

SIGACCESS Member Profile

David Sloan

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Member of SIGACCESS since: 2005

Member of ACM since: 2005

Also member of: SIGCHI

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

7 years.

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

I grew up thinking I was technologically incompetent, and computer science was the last area in which I thought my career would develop. However, after coming to Dundee to study, I was introduced to the field of inclusive design and technology for disabled people by Alan Newell and Peter Gregor, and my view of technology changed forever. I realised the flaws of much of today's technology stem from systems that are designed by and for a very small, but abnormally capable, sector of society, and I think the task of rectifying this situation is a fascinating and challenging one.

3. Please describe your current research project(s):

I've just (literally!) finished my PhD, titled "The Effectiveness of the Web Accessibility Audit as a Motivational and Educational Tool in Inclusive Web Design". It studied the impact on recipient individuals and organisations of web accessibility audits we've produced for commercial clients over recent years.

4. What is your professional background?

My Honours degree was a Bachelor of Science in Topographic Science from the University of Glasgow, followed by 4 years' work as a Database Cartographer for the UK's leading commercial producer of atlases and maps. I then made the decision to leave and come to Dundee to study for a Masters in Applied Computing in 1998; taking a post as a Research Assistant the following year. I've been here ever since, working as a consultant and researcher, as well as studying part-time for my PhD.

5. Please describe any past projects on which you have worked:

Much of my work has involved providing advice and support on a commercial consultancy basis, and then using that experience to inform my academic work on effective ways of promoting inclusive design. One specific project involved teaming up with a multimedia e-learning production unit to create a web site which supports the creation of accessible multimedia for learning – but also encourages the very use of

multimedia as a way of making the learning experience more accessible. This involved producing 'how-to' guides and commissioning case studies to illustrate practical experiences. The resulting site is available at <http://www.skillsforaccess.org.uk>.

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

My first academic conference was ASSETS in 2000, in Arlington VA; I also attended CUU 2000 which took place immediately afterwards, presenting papers at both. I also attended CUU in 2003 in Vancouver, but haven't made it back to ASSETS as yet. I also attended and presented at the W4A Workshop at WWW2006, a little closer to home in Edinburgh.

7. *What else would you like to see SIGACCESS do?(E.g. publish a journal, sponsor more conferences, advise government policy, etc.)*

All of the above! Take the lead in developing a co-ordinated approach to inclusive design, including making the community more aware of what each of us is doing. Minimise the negative aspects of regional differences in approaches (in particular arguments over what terminology to use and how best to evaluate!), and build on the combined strengths of work going on around the world.