

PUBLISHERS *for* DEVELOPMENT *in Action*

RESEARCH IN THE PALM OF YOUR HAND

Cambridge University Press' low bandwidth mobile access point - CJOM

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During the May 2010 PfD meeting, 'Global Research Effort', we had a session exploring how publishers might help to support access to resources in low-bandwidth areas. Designed and hosted by Alan Jackson, Aptivate, the session centred on a simulated student computer room in an unspecified developing country. Through this simulation publishers were able to experience how developing country researchers might access their resources in a low-bandwidth environment. A blog of the session, [Global Accessibility: The role of the content provider](#), is available through the Aptivate website.

From mobile to low-band

As many publishers are now designing platforms for mobile interfaces, a suggestion was that these might serve two purposes:

1. as mobile access points
2. as online entry points for low-bandwidth environments

This way, publishers can, firstly, ensure that these platforms reflect the ways researchers search, and secondly, achieve a simple design perfect for environments where 'bells and whistles' or multiple pages cause significant delays. This is a practical and important method of improving researchers' access to resources in developing countries.

The PfD team has received a lot of positive feedback following the session. Many publishers were keen to investigate how they might adapt their own interfaces and explore low-bandwidth solutions. We were particularly thrilled to hear how quick to respond Cambridge University Press (CUP) were, when they announced in November 2010 that their mobile interface, Cambridge Journals Online Mobile (CJOM), could also be used as a low-bandwidth access point.

Cambridge Journals Online

Cambridge Journals Online (CJO), the online publishing service for journals at CUP, launched CJOM as a way to help the busy reader browse and carry-out research while on the move. CJOM offers a streamlined version of the platform, which is home to over 250 internationally influential academic journals. CJOM allows users to search for journal content, read articles, save favourites and register for content alerts on their hand-held devices. Anything saved through a mobile can be picked up again when back at a desktop/laptop, and vice versa.

Director of Cambridge Journals, Simon Ross, explained the thinking behind the development:

"Journal articles and related content are primarily accessed online and we have seen an increasing number of visits to CJO via mobile devices. This information, in conjunction with feedback from customers, a wide range of user groups and our society publishing partners has led to CJO Mobile. It marks the beginning of our exploration of mobile internet that gives users

what they want whenever they request it, wherever they are located."

These developments could have ended here. However, after attending the Aptivate session in May, Caroline Kerbyson (Sales Executive, Journals) encouraged her colleagues to capitalise on these developments and improve their services to users in low-bandwidth environments.

Caroline saw opting for a mobile website, rather than a mobile application for a specific platform (iPhone, Android etc), would have the added benefit of offering a low-bandwidth version of CJO which could be accessed from standard computers. This is because CJOM has:

- a simplified design
- low resolution images
- an emphasis on text
- smaller data size

As a result of these features, CJOM functions as a quick access point for those with low-bandwidth internet access. Simply put - it is easier to use over slower internet connections. This is crucial for CUP as they participate in a number of access programmes in low-bandwidth environments. CJOM offers an easy route to research content/journal content.

Looking to the future, Simon said the user experience of CJOM would be critical: "As with our desktop site, we aim to grow mobile functionality by asking our users how we can improve it, and by keeping an eye on the latest devices and software to ensure we provide a rich and useful mobile learning resource."

CJOM

<http://jnls.cup.org>

Cambridge University Press

<http://www.cambridge.com>

Global Accessibility

The role of the content provider

<http://blog.aptivate.org/2010/06/08/simulating-low-bandwidth-publishers-for-development/>



Publishers for Development (PfD) is a joint initiative of The Association of Commonwealth Universities (ACU) and the International Network for the Availability of Scientific Publications (INASP).