

BYOD Revolution in Libraries: Are You Ready?

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Abstract: Electronic gadgets, with different features including smartphones and tablet computers have been rising in popularity in the recent times. In today's networked world students want network access for smartphones, tablets and other personal electronic gadgets in their campus. This trend is commonly termed as "bring your own device" (BYOD). Traditionally library was not a place where personal belongings are entertained. Property counters have become an integral part of libraries all the time. However now accepting the global e-learning trend Library and Information Science Professionals are welcoming BYOD in Libraries. Benefits like lower cost for implementing, co-construction of knowledge through social learning, promotion of personalised learning are some of the benefits of BYOD. Compatibility of devices and security of network are some of the resultant problems. Intention of the paper is to make aware of the challenges and potential of BYOD and help the Library and Information Science professionals to formulate faultless BYOD policy.

Key words: BYOD ; Bring Your Own Device ; Data Security ; Copyright

Introduction

Personally owned digital devices are now widely used in educational institutions for teaching and learning process. The wide use of personally owned digital devices raises new challenges to the Library and Information Centers. Electronic gadgets are becoming an integral part of the library's routine activities. However it is sad to observe that many libraries are slow moving to integrate mobile technology into their services. What are the benefits and drawback for adopting this model?

BYOD in Education

BYOD is a term used to refer to the trend of bringing a personally owned electronic devices to the work, college...etc and use them on the organization's network. It is a learning model that provides anytime access to educational resources empowered by mobile technology in its connected or disconnected form.

Change in the Attitude of Librarians

Libraries were a sanctuary of silence once and Librarians were stereotyped as nerd persons in fiction and movies with an unwelcome mind and gestures. Buzzing mobile phones were enemy of librarian till recent past. But now in the cyber era mobile phones is no more a foe to librarian instead it has metamorphosed into a trusted companion. Now librarians are prompting users to check overdue alert and access e-resources in these pocket computers. Mobile phones have become the key to unlock the unlimited power of knowledge. Now this companion device is proudly welcomed by Library and Information Science professionals.

Change in the Attitude of Users

Use of BYOD devices is forecasted to grow in a tremendous speed. Electronic devices are getting cheaper and cheaper and it has become integral part of everyone's life. At this juncture setting policies and determine the level of access are real challenges for Library and Information Science professionals. In future library users will demand different formats of books which can be accessed through their electronic gadgets. Instead of print books and shelves the priority of user may be cozy work stations and comfortable sitting places where they can use the resources made available through their personal gadgets. Educational institutions should foresee infinite possibilities of BYOD and prepare strategy to address the usage of BYOD.

BYOD Models in Education

Classrooms have undergone sea change now. Educational psychologists confirm that liking for the device and a preferred learning method accelerate learning process. BYOD in class rooms emerged foreseeing new generation students habit of clinging to the electronic gadgets. Metamorphosis of the class rooms is the need of the hour in the digital era. Multitude of mobile apps are available handy now in various subject areas to make smartphone learning enjoyable. Mentors can connect with students easily than before. Apart from this BYOD can positively reduce the overhead expense of educational institutes, as the institutes expenses to build IT infrastructure can be cut short.

Responsibilities of a Librarian

Role of librarian in selecting BYOD models is vital. The responsibilities of librarian include

1. Develop practical norms, policies and standards to manage student owned gadgets.

2. Acquire knowledge to give support to clients when technical problems arise.
3. Select library resources which is compatible with latest gadgets.
4. Plan strategies to improve institutions data network to improve data security.

Education institutions that have taken the issue seriously will naturally invest more for the protection of data.

Practical Use of BYOD

1. Usage of e-resources which supports the educational programmes will be accelerated.
2. The usage of e-books, e- journals and LIS modules and LMS modules will increase.
3. Online collaborative works will be promoted in a good way due to this.
4. Avoids un wanted printing cost of study materials.
5. Asynchronous communication with librarians and teachers can be accelerated.

Possible Dangers of BYOD

- (1) BYOD and access to social media may pave security threats to institution networks.
- (2) Virus-infected mobile devices will be a big headache for network managers.
- (3) Diversity of gadgets and OS accommodated into the network can create problems.
- (4) Copyright infringement threats.
- (7) Increase of Cyber crimes.

(8) Problems in walk-in / guest network access in the campus.

Precautions to be Taken

- (1) Monitor who and what is connecting to the network.
- (2) Identify the endpoint devices which students connects to the network.
- (3) BYOD guidelines are to be formed according to the specific nature of the institution.
- (4) Provision of access based on location and time.
- (5) Limited access provision for unsuitable devices.
- (6) Secure storage place should be provided for the electronic gadgets for the library users.
- (7) Review of BYOD policy from time to time considering the opinion of the clients.
- (9) Balance view should be kept on the matter of security of the network and comfort of the clients.
- (10) Provision for controlled access to guests.

Conclusion

Unlike the traditional practice librarian/ system manager lacks control over the data . Data storage, data transfer, data leakage are some issues to be considered seriously . Social media policy also can be implemented if extended use of BYOD accelerates use of social media. If safety issues can be set aside , the world of information is at the fingertips. Because of some thorny issues like device issues and privacy we cannot set aside this technology for long. Educational institutions have to revise their security policies to keep abreast with the current context. A progressive digital culture is need of the hour.

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