The smartphone is rapidly becoming a common tool in the healthcare environment. Increasing numbers of students began asking for assistance in identifying and loading information resources onto their devices. In order to gather all of our mobile information together, the reference staff developed a LibGuide that is available to patrons at all times.

As of mid-April 2011, attendance at the drop-in sessions by about 10 people, and at the afternoon sessions two more scheduled for June to accommodate various course schedules.

Since the GW wireless network does not support Blackberry devices, we suspect that may be the reason for the lack of participation at the drop-in sessions by Blackberry users.

As additional resources become available, we plan to add them to both the mobile website and the Mobile Resources LibGuide.

Mobile LibGuide

The Reference Desk receives numerous questions from patrons about smartphones; everything from resource availability to platform and purchase advice. In order to gather all of our mobile information together, the reference staff developed a LibGuide that is available to patrons at all times.

• From October 2010 to March 2011, the Mobile LibGuide received 965 hits. The majority of viewers visited the Websites and Apps page (609 hits), while Calculators (98 hits), Utilities (99 hits), and Wireless Access and Device Tips (159 hits) received less traffic.

The mobile website continues to evolve. A few additional resources have been linked to the site, and some of the category wording has been tweaked to be clearer.

In early 2011, the University launched their mobile app and a link to the library's mobile website has been included in the app.

The Mobile Resources LibGuide is also evolving. We realized that the layout we had chosen to display the mobile apps and mobile-optimized websites is not easily viewable on a handheld device, so we are experimenting with new layouts that will display more easily on a mobile device.

As more resources become available in a mobile format, they will be added to the website. We anticipate a library catalog update in a few months that will provide access to a mobile-friendly interface.

From October 2010 to mid-April 2011, the mobile website received 435 hits in its first six months of existence.

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Due to the popularity of mobile devices, the reference staff has begun experimenting with QR codes. A QR code is a barcode that can be photographed with a smartphone and then decoded with free software nearly instantaneously. The bar code can be linked to a website or web-based resource. For example, to view the Himmelfarb Library mobile website, photograph and decode this QR code.

• It includes a section on specific health information mobile-optimized websites and apps; both freely available and obtained via the library’s electronic resource licenses. Another section provides links to free and fee-based clinical calculators, and a third section focuses on mobile utilities for GW users.

• One section gathers practical information on the various platforms as well as step-by-step instructions on accessing GW’s wireless network from a mobile device.

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