Accessibility and Writing Up Research
HCC Seminar
09/26/18

Getting to Know Other HCC Students (5 min)

Directions: In your small group, go around and introduce yourself! Starting with the 2nd year, share your name and answer to the following question.

Question: If you could change one thing about the building you work in, what would you alter?[1]

1) Accessibility[2]: What you can do to make a difference (20 min)

Accessibility is the capacity for different groups of users, particularly disabled users, to have interaction, control, and autonomy with a system or technology and comparable knowledge gain to able-bodied users. Unfortunately, what we think of as accessibility is usually the bare minimum. It does not support equality (or quality) of interaction. HCC-er Brianna Tomlinson has created a handout full of great practices for making your work accessible. During the next 20 minutes, talk through some of the discussion prompts and then complete the following activity.

Discussion Prompts: (10 Min)
- What can you do to make your research more accessible?
  - As a group, walk through each of the guidelines in the accessibility handout.
    - What have you done in past work that's not accessible? How can you fix it?
  - In a current project, how will you adopt these guidelines to make your work more accessible?
- Making Design Accessible: Accessibility? Universal Design?
  - Chances are your research is involved with accessibility! As a group, brainstorm some accessibility needs that your users/participants have and what you can do to make sure your work is considering these individuals.
    - Are users/participants colorblind? Visually impaired? Deaf? Seniors? Young children? Do some participants have motor impairments? Cognitive impairments? Speech impairments? etc.
- Have you ever tried VoiceOver (macOS/iOS), TalkBack (Android), or NVDA/JAWS (Windows)?
  - If you have, walk your group through this experience—why you were doing it and what you learned.

Now you we've had a chance to talk about accessibility, let's see what accessibility in design looks like in action. Complete the following activity and discuss your experiences.

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[1] Credit for this question comes from the book *If [2]...* by McFarlane and Saywell (p. 15)

[2] We appreciate Brianna Tomlinson's help on preparing this part.

Activity: Is the weather on your phone accessible? (10 min)
What is it like to check the weather with accessibility features? Turn on your phone's accessibility features, then try to check the weather.

- On iPhone: Go to "Settings" → "General" → "Accessibility"
- On Android phone: Go to "Settings" → "Accessibility"[3]

Discussion Prompts:
- What happened? What went wrong? Was this a usable experience? A good one? What could have been better?

2) Writing Up Research:(20 min)

As Ph.D. students, writing is essential (and inevitable) because we rely on it to convey and communicate our work. Writing up your research has unique challenges because the specialized nature of what we do, the differences in audiences we need to write to, and the variety of publication venues we submit to.

Discussion Prompts:
- What are signs of good research writing?
- Getting started: Getting past the blank page
    - How do you encourage yourself to write? Got any strategies for writing?
- What strategies do you have for highlighting the novelty and significance of your work?
- Writing for different audiences: Conferences, Journals, CS, Health, Management...
    - What changes do you make when writing for different audiences?
    - Writing a conference paper is different from writing a journal article. How does the venue/publication change the way you write?
- Abstracts:
    - Given how much information you need to convey and how little space you have to do it, what do you do to write a good abstract?
- Peer feedback is a great way to improve your writing.
    - What past feedback helped you improve as a writer?
- If you could give your past self advice, what would have helped you grow as a writer?

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[3] Settings may be different for different models/operating systems