



# ACCESSIBILITY AND COMPUTING

A Regular Publication of the ACM  
Special Interest Group on  
Accessible Computing

January 2006

Number 84

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## SIGACCESS Newsletter

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### SIGACCESS Officers & Information

#### *Chairperson*

Vicki Hanson  
IBM T.J. Watson Research Center  
19 Skyline Drive  
Hawthorne, NY 10532, USA.  
+1-914-784-6603 ( work )  
chair\_SIGACCESS@acm.org

#### *Vice-chairperson*

Jennifer Mankoff  
HCI Institute,  
School of Computer Science  
Carnegie Mellon University  
5000 Forbes Ave  
Pittsburgh, PA 15213-3891, USA  
+1 (412) 268-1295 ( work )  
vc\_SIGACCESS@acm.org

#### *Secretary/Treasurer*

Andrew Sears  
Information Systems Dept.  
UMBC  
1000 Hilltop Circle  
Baltimore, MD 21250, USA.  
+1-410-455-3883 ( work )  
treasurer\_SIGACCESS@acm.org

#### *Newsletter Editor*

Simeon Keates,  
IBM TJ Watson Research Center  
19 Skyline Drive  
Hawthorne, NY 10532, USA.  
editors\_SIGACCESS@acm.org

#### *Who we are*

SIGACCESS is a special interest group of ACM. The SIGACCESS Newsletter is published regularly in January, June, and September. We encourage a wide variety of contributions, such as: letters to the editor, technical papers, short reports, reviews of papers of products, abstracts, book reviews, conference reports and/or announcements, interesting web page URLs, local activity reports, etc. Actually, we solicit almost anything of interest to our readers.

Material may be reproduced from the Newsletter for non-commercial use with credit to the author and SIGACCESS. Deadlines are one month before publication dates. Submissions may be sent as hard copy (paper), but machine-readable files are preferred. Postscript or PDF files may be used if layout is important, but word-processor files, text files, or e-mail are also acceptable. Ask the editor if in doubt.

Finally, you may publish your work here before submitting it elsewhere. We are a very informal forum for sharing ideas with others who have common interests.

Anyone interested in editing a special issue on an appropriate topic should contact the editor.

# Accessibility and Computing



## The Newsletter of ACM SIGACCESS

NUMBER 84, January 2006

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### **A note from the Editor**

Dear SIGACCESS member:

Welcome to the third on-line issue of the SIGACCESS Newsletter and another special issue. I had hoped to make this issue about designing for users with low vision as this a topic that receives comparatively little attention in the research community. However, after a great deal of hunting around for suitable work to report on, I succeeded in securing only two articles, reflecting the general lack of research effort in this area.

The remainder of the articles in this issue are the accepted papers from the ASSETS 2005 Doctoral Consortium.

As editor of the Newsletter, I welcome offers to guest edit similar special issues or else suggestions of topics that readers would like to see addressed. If you have any suggestions about this or indeed any comments about the newsletters generally, please e-mail me at: [editors\\_SIGACCESS@acm.org](mailto:editors_SIGACCESS@acm.org)

### **About this issue**

The first paper in this issue is “*A Personal Information Management approach for people with low vision or blindness*” by Silas Brown and Peter Robinson. In this paper, the authors discuss a new conceptual approach to organising information, supporting the simultaneous management of multiple information excerpts.

Wayne Dick’s paper, “*Using cascading style sheets to accommodate websites for individuals with low vision*” is the second of the two papers addressing the needs of low vision users. He examines how such users can customise their browsers to make web pages easier to read.

Moving on to the papers from the ASSETS 2005 Doctoral Consortium, Julie Jacko (the chair of the Consortium) provides an introduction to the Consortium and papers in her “*ASSETS 2005 Doctoral Consortium Overview*”.

Miguel Alonso describes an advanced method of compensating for specific vision impairments in his paper, “*A method for enhancing digital information displayed to computer users with visual refractive errors via spatial and spectral based processing.*”

In her paper, “*Accessibility and usability guidelines for mobile devices in home health monitoring,*” Rita Hubert addresses the issue that mobile devices have a significant role to play in telemedicine, but also present usability and accessibility challenges for older adults.

The paper by Kanav Kahol and Sethuraman Panchanathan, “*Distal object perception through haptic user interfaces for individuals who are blind*” investigates the challenges surrounding the remote exploration of an unknown space through a haptic interface.

Peter Parente’s paper, “*Clique: A conversant, task-based audio display for GUI applications*” looks at converting graphical applications into auditory ones by providing auditory descriptions of the underlying task, rather than a simple auditory rendering of the graphical elements.

The paper, “*Using functional assessment to improve information systems research, design and technology matching,*” by Kathleen Price examines the role of user capability profiles in the development and provision of technology.

“*Storytelling with a virtual peer as an intervention for children with autism,*” written by Andrea Tartaro, looks at the development of Sam, a virtual character, who is designed to help develop communication skills in children with autism.

Ted Wattenberg’s paper, “*Accessibility heuristics utilizing learnability characteristics of synthesized speech applications,*” investigates screen-readers and methods for improving their learnability.

Wrapping up the Doctoral Consortium papers, Jacob Wobbrock writes about the development of the EdgeWrite input system in “*A robust design for accessible text entry.*”

## **And finally...**

Just a reminder that the call for ASSETS 2006 is now available at:

<http://www.acm.org/sigaccess/assets06/>

*Simeon Keates*

Newsletter Editor