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# 1st International m-libraries conference,

13-14 November 2007, The Open  
University, Milton Keynes

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People everywhere are on the move and technology is either leading them there or supporting them on their journey. Highlighting this is the rapid growth of mobile technologies: there are now well over 2 billion mobile phone users throughout the world.

Like many service providers, today's library is facing the challenge of evolving to become tomorrow's library. A new model of library services is needed, a library that is there where you want it and when you need it – a library in your pocket. Mobile technologies have the potential to bridge the digital divide and to improve the access to library resources of people all over the world, particularly people in developing countries where Internet coverage is poor but where mobile phone coverage is high.

Wednesday 14 November saw the successful conclusion of the first two day International m-libraries conference, hosted by The Open University in partnership with Athabasca University in Canada.



The conference aim was to explore and share work carried out in libraries around the world to deliver services and resources to users on the

move, via a growing plethora of mobile and hand-held devices. M-libraries (standing for mobile libraries) brought together over 100 researchers, technical developers, educators, managers and library practitioners from more than 20 different countries (including Nepal, Sri Lanka, Serbia and Zimbabwe) to exchange experience and expertise, and to generate ideas for future developments.

One delegate from Zimbabwe said "It is an exciting idea to think about mobile technologies being used for information transmission. I am particularly interested in services for non-resident students, it has always been a challenge for us to get information to the students at the right time."

Speakers at the event included Joan Lippincott from the Coalition for Networked Information in the United States and Dr Mohamed Ally from Athabasca University in Canada. The conference, labelled as 'inspiring' by one delegate, has led to the creation of a new international organisation that will be exploring the possibilities and the future promise that mobile technologies encourage for meeting the needs of library users.

The next m-libraries conference has been scheduled for spring 2009 and will be held in Canada.

m-libraries website <http://library.open.ac.uk/mLibraries/>