent on the site, and much more. Suggestions will be given on how such information might guide the library's mobile strategy going forward.