

M-Learning Libraries in Distance Education: A Proposed Model for IGNOU

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Mobile revolution has swept across the landscape. The value of mobile technologies has made a real time contribution to the teaching and learning experience and making it both self-evident and unavoidable. Mobile learning methods offer valuable possibilities for learners in remote and distant parts of the world. Mobile devices are within the reach of a learner and any information that is provided through these devices can be accessed by the learner very easily.

With the introduction of 3G spectrum and the second largest mobile market in the world, it is expected that mobile base will expand to 500 million subscribers by the year 2010 in India. It currently has 320 million potential mobile subscribers with an average growth of 10 million new subscribers increasing per month.

The use of wide range of mobile technologies has opened the doors for providing unique learning experiences outside the classroom. The elements of distance education can also be offered through these mobile devices. Modern digital libraries in India are supporting 'nomadic' computing through providing appropriate wireless networking 'hot-spots' and access to information through mobile devices to support flexible learning space and mobile learning.

Indira Gandhi National Open University is the largest University in the world with 1.85 million students on its rolls. It offers 138 academic courses with a student services network spread over 1804 Study Centres coordinated by 58 Regional Centres.

The University has initiated a National Open and Distance Learner's Library and Information Network that provides a platform incorporating advanced technology for resource sharing and disseminating supporting information among distance learners to facilitate the outcome as quality education at par with conventional educational community. Through this platform, the paper proposes model for providing e-resources and other information services through mobile technology to its learners. The paper will also identify the requirements of different type of learners pursuing different courses and will suggest to provide Selective Information Sources to each identified category.

The network will also recognize the available m-technologies like Personal Digital Assistants (PDAs), Tablet PCs, SmartPones handhelds, and laptops. It will suggest for Peer interaction among learners for exchange of messages as well as by posting messages to mobile blogs. Current Awareness Service and Other Information Alert Services can also be provided through Mobile SMSs.

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