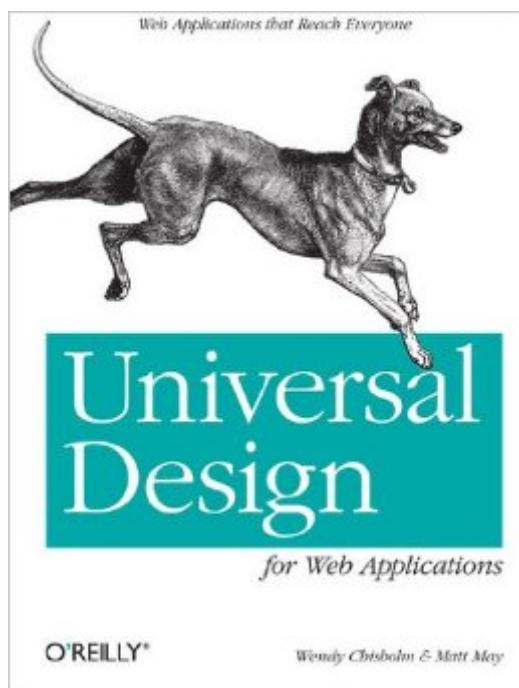


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# Universal Design For Web Applications: Web Applications That Reach Everyone



## Synopsis

Universal Design for Web Applications teaches you how to build websites that are more accessible to people with disabilities and explains why doing so is good business. It takes more work up front, but the potential payoff is huge -- especially when mobile users need to access your sites. You'll discover how to use standards-based web technologies -- such as XHTML, CSS, and Ajax, along with video and Flash -- to develop applications for a wide range of users and a variety of devices, including the mobile Web. You'll also learn specifics about this target audience, especially the key over-50 age group, whose use of the Web is rapidly growing. With this book, you will:

- Learn the importance of metadata and how it affects images, headings, and other design elements
- Build forms that accommodate cell phones, screen readers, word prediction, and more
- Create designs using color and text that are effective in a variety of situations
- Construct tables that present information without spatial cues
- Design Ajax-driven social networking applications that people with disabilities can access
- Provide audio with transcriptions and video that includes captions and audio descriptions
- Discover assistive technology support for Rich Internet Application technologies such as Flash, Flex, and Silverlight

Universal Design for Web Applications provides you with a roadmap to help you design easy-to-maintain web applications that benefit a larger audience.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Universal Design for Web Applications: Web Applications That Reach Everyone covers all of the latest techniques and related standards for designing universally accessible websites. The text

gives a very broad and complete overview with references for taking a deeper dive into any particular area. Up-to-date coverage mentions AJAX, RIA(rich internet applications), SilverLight, Flex, and JavaFX but very superficially since the goal of this book is to inform and guide you in creating highly accessible web content. Code snippets displaying XHTML, CSS, and JavaScript help demonstrate the discussed techniques. Topics include: proper use of CSS, semantic HTML, and Javascript; alternate text for images, links, and labels; captioning for audio and video; functional descriptions for images used as buttons; and how to structure menus to allow for proper tabbing and hot-keys. Additional items include coverage of screen readers, screen magnifiers, and comparison to using mobile devices such as phones which produce a very challenging environment for accessible designs. Also included is a list of tools for inspecting, reporting, and evaluating your designs for accessibility. I recommend Universal Design if you're looking for a complete guide to creating very accessible web designs. Keep in mind that in order to take full advantage of the this book you will also need good references for whatever tools/languages you are using to design/create your website such as CSS, XHTML, JavaScript, Flex, etc.

A couple of early comments in this book make it really obvious what the book is about. One of these asks which is to blame for someone who can't walk being unable to get into a building - their wheelchair or the steps in front of the building. The second points out that there is no us and them with regard to accessibility and gives the example of someone using a mobile phone to access the web whose fingers are too big to properly click on the links. These two examples clearly demonstrate the importance of the material in the book to ALL web sites. The main content of the book covers a whole range of different design considerations from meta data, forms, tables, video, audio, scripting, Flex, Flash, and Silverlight. In each case a few examples of specific problems with that particular technology are mentioned as well as some specific information on solutions to those problems. The size of the book means that each section is only briefly covered with mention of the most obvious of the problems and the book isn't a complete answer to all the problems you might be confronted with in any particular area. It does set you on the correct path though so that you know at least in general what sort of solution you should be looking for. The book advocates progressive enhancement so as to ensure that pages are still usable by those who do not have all of the more advanced technology. The other theme running through the book is how important it is that universal design principles should be considered from the beginning of the design process and not left to be tacked on at the last minute just before implementation. The reasons for this are made very clear in the book.

Universal Design for Web Applications flows between the history of design principles and problems, current best practices and a look at what's on the horizon for design implementation. The subjects of web accessibility standards and organizations, with which the book opens, are always the driest for me. I think this has more to do with the daunting tasks these organizations undertake than anything. But, Chisholm and May handled these topics swiftly and summarized the disabilities, guidelines and organizations in a short and tidy chapter. One of this book's primary strengths is the clean examples used throughout for topics like document-level metadata, web forms, and the ever-problematic menubars. Anyone tired of searching through forums for bits of scripts, HTML or CSS examples will appreciate these easily adaptable examples. The hot topics of video, Ajax and WAI\_ARIA, and RIA implementation are all handled without demonizing any technology. Especially helpful are the discussions of designing for mobile devices and keyboard support for users not using a mouse. Overall this book is designed not to be an exhaustive resource for any one design topic, but a useful survey of many of these topics, which comes in handy when you get bogged down in the details.

This short softcover book is good to learn. But, it is not really 100% informative. If you want to go into depth with web accessibility and other topics, you would have to look at other sources such as other books, online, etc.

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