ANEC preliminary comments on W3C Mobile Web Best Practices 1.0

("Last Call" draft version of 13 January 2006)

Title	**ANEC preliminary comments on "Mobile Web Best Practices 1.0, W3C "Last Call Working Draft 13 January 2006" version** (available at http://www.w3.org/TR/mobile-bp/)
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To	W3C Mobile Web Best Practices Working Group

Document for:

Decision	**x**
Discussion	**x**
Information	

1. Introduction and scope

As a general standpoint, ANEC considers Web accessibility and usability of very high importance to consumers. We appreciate your efforts trying to turn the interaction with the mobile Web a better consumer and user experience.

Our comments are provided below, with good intentions and in a positive spirit and should be considered as our contribution to improve the current draft.
The comments are intended to provide consumer-centric input and guidance on how to further improve and extend the coverage and usefulness of the present draft.
The comments reflect issues relevant to consumers, discussed and agreed in ANEC.

Would any further clarifications be necessary, we will be happy to discuss them with you over email or face-to-face during the February 2006 W3C Technical Plenary meeting work session and are looking forward to your feedback.

ANEC preliminary comments on W3C Mobile Web Best Practices 1.0

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2. Comments

All consumers must be provided the chance to easily set up and configure, access and use mobile information and communication services, provided through the mobile Web, from their device of choice- anytime, anywhere. This is also an important element in reducing the digital divide and enabling the use of more advanced personal and other services with a social impact, e.g. telecare monitoring, personal tax confirmation or voting.

2.1 General comments

1. The title of the document is somewhat confusing. The present document is definitely not about best practices for mobile network and system capacity optimization for reliable mobile Web access or other, related technical issues. As the document is providing best design practices of Web sites accessed through a mobile network and a telecommunication terminal, we suggest the title to be updated to "Best Usability Practices for Mobile Web *Sites"* (in accordance with the last sentence in chapter 1.3.2).

2. We have the impression that the development process of this draft was somewhat forced to be somewhat too fast. We would recommend to leave more time for stakeholder's involvement and qualitative fine-tuning, when developing future deliverables.

3. We believe that Web site access through mobile devices would benefit from the provision of some minimum-level requirements on terminal capabilities and browser features. If this cannot be achieved, other work should be referenced.

4. Accessibility should be addressed more specifically, as the mobile Web (and its specific issues) does not seem to be in the scope of the WAI/WCAG guidelines 2.0, currently under updating. The provided cross-referencing is beneficial but it does not provide enough substance.

5. Access to the mobile Web through a speech user interface is not covered by the present draft version. We believe it should be addressed (also as there is excellent work in W3C to cross-reference), as it is an important accessibility enabler to young and older users and users with temporary or permanent functional abilities.

6. A terminology issue: a device does not necessarily have a network connection and a user interface (e.g. a pencil or a wrist watch). We would like to know if this is defined differently for the purpose of this document (the definition is not included in the draft). Otherwise, we consider proposing to use "devices with a network connection and a user interface", or simply, "terminals", in the entire document.

NOTE: In the context of telecommunications and in accordance with ITU-T definitions, a terminal is a physical device which is capable of interfacing with a communication

ANEC preliminary comments on W3C Mobile Web Best Practices 1.0

("Last Call" draft version of 13 January 2006)

network, and hence to a service provider, to enable access to services. Examples of terminals are telephones, fax machines, and network devices in a VOIP network. In addition and as per definition, a terminal also provides an interface to the user to enable the interchange of control actions and information between the user and the terminal, network or service provider.

7. Setup and configuration is currently considered by consumers as a major difficulty, when trying to access mobile services and applications. As this document does not address setup and configuration-specific issues and it does not provide such guidelines, it should reference available recommendations and best practices developed in other standard bodies and fora, in order to improve the user experience.

2.2 Specific comments

Chapter 1.1, Purpose of the Document: The purpose should stretch beyond "…to promote more effective delivery…" and provide design guidelines applicable to the usability and accessibility of the mobile Web or, at least, specifics of interacting with mobile Web sites.

Chapter 1.3, Scope: The WCAG guidelines reference should be more specific, refer to the latest version or relate to the WAI guidelines family, where applicable.

Chapter 1.3.2, Usability:

- There are more than three aspects of mobile usability but there are three aspects of mobile *Web* usability (add "Web").
- The *relation* between these aspects should be described in detail (not only their individual characteristics). This description should include accessibility.
- Site usability is not only about effectiveness (see definition of Usability).

Chapter 1.3.3, One Web: With the currently available technologies and implementations (and considering the product generation gaps), it is not *always* desirable, beneficial nor affordable to consumers to access the same information, provided on the same format, regardless of the access network and device.
Although technology will improve continuously, consumer requirements will be strongly influenced by the context of mobile use (on the move, limited screen and keyboard, disturbing environment, et cetera), will not change that radically.
Due to the context of mobile use, terminal capability variations, bandwidth issues, access rights and mobile network capabilities, this principle should be reconsidered.
Even if it is easier to develop content for *one* Web, there are specific issues that need to be addressed.
Providing a good and affordable *mobile* Web user experience becomes even more important to roaming consumers (presently, there is no low-cost global roaming tariff plan for mobile data devices).
We would like to discuss the approach taken and would appreciate to hear your arguments for the "One Web" approach taken.

ANEC preliminary comments on W3C Mobile Web Best Practices 1.0

("Last Call" draft version of 13 January 2006)

Chapter 1.4, Default Delivery Context: More detailed specifications should be provided. In addition, possible fall-back solutions should be mentioned.

Chapter 2.1, Presentation Issues: In addition to the controls not being presented as intended, other issues such as the lack of the necessary interaction control elements and functions should be mentioned.

Chapter 2.2, Input: "…hard to type…" should be replaced by "…difficult to enter…". As this is a far more complex issue than just entering characters, aspects relating to the support, handling, mapping, sorting and transmission of characters should be addressed.
This change should also be considered with respect to the fact that speech technology enables and improves access to ICT (including mobile terminal devices and the mobile Web) for disabled people (e.g. people with upper limb impairments) and very young children, who will be able to input data and interact with mobile devices through speech user interfaces.

Chapter 2.3, Bandwidth and Cost: In addition to transmission speed, there are setup, configuration, access right, reliability, home network cost issues and roaming cost issues involved. These should be addressed or at least, mentioned. See also comment on chapter 1.3.3 above.

Chapter 2.4, User Goals: The first sentence should be rewritten. See also comment on chapter 1.3.3 above.

Chapter 2.7, Advantages: "Connected" should be added to the popularity reasons.

Chapter 3, Delivery Model Architecture: The entire section after "3" should be numbered separately (e.g. made 3.1 Introduction).

Chapter 5.1.1.2, How to do it: The references should be made more explicit.

Chapter 5.1.4, Testing: Update the recommendation to "…devices *and provided specific software versions*…".

Chapter 5.2.1, URIs of Site Entry Points: The recommendation should be updated to cover aspects of direct manipulation (clickable) and character entry support.

Chapter 5.2.2.2, How to do it: Provide advice on how to implement device-based wrapping.

Chapter 5.2.4.1, What it means: Connectivity and download speed issues should be mentioned.

Chapter 5.2.6.1, What it means: This is a far more complex problem than just the limited keyboard (12-key keypads and soft-and hardware-based keyboards should be covered). In

ANEC preliminary comments on W3C Mobile Web Best Practices 1.0
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addition, aspects relating to the support, handling, mapping, sorting and transmitting characters should be addressed.

Chapter 5.4.13, Error messages: The purpose of error messages should be dual:

1. To provide information to the user; and
2. To provide information to the service provider.

The recommendation should cover both aspects.

Chapter 5.4.13.2, How to do it: See the previous comment.

Annex A, Sources (Non-Normative): It would be highly desirable to reference WCAG 2.0 (under drafting) instead of the outdated 1.0 version from 1999.