Accessible Voting Technology Initiative

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NIST Webinar
Three Phase Research Project

1. Defining the problem
2. Designing a solution
3. Looking to the future
Defining the Problem

• Accessibility of current voting systems (University of Washington)
Defining the Problem

• Barriers to political participation for people with disabilities (University of Utah)

• Ethnographic research on the voting experience of people with disabilities (Georgia Tech)

Working papers available at: http://elections.itif.org/resources/working-papers/
Designing a Solution

• Innovation Challenge (OpenIDEO)
  – “How might we design an accessible election experience for everyone?”

Winning concepts at: http://www.openideo.com/open/voting/winning-concepts/
Designing a Solution

• Accessible voting design workshops (Georgia Tech)
Designing a Solution

• Simplified ballot interface (Georgia Tech)
Designing a Solution

• Mobile ballot interface (University of Baltimore)
Designing a Solution

• Voting Technology
  – Joystick control and mounting bracket (Michigan State University)
Designing a Solution

• Accessible iPad case for elections (Georgia Tech Research Institute)
Designing Solutions

• Voter Guides
  – Web-based voter guide for people with aphasia (University of Maryland, Baltimore County)
  – Interactive voter guide for people with cognitive disabilities (CITRIS)
  – Election data lookup tool (Apps4Android)
Designing Solutions

• Pilot programs for supervised voting by people in group living facilities (UC Berkeley)
Designing Solutions

• Evaluation of iPad voting for people living in long-term care facilities (Assistive Technology Partners)
Looking to the Future

- Online training materials for poll workers (Georgia Tech)
- Online course on universal design for voting system developers (Georgia Tech)
Looking to the Future

• 50 Ideas for More Accessible Voting

5. A “Yelp” for polling places
   Problem: Election officials do not always receive a lot of feedback on how well a polling place is run, especially in big districts with many polling places.
   Idea: An online rating system could allow voters to give feedback to election officials on what is, or is not, working and how to improve the voting experience. Ratings for polling places could help voters identify the most accessible early voting centers and well-run polling places. This would also let the community recognize the expertise of election officials who operate the best polling places, who can then help improve neighboring locations.

8. An easier-to-grip smartcard
   Problem: Some voting systems are activated with smooth, flat plastic smartcards, but they can be hard for voters with arthritis or low dexterity to hold, and inserting them in the right direction is a challenge for blind voters.
   Idea: Election officials could add a hole for a finger grip and cut an angle off at one corner or add a notch in the bottom for orientation to make these plastic cards more accessible.

15. Mobile-friendly election web sites
   Problem: For people with disabilities, smartphones can be a lifeline, but election web sites do not always work well on a small mobile device screen. This can keep voters who rely on their phone as their main computer from finding election information.
   Idea: Election officials should make sure that election web sites and applications, like online voter registration, work on mobile devices, either with a mobile app or a website designed so that it automatically adapts to the size of the screen. One way to help ensure that forms and web sites work on smartphones is to keep the layout simple.

Available at: http://www2.itif.org/2012-fifty-ideas-accessible-elections.pdf
Looking to the Future

• Innovations for Accessible Elections

Available at: http://elections.itif.org/resources/report-innovations-in-accessible-elections/
Learn more

• All material from the ITIF Accessible Voting Technology Initiative is available at: http://elections.itif.org
Thank you!

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