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# Second Mobile Accessibility Workshop

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**Abstract**

In this document we propose the creation of the Second Mobile Accessibility Workshop at MobileHCI 2012. Mobile Accessibility is an area that has grown both in importance and number of researchers in recent years. After a successful first edition at Interact 2011, we propose to once again bring together researcher and practitioners in a fruitful workshop, leading to synergies and major developments in the area.

**Author's Keywords**

Mobile accessibility; Accessibility; Workshop

**ACM Classification Keywords**

H.5.2 User Interfaces – User Centered Design; K.4.2 Social Issues - Assistive technologies for persons with disabilities

**Introduction**

In recent years, we have witnessed an increasing importance of mobile devices. They pervade our daily lives, not only just in the form of feature phones, but also as smartphones and tablets. Tablets in particular have been the object of much attention, lately. They are set to be one of the fastest growing mobile device markets. What is more, they have the computing power of small computers. This is also true for the most advanced smartphones and mobile operating systems. We are, thus, in the cusp of a fundamental change in

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how we relate to information and others, accessible at all times and places with the help of mobile devices.

Alas, this change might be barred to a large number of people, suffering from a wide range of disabilities. Mobile devices are increasingly visual, making them hard to use by the blind or other vision-impaired people. Keyboards are steadily being replaced by touchscreens, without tactile feedback, introducing additional barriers. Tetraplegic users have limited mobility of their limbs and hardly are able to pick up the devices or use their fingers for precise pointing. Additionally, mobile devices are being used as mediators to reach distal interfaces (e.g. interactive TV, information kiosks, etc.) providing people with disabilities with the means to potentially overcome physical barriers and freely interact with the environment.

Moreover, the mobile aspect often creates situations where those interaction modes are cumbersome or socially unacceptable, even for non-impaired people. Riding a bicycle on a mountain trail and looking at the maps at the same time is difficult and dangerous. Timely responding to urgent and confidential solicitations on a public site may be distressing or embarrassing. These are considered situational disabilities that often introduce similar problems to the use of mobile apparatus. Overall, the list of problems is immense.

Fortunately, there is a nascent area of research, Mobile Accessibility, where researchers are focusing on solving accessibility problems in mobile devices and settings. Bringing together Mobile Computing and Accessibility, it is the source of synergistic works that have the

potential of deeply transforming how we look at mobile devices, and to shape the ongoing mobile revolution. Work in this area ranges from new text introduction techniques to multimodal interaction solutions, mobile assistive technology, prototyping tools, navigation tools, theoretical models, etc. A wide range of users and situations is also considered (blind, tetraplegic, elderly, deaf, etc.). As a result, solutions provided to people to disabilities could be applied to the aforementioned situationally impaired users.

Papers on Mobile Accessibility have become an increasing presence in conferences such as CHI, Assets, W4A and MobileHCI, proof of a growing and active community. However, there has been a lack of a single well defined venue for the topmost researchers in the area to meet and exchange ideas and results. To fill that gap, we held the First Mobile Accessibility Workshop at INTERACT2011, held in September 2011 in Lisbon, Portugal. With 20 participants, it shows the growing interest in the area, and that there is an active community of researchers interested in such a venue.

It is our objective with this Second Mobile Accessibility Workshop to once again bring together researchers and practitioners with clear advantages in terms of critical mass, synergies, collaborations and networking, and unmistakable benefits for the area. We intend to make the workshop a regular event and a place of reference for those working in the area to exchange their ideas.

We feel that MobileHCI is especially suited to host the workshop, since there is a large affinity between the subjects of the workshop and main conference. Other considerations aside, this will undoubtedly help both events attract a wider audience, with people working in

mobility wanting to attend the workshop, and people working on accessibility attending the conference.

### **Participants**

The workshop will be organized by Prof. Daniel Gonçalves, Prof. Luís Carriço and Charlotte Magnusson, all of them researchers in mobile accessibility, with several published papers in the area. They were also the organizers of the aforementioned First Mobile Accessibility Workshop.

#### *Intended Audience*

Researchers and practitioners of Mobile Accessibility, both from academia and industry, in any of its different facets (as described in the introduction). It might also appeal to researcher in mobility and HCI in particular, that want to explore new and interesting concepts in their research.

#### *Expected participants*

The first edition of the workshop had 20 participants, in a broadly-themed HCI conference. Given the close match between the workshop and MobileHCI, we expect to attract 20-25 participants.

### **Organization**

#### *Before the Workshop*

The workshop will consist, mainly, of paper presentations by its participants. We'll solicit submissions using the MobileHCI Archive paper template that will be peer-reviewed, double-blind, before acceptance.

A website will be set up to provide participants with a go-to place for relevant information, copies of accepted papers, etc.

#### *At the Workshop*

The workshop will last an entire day (six hours, plus coffee and lunch breaks)

We will structure it around paper presentations, with thematic sessions in which they are presented, followed by discussion. At the end, we will have an extended discussion period where breakout groups will address specific issues (that will depend on the paper's themes, in order to be captivating to attendees and ensure relevant discussions) and report back to everyone

#### *After the Workshop*

We will write a workshop report, to be disseminated to participants and to be publicly available online.

For the first edition of the workshop, secured a special issue of the Universal Access in the Information Society journal. Extended versions of selected papers are currently undergoing a new round of peer-review and will be published in that special issue at the end of 2012. We will try to negotiate a similar arrangement for the upcoming workshop.