

Industry Leaders Join Effort to Improve Mobile Web User Experience

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Today, at the WWW2005 Conference, the World Wide Web Consortium (W3C) announced the launch of the Mobile Web Initiative (MWI) - an endeavor to make Web access from a mobile device as simple, easy, and convenient as Web access from a desktop device.

"Mobile access to the Web has been a second class experience for far too long," explained Tim Berners-Lee, W3C Director. "MWI recognizes the mobile device as a first class participant, and will produce materials to help developers make the mobile Web experience worthwhile."

Many of today's mobile devices already feature Web browsers and the demand for mobile devices continues to grow. Despite these trends, browsing the Web from a mobile device -- for example, to find product information, consult timetables, check email, transfer money -- has not become as convenient as expected. Users often find that their favorite Web sites are not accessible or not as easy to use on their mobile phone as on their desktop computer. Content providers have difficulties building Web sites that work well on all types and configurations of mobile phones offering Web access.

W3C has launched the Mobile Web Initiative to make browsing the Web from mobile devices a reality.

Mobile Web Initiative participants will initially focus on two areas: best practices and mobile device descriptions. The Mobile Web Best Practices Working Group is chartered to develop authoring guidelines, checklists and best practices to help content providers to develop Web content that works well on mobile devices. The Device Description Working Group is chartered to address the development of improved device description solutions, that is, a database of descriptions that can be used by content authors to adapt their content to a particular device.

W3C is already active in the mobile Web space, developing Web standards for multimodal interaction and device-independent design, as well as profiles for mobile devices; related standards include XHTML, SVG Mobile Profiles, and SMIL Mobile Profile. MWI work will complement these current efforts.

W3C Members France Telecom, HP, MobileAware, Segala, Vodafone, and Volantis have stepped forward as Founding Sponsors of the Mobile Web Initiative. MWI Founding Sponsors enjoy unique benefits, including a seat on the MWI Steering Committee, the group that will set the direction of the MWI and propose new work. All W3C Members are eligible to become MWI Founding Sponsors until 1 July 2005.

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