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WEB APPLICATIONS FOR MOBILE HURDLES & GOTCHAS

state of “normal” web?

it's alive like never before

new browsers, engines, frameworks & languages

CSS design is still sometimes tricky

but a lot better than a couple of years ago

IE6 blows...

...but we're almost rid of it 😊

the rest of it is actually alright

it's stable and hassle-free

...most of the time 😊

state of mobile web?



someone broke the time machine, it's
2000. & 2010. out there at the same time

ecosystem **VERY** fragmented

phones & OS's, browsers, versions

rapidly developing & changing

long tail of old devices, left behind

no real standards we
can look forward to

mobile web will always be *different*

why do we even bother?

4.6 billion mobile devices. right now.

5 billion some time in 2010

- ⦿ feature phones
- ⦿ smartphones, PDAs & MIDs
- ⦿ ...

most are capable of consuming
mobile web of some sort

do you have a mobile web app?

opportunities

- ① always with the user, not bound to a PC
- ① location-aware
- ① different situations and contexts
- ① more powerful than you imagine
the infrastructure just needs to catch up

limits

- ⦿ screen size, resolution & orientation
- ⦿ input sucks
yes, even on the iphone
- ⦿ slow CPUs, no RAM
complex stuff takes ages to parse and display
- ⦿ slow networks
bigger stuff takes ages to load

problems

flaky network connections

- ⦿ error handling is your first component
- ⦿ light AJAX, if you can
- ⦿ depending on your use-case, a local database to allow for offline/resync

forget progressive enhancement & graceful degradation

- ⦿ too many platforms,
maintenance is a nightmare
- ⦿ mobile browsers that strip down
content are a big hit
Opera Mini, Skyfire...

solutions?

- ⦿ the *facebook* way
- ⦿ the *Google Mail* way
- ⦿ the *Google Buzz* way
- ⦿ lowest common denominator
IE Mobile, NetFront (SonyEricsson), etc.
- ⦿ wurfl helps, but nowhere near
a silver bullet

solutions? (II)

- ⦿ one way or another, there can't be a One True Mobile Web App

- ⦿ if you still don't believe me:

Mobile compatibility tables

<http://www.quirksmode.org/m/table.html>

outside the box

- ⦿ things get even worse when you reach outside the browser
- ⦿ not important with “real” web but a big issue with mobile
- ⦿ almost no access
- ⦿ NO standardization, complete lack of proper documentation

outside the box II

- ⦿ composing an SMS with a predefined body and destination number
- ⦿ geo-location reliability
- ⦿ interface with camera & other HW
- ⦿ device events, notifications

links

- ◉ QuirksMode compatibility charts
<http://www.quirksmode.org/m/>
- ◉ dotMobi Mobile Web Developer's guide
<http://mobiforge.com/starting/story/dotmobi-mobile-web-developers-guide>
- ◉ WURFL
<http://wurfl.sourceforge.net/>

questions?

thank you

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