

Donald L. Moore

Beyond the Ordinary on the Web

Ever get stymied when filling out web forms that require your telephone number? You are afraid to give them your telephone number, knowing if you do, you could become the recipient of unwanted phone calls by telemarketers who know nothing about using a TTY or the Relay. Donald Moore knows the frustration many of us feel, and has set out to be a contributing author for a new book for Web Developers, "Constructing Accessible Web Sites" published by Glasshaus, an offshoot of Wrox Publications.

Don Moore remembers, "In the fall of 2001, I submitted a white paper recommendation on a web form technique to the WAI (Web Accessibility Initiative) workgroup of the W3C (World Wide Web Consortium). The white paper outlines the need to provide web site visitors the ability to specify their preferred method(s) of communication on on-line contact forms. The recommendation is to help companies facilitate communication between deaf, hearing, and speech-impaired consumers. [According to the National Association of the Deaf and the American Speech Hearing Language Association, there] are approximately 30 million U.S. citizens that fall into one or more of these population segments. Furthermore, as the U.S. population ages and lives longer, more consumers are developing limitations that require them to prefer various methods of communication."



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Who is the W3C? An Excerpt from their Web Site

"The World Wide Web Consortium (W3C) develops interoperable technologies (specifications, guidelines, software, and tools) to lead the Web to its full potential as a forum for information, commerce, communication, and collective understanding."



While the recommendation within the book may be brief [chapter 6: pages 160-161], it illustrates how organizations can improve communication with consumers that visit their online sites. This is especially true

in situations that require frequent contact and communication with consumers that use the Internet for ordering products and services. Banks, financial service firms and travel agencies are some of the many types of businesses that require frequent communication with consumers, thus they should heed the advice of this book when serving deaf, hearing, and speech-impaired consumers via the Internet. This recommendation is by no means final or exhaustive. New technologies and services that provide alternative ways and forms of communication continue to emerge each year, and websites that use the form need to keep up with the changes.

Snapshot of Recommendation

As a heavy user of the web and being



Name	<input type="text"/>
Address	<input type="text"/>
Address	<input type="text"/>
City	<input type="text"/>
State	-- Select a State --
Zip	<input type="text"/>
E-mail Address	<input type="text"/>
Home Phone	<input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="radio"/> Voice <input type="radio"/> TTY
Work Phone	<input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="radio"/> Voice <input type="radio"/> TTY
Fax	<input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/>
Wireless Device / Pager	<input type="text"/> <input type="radio"/> This is a 2-way text device
Preferred way to be contacted	-- Select One -- -- Select One -- Phone (Voice) Phone (TTY) E-mail Wireless Device Fax

This screenshot lists all the contact information possible, including TTYs and wireless devices.

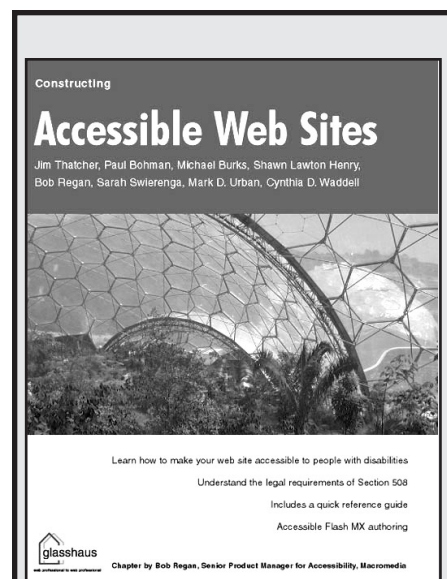
knowledgeable about web development, Donald concluded that the contact forms often found on websites have shortcomings in accessibility. He conducted a review of approximately 100 business and financial services web sites, and had numerous informal conversations with other web users who are deaf or hard of hearing.

Don adds, "After further research and exploration, I submitted the suggestion to the WAI of the W3C to encourage the addition of 'Preferred types of Communication' to include in their web accessibility recommendations - hoping to raise awareness of the shortcoming not addressed by accessibility guidelines." The original white paper suggestion

may be previewed on the web at: <http://www.geocities.com/moorechi/accessibility/index.htm>

This recommendation was very timely as Section 508 was recently implemented and many developers became more aware of web accessibility needs. All the comments and suggestions were received from a group working closely with the W3C - which lead to a inquiry from them to include my recommendation into the book.

This book is now available at online bookstores.



Review:

"Once I started reading it, I did not put it down. It reinforces my understanding of the challenges people with disabilities face in obtaining full access to the web, and reaffirms my faith in our ability to overcome these challenges."

- John Williams
National Organization on Disability

Title:

"Constructing Accessible Web Sites"

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Sample Chapter from the book:

www.glasshaus.com/samplechapters/1000/default.asp

Advocacy Toolbox - Web Accessibility



1. BOBBY Website Accessibility Test:
<http://bobby.watchfire.com/bobby/html/en/index.jsp>
2. World Wide Web Consortium Web Accessibility Initiative:
www.w3.org/WAI
3. National Center for Accessible Media:
<http://ncam.wgbh.org/webaccess>