

## IBM Accessibility Facebook Expert Hour on Mobile Usability Transcript 07/26/2011

[IBM Accessibility](#) Good morning, good afternoon, and good evening, everyone. Welcome to the July IBM Accessibility Expert Hour. Our topic today is "Mobile Usability".

[Bill Creswell](#) likes this.

[IBM Accessibility](#) We have five IBM experts today who are looking forward to answering your questions.

[IBM Accessibility](#) \* Brian Cragun, IBM Master Inventor & Accessibility Consultant

\* David Dracoules, IBM Systems Software Development Advisory Software Engineer/Windows Engineer

\* Susann Keohane, IBM Master Inventor and Accessibility Consultant

\* Matt King, IBM I/T Chief Accessibility Strategist

\* Rich Schwerdtfeger, IBM Software Chief Technology Officer, Accessibility, IBM Distinguished Engineer and Master Inventor

[Matt King](#) likes this.

[IBM Accessibility](#) So a few housekeeping items. :-)

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[IBM Accessibility](#) To ask a question, type it into the box on your screen that says, "Write something..." and press Enter. Our experts will answer your question as a Comment, and it will show up underneath your question.

[IBM Accessibility](#) Please remember to refresh occasionally -- sometimes Facebook has trouble keeping up with the pace of our Expert Hours.

[IBM Accessibility](#) Okay, let's open the floor for questions. :-)

[Andy Schirmer](#) What is your advice about whether or not to use "on hover" gestures, for help, navigation, action menus, etc.? Should they be avoided altogether or are there recommended fallback techniques to use with them? Hover is particularly problematic with the rise of touch interfaces on devices of all sizes.

[Shreyans Jain](#) likes this.

[Brian Cragun](#) Are you talking about web or native apps?

[Andy Schirmer](#) Both, on desktop, pads, and small mobile devices

[Brian Cragun](#) For native apps, iPhone has a nice implementation with VoiceOver that handles "hover" through touch and hold; this is actually well utilized by blind users. In HTML5 apps, however they are not accessible, so until we have a way to assign gestures for hover, use an alternative method.

[Andy Schirmer](#) Hover is sometimes used to reduce clutter by making affordances less visible, but "accidentally discoverable." This would seem not to work well with techniques like touch and hold.

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[Sharron Rush](#) yes the iPhone seems to be doing quite well for blind users - Does Apple support apps developers to make sure they incorporate accessibility when building apps? if so, how?

[Brian Cragun](#) Sharron: Apple does have documentation about how to make apps accessible. Try this link: <http://bit.ly/nfZo28>

[Matt King](#) Andy, right ... it could easily be though if IOS had an equivalent of aria-haspopup that would indicate that a pop-up menu is available. Then the VO user would know that hover actions are available. This is a good recommendation for Apple.

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[Andy Schirmer](#) Thanks all. One more. If a desktop web app makes heavy use of hover, do you know of particular techniques to translate the functionality to touch devices with a minimum of recoding?

[Matt King](#) on desktop, are you using title attrib in html?

[Andy Schirmer](#) I believe so. I don't write the code. :-)

[Sharron Rush](#) What do you consider the most serious accessibility barriers related to the use of mobile devices?

[David Dracoules](#) - Accessibility layers not being implemented correctly on the mobile device.

[Rich Schwerdtfeger](#) Well, for the Web we need device independent events to respond to input other than a keyboard.

[Rich Schwerdtfeger](#) HTML5 accessibility API mappings are incomplete

[Sharron Rush](#) And how are those issues best addressed at the design level?

[Rich Schwerdtfeger](#) Big problems - built in screen readers largely only seem to support built in controls. This leaves many non-native platform applications inaccessible

[Rich Schwerdtfeger](#) Clear guidance needs to be made on how to produce an accessible UI widget with the APIs that are available. Also, if there is a problem with a built in AT I don't believe that you get the same response that you would get with a private AT vendor. These are big companies where you can't just fund them to focus on your problem.

[Sharron Rush](#) Is that "clear guidance" something we can expect from the W3C or from where?

[Rich Schwerdtfeger](#) Companies like Apple should be producing that they own the APIs for the platform.

[Brian Cragun](#) Good question about where. See answers to Marnie Hoover's question.

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[Marnie Hoover](#) Hi. I was wondering which groups are creating accessibility standards that will impact mobile device accessibility?

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[Rich Schwerdtfeger](#) There is a new working group, currently being chartered, that will impact things like device independence, in the W3C. However, because the industry is converging on mobile technology I would not limit these features to "mobile". For example, tablets and touch devices will be more the norm.

[Rich Schwerdtfeger](#) Personalization and context awareness will also be important in a mobile working environment.

[Marnie Hoover](#) Thank you

[Sharron Rush](#) and here is something from the w3c about mobile and accessibility - more of a mapping than a real guide, however. <http://www.w3.org/WAI/mobile/>

[Danese Frazier Turner](#) Pls verify that link. I'm unable to access.

[IBM Accessibility](#) I just tried it and it worked, Danese.

[Danese Frazier Turner](#) Thanks! I originally tried it inside the firewall. Duhh!

[Danese Frazier Turner](#) Are there IBM accessibility guidelines for mobile courses posted on the Accessibility Center? I've not been able to find any.

[Dennis Lembree](#) Mobile Web Best Practices 1.0 from W3C: <http://bit.ly/nL0NnY>  
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[Phil Briers](#) Thanks..

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[Fran Hayden](#) This is great discussion - great questions and super panel... My question: What are your top recommendations to make a mobile application usable and accessible?

[Fran Hayden](#) OK - they don't have to be YOUR recommendations - just what is the current "best practice" thinking

[Rich Schwerdtfeger](#) - Use a platform with enabled accessibility  
- Use the built-in platform standard UI components. Built in AT will support them.  
- For longer term planning target web applications as they will become accessible across platforms and new FCC laws will enforce Twenty-First Century Communication and Video Act requirements that mobile web browsers support accessibility in 3 years.  
-As on other platforms but even more so: keep it simple.

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[Dennis Lembree](#) For more on Android, check out this blog by WebAxe: <http://bit.ly/l8uxPb>  
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[David Dracoules](#) Hi Dennis... thanks so much! Fantastic Blog!!

[Susann Keohane](#) Thanks Dennis great link. The mobile ASL project is very interesting.

[Rich Schwerdtfeger](#) so, general problem is that their accessibility API is designed to allow an AT to speak automatically in response to user actions but the ability to review the content of the app. is deficient. Also, Google is very focused on things like self voicing solutions that I have near term concerns about scaling for broad market adoption.

[Phil Briers](#) Is there a recommended language for example HTML5 for developing mobile applications?

[Rich Schwerdtfeger](#) likes this.

[Phil Briers](#) Thanks..

[Rich Schwerdtfeger](#) yw

[IBM Accessibility](#) Keep refreshing Facebook, we have a lot of activity going on with some of the first questions. :-)

[Shirley E Kaiser](#) likes this.

[IBM Accessibility](#) So I'll ask this question of our panel: Where do each of you see mobile usability going in 5 years?

[Brian Cragun](#) Within about 1.5 years: Mobile browsers will fully support HTML 5 and its accessibility features such as WAI-ARIA

[Susann Keohane](#) Expect user interaction to be more natural through the use of natural language processing especially as voice recognition technology improves.

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[Matt King](#) - Device aware, environment aware, location aware, user capability and user preference aware experiences

[David Dracoules](#) The desktop and mobile world will merge into one.

[IBM Accessibility](#) All right. Our hour is up. That was a great session -- thanks for joining us today.

[IBM Accessibility](#) The session will remain on the wall, but if you'd like a transcript, send an email to [acweb@us.ibm.com](mailto:acweb@us.ibm.com), and we'll send you a copy in the next few days.

[IBM Accessibility](#) Have a wonderful day/evening! :-)

[Patsy Popa](#) likes this.