

Communicating Agricultural Leadership Through Mobile Technology

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Abstract

Mobile learning presents agricultural communicators working with the Cooperative Extension Service a unique way to address issues currently facing Extension agents (Xie & Gu, 2007). Two issues facing Extension programs focusing on leadership development of individuals involved with agricultural industries are increasing budget reductions and a limited amount of time to disseminate relevant information during traditional face-to-face seminars. In addition, it is believed that mobile learning will also provide increased communication between both current program participants as well as program alumni. Twenty-nine current participants in a statewide Extension leadership program were given iPods as part of their two-year program experience. Data was collected during their first year of the program to determine: participants' preferences and how they relate to mobile learning; how mobile devices were utilized and participants' preferences of utilizing mobile learning in leadership programming. This study will show that participants have positive attitudes towards mobile learning and that they have incorporated it into their leadership program experience. Further research in this area should be conducted as many Extension programs could use mobile learning to enhance and maintain their programming efforts.

Keywords: mobile learning; mobile technology; leadership programming; Extension programs; self-directed learning; adult learning; communication technology