

## SIGACCESS Member Profile

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Member of SIGACCESS since: 1996

Member of ACM since: 1996

Also member of: SIGCHI

### **1. *How many years have you been working in this area?***

I've been interested in accessibility since I started graduate school, back in 1992. Unfortunately, in industry, accessibility is raised as a "good citizenship" kind of topic, but resources are not typically invested in it. Therefore, many of the projects that I consider to be related to accessibility (e.g., audio interfaces) have to be framed in other non-disability contexts (e.g., vehicle-based interaction) to motivate the investment. So, I consider myself to have worked "off and on" in accessibility since graduate school, even though many of the topics are relevant for the area.

### **2. *What motivates or inspires you to work in this area?***

My reason for entering the field of human-computer interaction in general is that I like the idea that it is a branch of computer science aimed at helping people. Too much of technology is designed in a way that users feel incompetent, stupid, or any number of other bad things. It's nice to be able to say at the end of the day that the work we do in this field has made a positive impact on somebody. Accessibility makes you think about users with some very interesting requirements, and the challenge is really interesting and exciting.

### **3. *What is your professional background?***

My major was Computer Science, and my specialization for my Ph.D. was in Human-Computer Interaction (HCI). During my undergrad, I also had a minor specialization in American Sign Language.

I've worked in HCI since I graduated, although my first job was with a group of computational linguists, working on dialogue-based spoken language interfaces. My main foci have always been on non-desktop interactions (for example, audio output, speech input and output, and mobile device interfaces) and accessibility, and I see a strong link between those areas..

### **4. *Please describe any past projects on which you have worked:***

My dissertation was about audio interfaces to HTML to support blind users. I conducted several user studies and was able to develop a framework for choosing audio cues to mark document structures, based on user satisfaction data. One of my goals is to

eventually also gather data about memorability and performance effects of structured audio, to prove its applicability more broadly.

I also spent several years working on a project to allow speech input to portal-based desktop applications, where the speech interface was added to pre-existing applications without requiring the applications to be rewritten. My team developed a prototype system that supported voice navigation and data entry, and supported more than one language as well. We conducted several user tests to refine the interaction for navigation and data entry and measure the usability of the system for both disabled and non-disabled users.

**5. *Have you participated in any SIGACCESS-sponsored event?***

ASSETS '98 paper: Lessons from Developing Audio HTML Interfaces (F. James)

ASSETS 2002 paper: Voice over Workplace (VoWP): Voice Navigation in a Complex Business GUI (F. James and J. Roelands)

**6. *What else would you like to see SIGACCESS do?***

I'm not sure if this already exists, but it would be nice to see student SIGACCESS chapters at universities. I think it would be great to get people involved in accessibility early, while they are still students, so that they can have this in mind right from the start of their careers.