

Barclays: making mobile banking fully accessible

The re-designed Barclays Mobile Banking application (app) is now fully compatible with the assistive technology available on most devices, allowing disabled customers to use core mobile banking services without difficulty.

Research had shown that disabled and older customers were less likely to use mobile banking than the general banking public but, when they did, customer satisfaction was extremely high. The challenge for the bank, therefore, was to ensure its mobile banking service was fully accessible.

Audits carried out by accessibility experts and feedback from a visual impairment charity in the UK revealed the obstacles that needed to be overcome. Senior executives backed the initiative and provided the resources to fix the problems highlighted.

The app re-design began in summer 2014. AbilityNet, a UK organisation which helps disabled people use computer technology, facilitated disabled user-testing during the early design phase, influencing the user-

interface and flow of screens. Weekly review meetings with internal accessibility experts AbilityNet and the project team ensured the redesign was carried out quickly and thoroughly.

The revised app was launched in February 2015 and received accreditation from AbilityNet following further disabled user-testing. The bank has received praise for its design from all users – disabled and non-disabled alike.

While re-designing the app, however, the Barclays IT accessibility team became aware that design and project managers did not fully understand how disabled users used technology. As a result, the team has expanded the 'personas' which are used as hypothetical customer examples to ensure banking products are accessible.

The personas, developed from disabled user-testing, encompass both physical and mental health conditions. They enable designers to understand, for example, the security, confidence and communication concerns of many disabled users.

What Barclays learned from redesigning its Mobile Banking app:

- Engage experts from the start of the design phase of the project
- Identify opportunities outside the usual accessibility areas; in this case taking advantage of the re-design of the app to make it more accessible
- Involve disabled people throughout the re-design process and act on their feedback – an app may be technically accessible but still not work in real life
- Ask employees to test and fine tune the app before it is launched

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