

Usability Assessment of AccessPlace During Initial Public Community Launch

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Introduction

People with disabilities consistently face challenges participating in the community due to inaccessible mobile, cognitive, and sensory environments. While the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) established set rules and regulations for building accessibility, these are only minimal requirements, and many community buildings still remain largely inaccessible.[1]

AccessPlace is a part of the Access Ratings for Buildings (ARB) project developed by the R₂D₂ Center at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee. This mobile web-based app allows users to leave star ratings and subjective reviews of their experiences regarding the accessibility of local restaurants.[2] AccessPlace is designed to be intuitive and easy to use for the average community member with no specialized training. The purpose of this study was to analyze the usability of the AccessPlace mobile web-app based on community feedback following its initial public launch.

Methods

Participants

Sixteen individuals were recruited for our survey out of twenty-five event attendees. This sample was mainly comprised of Occupational Therapy students, people with disabilities, and local disability advocates. Participants were surveyed after spending time in the community rating local restaurants using the AccessPlace web-app.

Survey Instrumentation

After having time in the community to use the AccessPlace web-app, participants were asked three free-response questions pertaining to their experience using the web-app, any problems they experienced, and any suggestions they may have had for future improvements. We based our analysis on two main categories: 1) whether or not the participant felt the experience using the web-app was positive, 2) whether or not they had any specific suggestions for improvement.



Discussion

AccessPlace is designed to be a simple and portable evaluation tool that allows users to quickly find the information that they need or input their own experiences and ratings [3]; however, this is not possible if users are not able to easily and intuitively navigate the current web-app still under revision and final development. With the Center for Disease Control (CDC) reporting 61 million Americans living with a disability [4], the need for readily available accessibility information is more apparent than ever. Future testing and analysis are needed as updates are made to AccessPlace to ensure the structure remains intuitive and user-friendly for all potential users.

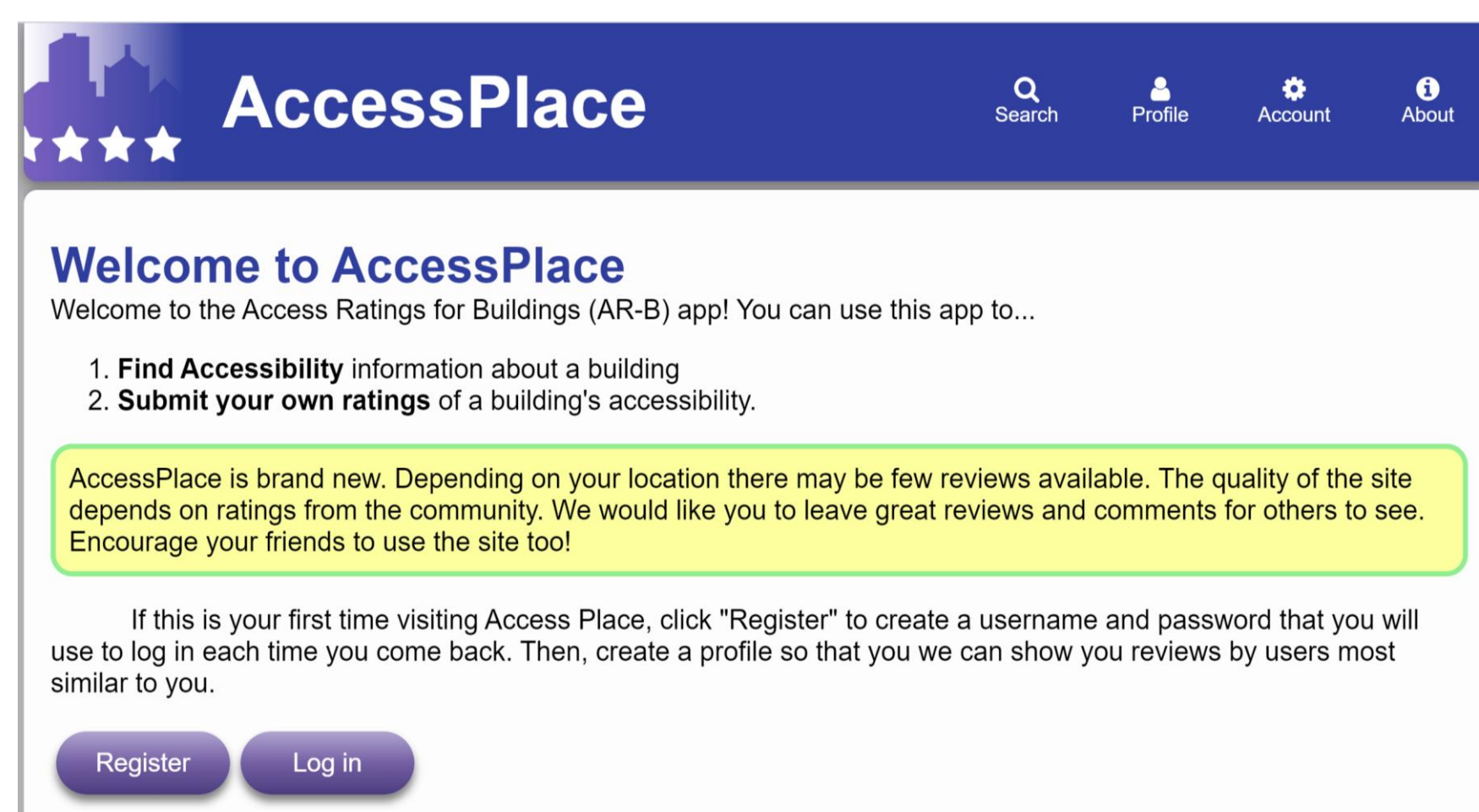
Results

Of the 16 participants surveyed, 14 (87.5%) reported that they had an overall positive experience at the event and using the web-app, and 7 (43.75%) gave specific suggestions for improvement. Furthermore, half of participants mentioned that the structure of the web-app was intuitive, and several expressed desire to return to future community events.

| Table 2. Results | Total | |
|--------------------------------------|--------|-------|
| | % | Count |
| Reported positive experience | 87.5% | 14 |
| Provided suggestions for improvement | 43.75% | 7 |

Conclusions

The wide-spread implementation of AccessPlace will help make communities more accessible by providing the public with the information they need to participate in their community. With the responses gathered from our survey, we are able to conclude that while further updates and developments are needed, the overall structure and design of AccessPlace community training and data collection events are intuitive and user-friendly for the average community member.



Literature Cited

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