

MOBILE LIBRARY SERVICES IN UZBEKISTAN: CURRENT STATE, FUNCTIONAL MODELS, AND DEVELOPMENT PRIORITIES

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Abstract: The article analyzes the current state of mobile services in the libraries of Uzbekistan. Existing mobile library and near-library applications are examined as two major groups: open nationwide platforms and specialized educational services with restricted access. Using the examples of Mutolaa, Kitob.uz, Asaxiy Books, KUAF Mutolaa, SamDTU Books, and TDIUSF Kutubxonasi, the study compares content type, target audience, access model, language policy, and functional capabilities. The analysis shows that Uzbekistan has already developed an emerging ecosystem of mobile library services; however, its growth remains fragmented and uneven. Major problems include weak user feedback channels, the absence of recommendation mechanisms, limited personalization tools, and the lack of a dedicated mobile application for the National Library of Uzbekistan.

Keywords: mobile library services, libraries of Uzbekistan, mobile application, digital library, Mutolaa, Kitob.uz, Asaxiy Books, National Library of Uzbekistan.

Annotatsiya: Ushbu maqolada O'zbekiston kutubxonalarida mobil xizmatlarning hozirgi holati tahlil qilinadi. Maqolada mamlakatdagi amaldagi mobil kutubxona va kutubxona atrofidagi ilovalar ochiq umumrespublika platformalari hamda cheklangan kirishga ega ixtisoslashgan ta'lim servislariga ajratilgan holda ko'rib chiqiladi. Mutolaa, Kitob.uz, Asaxiy Books, KUAF Mutolaa, SamDTU Books va TDIUSF Kutubxonasi misolida ularning kontent turi, foydalanuvchi auditoriyasi, kirish modeli, til siyosati va funksional imkoniyatlari tahlil qilinadi. Tadqiqot natijasida O'zbekistonda mobil kutubxona xizmatlari shakllanayotgan bo'lsa-da, ularning rivojlanishi hali ham fragmentar va notekis ekani aniqlanadi. Asosiy muammolar sifatida foydalanuvchi bilan ikki tomonlama aloqaning sustligi, tavsiya

mexanizmlarining yo'qligi, shaxsiylashtirish vositalarining cheklanganligi va O'zbekiston Milliy kutubxonasining o'z mobil ilovasiga ega emasligi ko'rsatib beriladi.

Kalit soʻzlar: mobil library services, Uzbekistan libraries, mobile application, digital library, Mutolaa, Kitob.uz, Asaxiy Books, National Library of Uzbekistan.

Аннотация: В статье анализируется современное состояние мобильных сервисов в библиотеках Узбекистана. Действующие мобильные библиотечные и околобиблиотечные приложения страны рассматриваются как две основные группы: открытые общенациональные платформы и специализированные образовательные сервисы с ограниченным доступом. На примере Mutolaa, Kitob.uz, Asaxiy Books, KUAF Mutolaa, SamDTU Books и TDIUSF Kutubxonasi сопоставляются тип контента, целевая аудитория, модель доступа, языковая политика и функциональные возможности. Показано, что в Узбекистане уже формируется экосистема мобильных библиотечных сервисов, однако её развитие остаётся фрагментарным. Среди ключевых проблем выделяются слабая обратная связь с пользователями, отсутствие рекомендательных механизмов, ограниченность персонализации и отсутствие собственного мобильного приложения у Национальной библиотеки Узбекистана.

Ключевые слова: мобильные библиотечные сервисы, библиотеки Узбекистана, мобильное приложение, цифровая библиотека, Mutolaa, Kitob.uz, Asaxiy Books, Национальная библиотека Узбекистана.

Introduction

The rapid digitalization of information environments has changed the conditions under which libraries preserve their relevance and competitiveness. In the contemporary media landscape, a large documentary collection alone no longer guarantees sustained user demand. Libraries now compete with commercial digital platforms that offer immediate, personalized, and mobile access to content. Under such conditions, the ability to deliver information through mobile channels has become a strategic necessity rather than an optional technological supplement.

Against this background, the present state of mobile services in Uzbekistan deserves special attention. The country has already developed several mobile applications connected either directly or indirectly with library activity. At the same time, these services differ substantially in mission, openness, technological maturity, and user orientation. A systematic analysis of these differences makes it possible to

identify both the achievements already made and the structural gaps that still prevent the emergence of an integrated national model of mobile library service.

Two Functional Models of Mobile Services in Uzbekistan

The materials of paragraph 1.3 show that the current Uzbek mobile library environment can be divided into two broad categories. The first includes open nationwide platforms designed for wide public use. The second consists of specialized educational services with restricted access, usually intended for students and staff of particular higher education institutions. This distinction is not merely technical. It reflects different service philosophies, different audiences, and different understandings of what a mobile library should provide.

Open nationwide platforms are primarily aimed at promoting reading and giving broad access to digital books and audiobooks. Specialized university services, by contrast, are more closely tied to academic infrastructure and are designed to support the educational process. As a result, the mobile library landscape in Uzbekistan is not uniform. It is a set of overlapping but functionally distinct solutions that have emerged within different institutional and social contexts.

Nationwide Reading Platforms

One of the most visible examples of a public-oriented mobile reading service is Mutolaa. The platform is symbolically linked to the legacy of Mahmudhoja Behbudiy and the historical Mutolaaxona library founded in Samarkand in 1908. In its current digital form, Mutolaa offers open access to electronic and audiobooks in Uzbek and Karakalpak. According to the source material, the platform has accumulated a large user base and a substantial volume of digital content. Its model combines free access with premium subscription options, while tag-based filtering and support channels improve navigability and practical usability.

Kitob.uz represents another important type of open mobile platform. Created with the participation of the Ministry of Preschool and School Education of the Republic of Uzbekistan, it is explicitly oriented toward the popularization of reading among younger audiences. The platform includes thousands of electronic and audio titles and is available on both Android and iOS. Its multilingual interface, which supports Uzbek, Russian, English, and Karakalpak, is especially significant because it expands accessibility beyond a narrowly defined linguistic community. At the same time, the source notes functional limitations, including the absence of search filters and built-in user support mechanisms.

A different service model is represented by Asaxiy Books, a commercial digital reading platform integrated into the broader Asaxiy publishing and retail ecosystem. The project focuses on translated world bestsellers in Uzbek, especially in business, self-development, psychology, and fiction. Access is predominantly paid, although some materials may be available through subscription. Among its practical advantages are bookmarks, search tools, tag-based filtering, and offline reading after content download. These features show that commercial digital reading services may respond more actively to convenience-oriented user expectations than many library-centered platforms.

Restricted Educational Services

The second major category consists of mobile services developed for limited institutional use. KUAF Mutolaa, created for students and staff of the Andijan branch of Kokand University, functions in Uzbek and requires authorization through Hemis ID. Access to many digital materials is tied to the university library system and, according to the source, may require on-site interaction with QR codes inside the library building. Such a model ensures control over access, but it also reduces the flexibility of remote use.

SamDTU Books, associated with Samarkand State Medical University, is another example of an institution-specific digital platform. It provides medical textbooks, methodological manuals, monographs, and other academic materials. A significant part of the content is licensed and available only to authorized members of the university community. In this case, the application serves an important academic support function, yet its practical scope remains limited by its closed access model.

TDIUSF Kutubxonasi demonstrates an even narrower functional profile. Rather than offering full digital texts, the application performs a bibliographic and cataloguing role. It supplies information about author, language, year of publication, number of pages, subject category, and physical availability in the printed collection. This makes it useful as a reference tool, but not as a full mobile library service in the contemporary sense, since it does not solve the core problem of direct content access.

Comparative Patterns and Development Gaps

A comparison of the examined applications reveals several stable patterns. Nationwide platforms such as Mutolaa, Kitob.uz, and Asaxiy Books are oriented toward broad audiences and focus on reading and listening content, but they differ in monetization strategies, linguistic policy, and service depth. University applications are

tied to narrow user communities and are mostly designed to support teaching and learning. Their functionality is often more limited, and their service logic is administrative rather than reader-centered.

Language policy is also uneven. Kitob.uz stands out because of its multilingual design, while Mutolaa broadens access for Karakalpak-speaking users. Most university platforms remain predominantly monolingual, which reflects their local academic orientation. Another common weakness is the almost complete absence of user feedback channels. The examined applications generally do not include built-in chat, forum functions, recommendation systems, or advanced personalization tools. This means that many services remain transactional rather than interactive.

The most important strategic gap identified in the source material is that none of the examined applications belongs to the National Library of Uzbekistan. The country's principal library institution still lacks its own mobile service. This absence is not a merely technical detail. It signals a structural weakness in the national library system because, without a dedicated mobile application, the National Library cannot fully act as a central coordinator of digital access, a national interface for readers, or a leading actor in the mobile transformation of library services.

Conclusion

The analysis of paragraph 1.3 makes it possible to conclude that Uzbekistan already possesses an emerging ecosystem of mobile library and near-library applications. These services perform valuable functions: they popularize reading, provide access to electronic and audio content, support educational processes, and help users navigate library collections. At the same time, their development remains fragmented. They differ substantially in openness, technological sophistication, service philosophy, and user orientation.

The central challenge is therefore not the absence of mobile initiatives as such, but the lack of integration, uniform quality, and national coordination. Weak feedback channels, limited personalization, and the partial character of many current solutions reduce the effectiveness of the existing ecosystem. The absence of a dedicated mobile application for the National Library of Uzbekistan is especially significant. The next stage of development should be directed not simply toward multiplying isolated applications, but toward creating a more comprehensive, user-oriented, and nationally coordinated mobile library platform.

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