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Captcha against accessibility.

Captcha tend to generalize to fight spams and unwanted activities on website. We are going to explore the damage for accessibility.

Captcha were made to prevent automatic processes to act on websites. the aim is to prevent automatic processes like robots to exchange information with websites like blogs or any interactive platforms.

Many interactive platforms risk to be overloaded with spams that make any activity impossible.

the use of captcha is one of the systems assuring that any interactive process on the website is coming from a human intervention. The problem is that the website and all its related services are locked to visually impaired users.

A captcha is a random set of characters that the user must capture to complete a process to enjoy a service on a website. Many websites use this system to allow users to sign up or to send written forms or any over information to be dealt wit.

Most of the time the website is perfectly accessible. So the user completes all the necessary steps until the very end of the process where the user is blocked by an action that he/she cannot perform, which is very frustrating. The captcha consists in a randomly displaid picture representing characters (letters and/or digits) that the user has to recognize and to reproduce on his/her keyboard.

What happens when the visually impaired person cannot see the picture? Most of the time web masters add an audio file where the displayed characters are spoken. Unfortunately, most advanced speech recognition software may automatically recognize what is spoken and automatically capture the characters. To avoid that, website designers have put In place audio files very difficult to recognize. the problem is that it is nearly impossible for the human ear to recognize them either. The same thing applies for visual recognition by the way. One may use an automated OCR to recognize the picture and the problem remains the same. This is why sometimes captcha pictures are so difficult to recognize for a user with a normal sight.

So not only captcha system is often inefficient, but it prevents an entire category of users to access a service.

the solution would be simple. One can keep the idea of characters to capture randomly, but in stead of displaying a picture to reproduce, one could display an easy-to-answer question.

Example:

"My father gave me five dollars of which I spent two, how many dollars am I left with? Please write the figure in letters."

The process becomes extremely easy for a human being but very difficult to reproduce within the framework of an automated process.

Other solutions may be found to satisfy both spam prevention and people with special needs.

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