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Reflections on the Impact of a Library-based Personal Digital Assistant (PDA) Service

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Rick Wallace, Nakia Cook, Travis Clamon
East Tennessee State University / Quillen College of Medicine Library

Background
De Groote and Doranski (2004) noted, “All librarians in information services departments at health sciences libraries need to be able to provide consistent and knowledgeable PDA support” (p. 346).

Rios (2004) stated, “With the convergence between our profession and other information technology professions, librarians have a choice to be involved with PDAs or be bypassed” (p. 17).

EBM experts, Shaughnessy and Slawson (n.d.), suggested that the PDA would become the stethoscope of the future.

Orgins
ETSU QCOM Library received a grant to encourage use of PDAs to attending physicians. The goal was to eliminate barriers to technology use. Gradually, the service has grown and been promoted mostly by word of mouth.

PDA Platform Breakdown

Gender Breakdown

Survey Results
Q.1 If the ETSU Quillen College of Medicine Library did not assist/promote the use of PDAs, would you be a PDA user?

Survey Results (cont.)
Q.6 What is your favorite database on your PDA?

Conclusion
Since the inception of the PDA services, the library has serviced over 2,000 PDA devices.
• The survey results can serve as a basis for collection development.
• The results appear to dispel stereotypes of technology specifically gender and age.
• Provides data showing the need for a library based PDA service especially with issues related to support and installation of databases.
• The PDA Platform breakdown gives us an idea of possible PDA purchasing trends.
• This service has increased the perception of the library’s value significantly across our university.

References

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Survey Results
Q.2 How often do you use your PDA??

Q.3 Do you find the ETSU Quillen College of Medicine Library’s PDA Service Useful?

Q.4 Do you feel confident you could install the PDA software without the Library’s help?

Q.5 Do you feel the programs the Library install on your PDA are useful?

Survey Results
97.22% - Yes
2.78% - No
97.22% - Yes
2.78% - No

97.22% - Yes
2.78% - No
97.22% - Yes
74.07% - No
25.93% - Yes
97.22% - Yes
2.78% - No

Age Breakdown

Organizational Breakdown