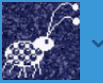




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
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Austin Seraphin: Interface Accessibility for the Vision Impaired

@PhillyCHI presented Austin Seraphin at the January 23, 2014 meeting as a guest speaker. Austin became blind at birth. He started programming at age 7, and has used all of the major operating systems. Austin offers a unique perspective as both a blind user and a blind developer.

by  Anne Gibson 3 years ago 47 Views ▾

Note: I've reorganized some of the tweets by subject instead of the presentation order because folks asked some great questions at the end and they made more sense in context of their initial subjects.



Anne Gibson
@perpendicularme

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Austin Seraphin (blind since birth) is presenting tonight on the interfaces available for accessible computing.

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2 1

First, some history of computers and accessibility.... complete with demos provided via emulators that run on Austin's Mac.



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1949 was the first computer outputting teletype paper, so you had to conserve your output because you were paying for it.

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1966 - IBM released the first command line interface.

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1983 Apple IIe was the first computer with a screen reader. Austin was 6 at the time.

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(He's got an emulator that provides the sound from the Apple II. It's pretty awesome.)

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A screen is a two-dimensional output, but speech is a one-dimensional output. The challenge: how to render 2 dimensions as 1.

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Because the Apple II had Basic built into the OS, and a speech synthesizer, he could learn Basic. Games like blackjack were also available.

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Austin's first PC was in 1990 that had a screen reader called Business Vision and a turbo pedal to fast forward and rewind the speech.

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Austin played a lot of interactive fiction, text adventures - he's demo'ing Colossal Cave.

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The game: "It is pitch dark."

Austin: "I don't care that it's pitch dark. But I'm playing a sighted person so I'll turn on the lamp."

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Anne Gibson

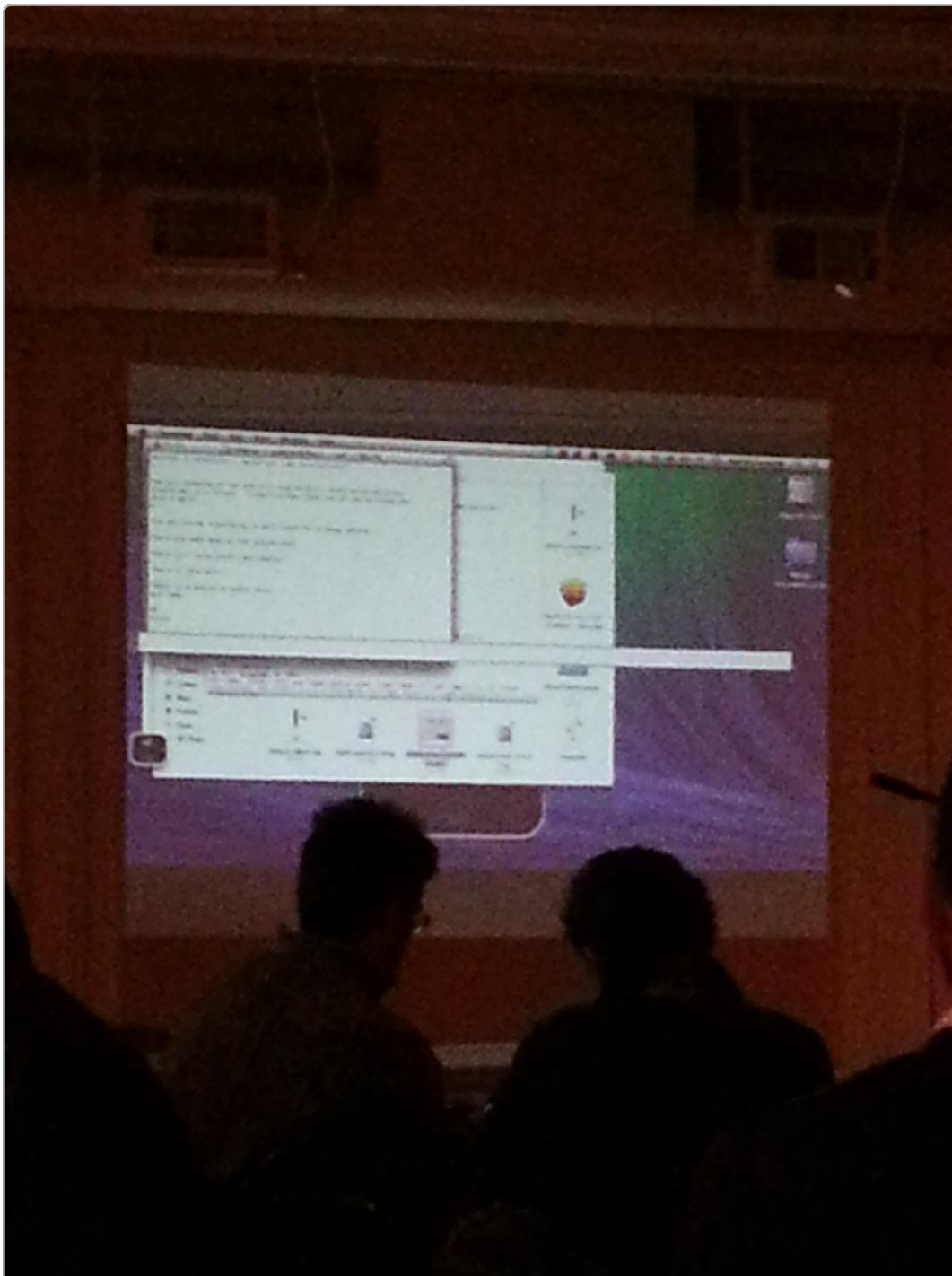
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Text adventures invoke all of the senses because they are just text. Since the pictures are in your mind they're really high def.

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PhillyCHI **PhillyCHI**
@PhillyCHI

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[@AustinSeraphin](#) is taking us through some text-based adventures

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There's a documentary named "Get Lamp" that covers text adventures.

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Chris Cavallucci

@ChrisCavallucci

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Austin Seraphin is presenting @PhillyCHI interface Accessibility for the Vision Impaired vine.co/v/MBpLOFVtUln

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Synchronet BBS is still up, so Austin is logging into a retro bulletin board system to show us what it was like.

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(He's using his iPhone hot spot for Internet, so the speeds are actually comparable to the BBS modem days)

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There is a TON of crap and clutter that modern forums have that we didn't need in the BBS days and we don't need now... but we build.

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BBSs had single character keystrokes and very short/simple messaging so you didn't have to wait as long on slow connections.

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Austin is showing a space trading game on the BBS - all in text, all with single character commands. (I miss those days.)

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Austin took a few minutes to show us the devices that were available to take notes before things like iPhones were available. Most of them centered around using Braille.



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Before the 1990s Austin took notes with a slate and stylus. It looks a lot like a metal slide rule that you poke holes using a stylus.

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There's a lot higher Braille literacy in Europe and more descriptive television in Europe

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"Is there an activity where you'd prefer Braille as compared to VoiceOver?" Personal preferences.

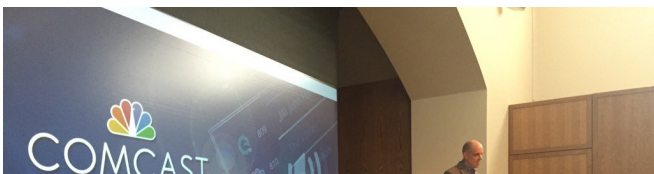
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Accessibility Equals Innovation by Tom Wlodkowski

By examining the extreme ends of a set of phenomena in depth, the entire universe of relationships can be illuminated since other instances will fall somewhere between on the map of relations and links.

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