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## **ABSTRACT**

The application of wireless communication services have recently managed to penetrate the educational enterprise in an effort to improve campus-wide information delivery services, for example, lecture notes, examination results, admissions and bursary. The article reviews the current state of wireless technology, explores the utilization of mobile phone services at a public university in Malaysia, investigates the nature of mobile phone usage among university students and their perceptions of practical mobile phone applications within the context of library services.

+ Asia has the world's largest users of wireless phones with an estimated 600M users in 2005. Malaysian wireless phone users have reached 14.5M exceeding half of the total population. Approximately 74% of the users send at least one simple text message (SMS) daily.

+ The most common wireless phone application services utilized in the educational setting are information queries/deliveries via SMS.

+ A more recent telecommunication standard, 3<sup>rd</sup> Generation (3G), a high-speed wireless technology, converges different devices, networks and content, and enables users to access data, voice, video, e-mail and internet through wireless application protocol (WAP). Wireless application in higher education is anticipated to extend to on-line library information services.

+ The convergence of mobile phones and the internet via the WAP standard presents libraries with the unique opportunity to deploy wireless phone technology to provide the following services: check/verify the record of books borrowed, renew library items, overdue and outstanding fines alerts, forward reference inquiries to a librarian, and library event information.

+ For measurement and data collection, a questionnaire was designed to elicit demographic information, experience in using mobile hand phones and awareness of available services, patterns of library use, perception of library services that may be provided via mobiles, and willingness to utilize and bear the cost of these services.

**+ Survey highlights: all respondents owned a mobile unit; 86% utilized for four years or less; 94% principally utilized simple message service (SMS); the information service receiving highest usage (97%) was “Games”; also, students responded favorably to a “library renewal service” application.**

**+ Few libraries provide services via mobile phone technology and limit them to operating hours and basic circulation information. In collaboration, librarians must determine the appropriate functions to be delivered via the restrictions of the small interface environment of the pervasive student mobile phone. The Malaysian survey findings suggest that the institution of a “borrowing and renewal service” should be given a thoughtful review and consideration.**