BBC Accessibility Settings Kit
Draft presentation for IMS-Global judging: Personalization & Accessibility category

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Disabled people in the UK

11 million adults

- More likely to be older
  - 47% over 65 compared to 20% of general population

- Less likely to be working
  - 43% of disabled people of working age are working compared to 74% of general population

- Heavy media consumers
  - Particularly of TV and radio

- Only half see themselves as ‘disabled’
  - This made little difference to attitudes to the media

Sources: Experience and expectations of disabled people (ODI 2008), TGI, Disabled for Life (DWP 2002), Phase 3 research
Internet use in the UK

42% Of disabled people have used the internet

67% Of the general population have ever used the internet
Missing disabled internet audience…

58% of 11m = 6.4m
Use of Assistive Technologies is low...

6-8%

Of web users use an Assistive Technology (screenreader, adapted mouse or similar) to access the Internet
When the benefits should be useful to most users...

57%

Of computer users (aged 18-64) are likely or very likely to benefit from the use of Assistive Technology.
2. How you might achieve that impact - how accessibility preferences could help...
Examining our current model - the Inclusion model

- the one-size-fits-all “design for all” approach
- design it for the mainstream, tweak it so disabled people can use Assistive Technologies to make it work for them
Inclusion model problems – diversity of needs

- rarely considers disabled people’s actual needs… or compares them with non-disabled people’s needs
- different user groups can have conflicting needs
  - BBC iPlayer disability focus group (2009)
    - Vision impaired / dyslexic
      - “I like the black – it’s cool”
      - “I hate it – I find it really tiring”
    - Low literacy
      - “can it just talk or something?”
    - Aging / learning difficulties
      - “it was just too overwhelming”
Inclusion model problems - reductionism

- Inclusion tries to cover all this diversity of needs with one product
- so Inclusion can be reductionist, constraining, lowest common denominator, a compromise
  - e.g. signing on TV

- and it can constrain innovation - new technologies and techniques
Worse… inclusion doesn’t work for all our users

- Inclusion expects:
  1. an Assistive Technology to exist to make sites accessible
  2. web users to:
     a. be aware that an Assistive Technology exists for their need
        • (even with sites like BBC My Web My Way to point the way) most are not
     b. are able to afford that technology
        • most are C2DE so have difficulty affording expensive techs
     c. are able to work out how to install it
        • most are not technical
     d. are able to work out how to use it
        • most are unconfident
     e. are able to use it to access online content
        • thus… most never get this far, even if the site is WCAG AAA
A complementary model: personalization

- cf. web 2.0 personalisation…
  - BBC homepage, iGoogle, MySpace…
- for disabled people:
  - being able to select how they want to view web sites
  - being able to select between levels of interface complexity (available on much software)
- can help all disabled people, but especially users with:
  - Dyslexia, Aspergers, ADHD, poor vision or mild to moderate Learning Difficulties
- advantages:
  - frees designers, product managers from some constraints
  - but requires more work, and testing of multiple paths/interfaces/content
- e.g. iPlayer subtitles
3. How to have a chance of achieving that impact - didn’t someone try this before...?
Er, aren’t web accessibility preferences for Sissies...?
Maybe… if you don’t do your research…

- BBC comparative testing on BBC and other sites’ tools
  - 14 BBC and non-BBC customisation tools (mostly site-based) tested
- with a group of 15 people with:
  - Dyslexia,
  - Aspergers,
  - ADHD,
  - Poor Vision
  - Mild to moderate Learning Difficulties
- research was conducted externally and participants were not told until the end it was commissioned by the BBC
Research results...

- most users had never used customisation before
- none knew what “AAA” was

- many initially didn’t see the point... some initial reluctance to try something new...
- however all said the sites they viewed were better once they had customised them

- Requirement 1: make the idea simple to identify, and motivate people to use it, or else they won’t get the benefit...

“If all the web were like this, I’d use it…”

User with ADHD
Research results…

• some of the tools were confusing at first to use
  • too many choices were displayed simultaneously…
  • … or the tools were too complicated or took too long to use
  • … or they didn’t include the preference which would have helped

• Requirement 2: make the tool as simple as possible…
  and able to get users to their required preferences within the minimum of clicks…
Research results...

- there was some missing functionality that the users wanted
  - they wanted a quick way to turn preferences off, if they shared a computer, or were embarrassed for others to see their preferences
  - people wanted to take their preferences with them across all their computers... the whole web... and ideally across devices...

- Requirement 3: allow users to feel completely in control... and use their preferences everywhere...
4. Creating something that might achieve that impact
- development & user-testing of BBC ASK
BBC ASK at a glance

• a way of letting people know why they should want…
• to use an engaging way of setting and storing their accessibility preferences…
• and getting sites to respond to them
• … which works consistently across BBC Online…
• … and ideally cross-platform to mobile + IPTV
• … and ideally across the rest of the web
  – … providing common tools for sites to respond to those preferences
  – … and a common model for existing tools to use to find a user’s preferences
• opening up BBC content, and the rest of the web, to underserved audiences
BBC ASK: Our Journey So Far

Usability Testing of existing personalisation Solutions (on bbc.co.uk and other UK websites)

Depth interviewing and creation of Personas for primary audiences

Specification, supplier search & development of four prototypes

Usability Testing of Prototypes and existing solutions on bbc.co.uk

1x Display Preferences 3x Voicing

Specification & development of BBC ASK Preferences Release 1 (incl. more user testing)

Launch of BBC ASK Preferences Release 1
BBC ASK Release 1 includes…

• Preference themes for people with:
  • Limited vision
  • Aspergers
  • ADHD
  • Dyslexia
  • Low-literacy

• Ability to create your own custom theme including:
  • Setting text size, spacing, font & style
  • Layout: multi-column or single linear column
  • Changing colour of links (only)
  • Setting background and text colours
  • Displaying text & picture, or replacing pictures with text

• Ability to take your preferences with you between PCs
• Works over all of BBC Online’s > 3 million pages
Two clicks to preview a change...
Three more clicks to tweak and save…
And the rest of BBC Online uses your preferences...
Or maybe you want…

Hi-viz theme for limited vision

4 Aspergers themes

A simple change of font for readability

Or the whole page linearised so you don't have to read across columns
What our audience say...

“it makes people feel their uniqueness is being taken into consideration.”

“It’s more visual, more fun and funky.”

“I’m going home and have a shot, that was fun.”

Felt ‘excited’ when she saw her disability as one of the themes.
Initial indications of potential impact from user-testing

A display tool like this would encourage you to use the internet more often.

Strongly Disagree

Strongly Agree

A voice tool like these would encourage you to use the internet more often

Strongly Disagree

Strongly Agree
5. How to actually achieve the impact users want - making this available everywhere...
BBC ASK roadmap

- working with standards bodies in ensuring BBC ASK fits in with, and helps set, international standards for specification of Accessibility Preferences

- working with initial non-BBC adoption partners…
  - have 5 signed-up for a feasibility pilot
  - have interest from many, many more
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<th>Step</th>
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<td>Establishing brand and icon for BBC ASK</td>
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<td>(with guidance from users and partners)</td>
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<td>promoting this via UK Media Literacy</td>
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<td>channels and BBC media</td>
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<td>BBC ASK Voicing pilot on BBC Online</td>
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<td>Review of feedback of this and Preferences</td>
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<td>Release 1 into roadmap</td>
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<td>Pilot of sharing BBC ASK Preferences</td>
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<td>Full release of BBC ASK for use on non-BBC</td>
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<td>BBC Ask releases on mobile, IPTV etc.</td>
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Questions...

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