

Towards finding *real* user needs for the Device Description Repository

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Who is using Device Descriptions?

2.3 The users and providers of Device Descriptions

A broad range of organizations and individuals have a stakeholding in successful mobile web content delivery, and participate in the consumption and provision of Device Descriptions. This section details some of these parties and contributions, and should be read in conjunction with the Ecosystem Document sections on their roles.

2.3.1 Content Authors

Content authors are responsible for the primary authorship, development, or editorship of mobile content and applications. Authors are concerned that the content they create is properly represented to the user, regardless of device.

Even at the earliest stages of content origination, Device Description knowledge can be valuable. A journalist, for example, may even make editorial changes to mobile-destined content (such as front loading a news article) if aware of devices' limited screen or page sizes.

2.3.2 Web Developers

Web developers are responsible for integrating content into a web site or application so that it can be navigated and accessed. Their desire is to ensure structural integrity, navigational ease, and cosmetic consistency within a site, regardless of accessing device.

They use Device Description information both at design- and run-time to determine the amount, type and variations of content to provide.

For example, a developer can influence which links, navigational structures, and documents are provided on a device-by-device basis.

As a more superficial example, it is common for logos and icons to be available in a number of different formats and sizes at design-time. Device Descriptions can be used to choose which images to use at run-time.

[Device Description Landscape](#), W3C Working Draft 10 February 2006

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Are all Content Authors the same?

Are all Web Developers the same?

Do they all have the same needs?

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The *Elastic* User – bending and stretching to fit the opinions and presumptions of whoever has the floor

(2003 Alan Cooper)

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Lets look at two *typical*
Content Authors
on the Internet in 2006

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Anna

"You just got to love it..."

Blogs about fashion and other interesting things. The Blog is read by friends from school and some she has met at MySpace and other community sites.

Age: 13

Occupation: N/A

Mobile phone: A Nokia she got from dad

Technical profile: Not interested (interested in fashion).

Uses Web-mail, IM, and MySpace.

Blog is hosted at MSN Spaces.

Need for Device Descriptions:

None. (But it would be nice if the blog could be viewed from a mobile phone.)

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Play-It-Again-Sam.Mobi

"We have 40 variants of every Java application we write."

Small developer team that develops Java applications for mobile phones. Frustrated by the large number of variants they must create for different phone models. Content adaptation is a problem; want to reduce content adaptation.

Age: Since 2001

Occupation: Mobile application development

Mobile phones: Many, for testing mainly

Technical profile:

Java MIDP, S60, UIQ, etc.

Need for Device Descriptions:

Screen size, operating system (UIQ, S60, other), phone model name.

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Lets look at two *typical*
Web Developers
on the Internet in 2006

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Joe

"Software shall be free."

Build Web applications based on open-source software for himself and small organizations.



Age: 37

Occupation: self-employed

Mobile phone: An old Nokia

Technical profile:

Pragmatic and conservative.

Uses what is readily available for free:

HTML, CSS, PERL, MYSQL, APACHE, PHP, HTTP.

Need for Device Descriptions:

Small. Would be nice to know from HTTP header if the request comes from a phone.

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Blogs'R'Us

"Web publishing for everyone."

Small Blog startup. Bloggers design Blogs by customizing HTML-templates.



Age: Since 2005

Occupation: Blog provider

Mobile phone: Nokia S60s
and Sony Ericsson K800

Technical profile:

Strict XHTML and CSS with @media where possible

Need for Device Descriptions:

No intention to support all mobile phone. Would be useful to adapt content selection based on whether it's a phone or not, and maybe on the bandwidth, if there is a simple way of doing it.

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Conclusions

- The DDR implementation must take into account *real* user needs – no *elastic* users
- The rise of Blogging and User-generated Content has changed Web publishing significantly during the last 2-3 years - Typepad and MSN Spaces, for example, provide high-level design
- Mobile content is also Java MIPD applications
- Many Web developers do not need (do not WANT!) a very large amount of Device Description information – Is it a mobile or not? is often sufficient

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