

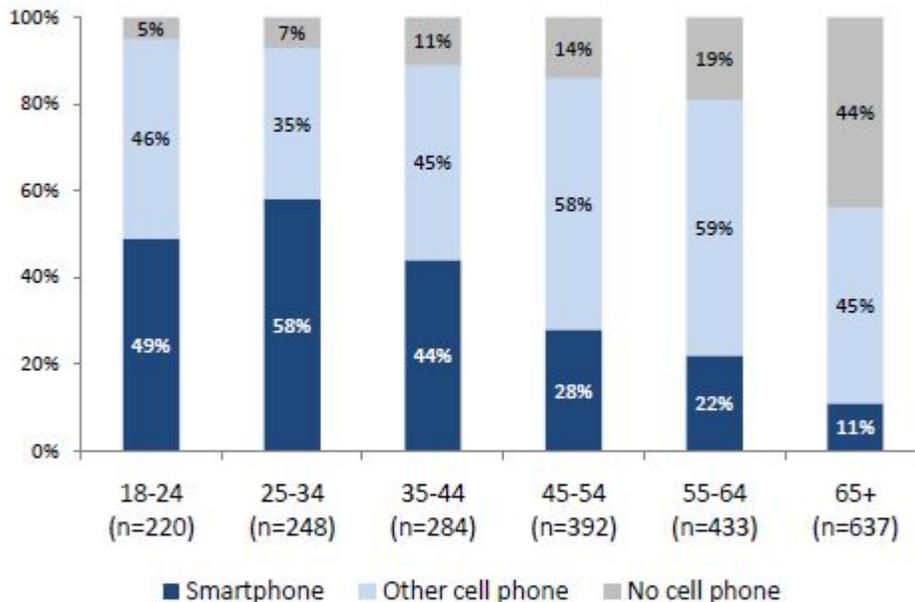
On The Go: Developing a mobile web presence for your library

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For libraries that are still wondering whether it's worth it to create mobile-friendly options, here are a few reasons. One reason is that LOTS of people have smartphones. According to the August 2011 Pew Internet & American Life Project report *Americans and Their Cell Phones*, "Mobile phones have become a near-ubiquitous tool for information seeking and communicating." And lots of those people who have smartphones are in our target market age range for academic libraries. Figure 1 shows smartphone ownership by age, and demonstrates that the two highest adoption groups are 18-24 years old (with an adoption rate of 49%) and 25-34 (with an adoption rate of 58%). These figures are from Pew's Spring Tracking Survey in 2011, so the figures are even higher by now.

Smartphone ownership by age

% of US adults within each group who own a smartphone, some other type of cell phone, or no cell phone



Source: The Pew Research Center's Internet & American Life Project, April 26 – May 22, 2011 Spring Tracking Survey. n=2,277 adult internet users ages 18 and older, including 755 cell phone interviews. Interviews were conducted in English and Spanish. "Smartphone ownership" includes those who say their phone is a smartphone, or who describe their phone as running on the Android, Blackberry, iPhone, Palm or Windows platforms.

Also, lots of the people who have smartphones use them as their primary internet access. According to the July 2011 Pew Internet & American Life Project report *Smartphone Adoption and Usage*, "42% of smartphone owners age 18-29 go online mostly using their cell phone." You may ask yourself: Yes, people use their smartphones to go online, but do they access LIBRARY services online? Our Golden Gate University library site analytics show that they do! Figure 2

demonstrates the increased access of the university library's website by mobile platforms over the past two years.

Mobile Devices

Nov 20, 2009 - Nov 30, 2011



These mobile devices sent 2,374 visits via 10 operating systems

So, now that I've convinced you to create mobile-friendly access for your patrons, let's talk about what you might want to include in an app or mobile site. First, ask your users. You can get a good feel for what direction to take with your mobile services by asking the people they are intended for. You can get a rough idea of how many of your patrons have smartphones, what types of devices they have, and what services they'd like to use. This can inform all the next steps that you take.

The simplest thing to start with is by doing a survey of mobile apps or interfaces that are already available. For example, many database providers have developed mobile interfaces or apps for their services, so you can start by gathering these together and offering them in one place. If you have access to website statistics, take a look at the analytics for your library site to find out what webpages and services people use the most. Analytics can also give you an idea of how many users are accessing your site already using mobile devices, and which devices and platforms they're using. In addition, doing a survey of other library's mobile sites can give you inspiration for types of services to include, interface design, and other considerations.

Another decision to make is how to build your mobile-friendly services. There are several options for downloading open source code and adapting it to your purposes, such as from Kurogo or jQuery Mobile, or from other library sites such as the University of Michigan. If you don't have the staffing or expertise to use open source code, there are also hosted options available. A few include Springshare, Boopsie, and LibraryAnywhere from LibraryThing. At our library we decided to go with a hosted option to reduce our maintenance efforts and be able to focus on content.

Once you have a mobile site, you need spread the word! We posted flyers around campus with screenshots of our mobile site, and giant QR codes leading to our site. We also have an automatic redirect from our library homepage for users accessing our site with a mobile device. We put information about it in our newsletter, on our website, and in emails to our users. We also promote it in class visits, and hand out library contact business cards with our QR code on them.

So far, our main measurement for success is usage statistics. We've seen a slow but steady increase in the usage statistics for our mobile site and mobile services. We count that as success, and we wish you success as well!

Online handout, with suggested readings, at <http://bit.ly/car12012mobile>
Slides at <http://margothanson.com/presentation/car12012>