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Techie to the rescue

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Snapshots:Of Book Overflow.

An undergraduate has developed an open source application that reminds students to return books to the library

Are you one of those who tend to borrow several books from the library but never seem to remember the due date for turning them in?

Pritesh Sankhe, a student of B.Tech at the Indian Institute of Technology, Gandhinagar (IITGN) always forgot to return books at the library and ended up paying late-fines. Once when he had to cough up a fine of Rs. 300, he decided to do something about it. Being a techie, he created a mobile phone application to alert him of the due date. Realising the usefulness of the tool, he circulated an alpha version of it amongst college mates for feedback and that resulted in an open source android application that he calls Book Overflow.

He wrote the script for the application, connected it with the IITGN library software SOUL and made it available to everyone in the institute to download and use for free.

Explaining how it works, he says, “When a student borrows a book from the library, the mobile phone application automatically or manually registers the details by syncing with the digital data available in the library. When the due date for returning the book closes in, the user’s mobile phone will regularly start alerting by flashing the name of the book and the due date for returning it.”

Initially sceptical of the idea, the college slowly came around to the fact that around 80 students who had android phones were using the application, he says.

The local application is an open source one and can be freely availed by any other library as well. It will work in any university or college using the Software for University Libraries (SOUL), an integrated library management software designed and developed by the INFLIBNET Centre based on requirements of college and university libraries. This user-friendly software is being used by many of the college libraries across the country, including Jawaharlal Nehru University, Delhi University, Indian Institute of Management, Ahmadabad, Gujarat Vidyapith and All India Institute of Medical Sciences, among others.

Going forward, Pritesh plans to add more features for books like ‘que up’, ‘favourite’ or ‘read it later’. He also wishes to

approach SOUL and share his idea with them to help more students like himself who are as forgetful.

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