

Meet Maria

Posted on February 28, 2014 by [Whitney Quesenbery \(http://rosenfeldmedia.com/author/whitneyq/\)](http://rosenfeldmedia.com/author/whitneyq/) | [Leave a comment](#)

Maria is one of the personas from our book, *A Web for Everyone* (<http://rosenfeldmedia.com/books/a-web-for-everyone/>). It's important to remember that a person with a disability is, first, a person. They like their hometown sports team or love going to the theater. They are funny or quiet, or quick to anger, just like everyone else.

You can download an overview of all the personas from our [Resources page \(http://rosenfeldmedia.com/books/a-web-for-everyone/resources/\)](http://rosenfeldmedia.com/books/a-web-for-everyone/resources/). The personas images, created by Tom Biby, [twofinechaps.com \(http://twofinechaps.com/\)](http://twofinechaps.com/), are available on Flickr. Tune in for a new persona every Tuesday until all eight are posted.

Maria: Bilingual community health worker



I love this. It's all here ... when I can find it.

Maria comes from a traditional Mexican extended family. She grew up helping her parents and older relatives navigate the English-speaking world. Her work as a community health worker is a natural extension. She does outreach and health education in the Spanish-speaking community in LA.

Her husband is good with the computer, and bought one for home, so their kids would be able to use it for their homework. It's become an important way to keep up with their family back home. They post videos of the children and use Skype to keep up with cousins and friends.

Her real lifeline is the smartphone that her family got her last year. Her daughter set up all of her favorite sites in her bookmarks, and she uses the calendar to keep track of her appointments. To tell the truth, she isn't really sure how it all works, but it's wonderful that it does.

She prefers to read in Spanish, especially when she's looking up information that she needs to share with a client in Spanish. Her daughter showed her how to translate a page on the browser. It's not very good, but she can use it to get the general idea of what a page says.

A lot of her professional health education has online videos. Captions help her understand the lectures better, especially for scientific words.

When a site is confusing, I just leave.

Talking about sites with clear purpose (in Chapter 3), Maria says, “My clients, most don’t speak English well, so I need sites that have health information in Spanish, too. I can read it with them and make sure that they understand it, and that they know the words to tell their doctor.

“To tell you the truth, on my own, I don’t stay on a site long if it’s confusing. On many sites, there is so much crammed in that I can’t find anything at all. It just makes my head hurt to even try. I like the sites that are simple and don’t have so many decisions I have to make. When I find a site that works for me, I stick to it. I have a nice health site that I use most of the time. For anything else, I just search.”

When I hear and see it, health information makes more sense.

She also talks about how text-to-speech features help make media more accessible for her (in Chapter 9), “My new phone is so good for my work. I don’t have to carry around so much paper because I can pull it up from my bookmarks. I even tried watching one of my health educator’s videos, but the captions were hard to read on the phone. Those captions are very nice. I can see the words spelled out while I hear them, so I learn how to spell them, too. It’s also nice to give videos to my clients. Sometimes they don’t read English well, but they can listen OK.”

Snapshot of Maria

- 49 years old
- Community college + healthcare certificate
- Married, grown children
- Bilingual (Spanish dominant)
- Community health worker
- Smartphone from her phone service, home computer primarily her husband’s, for his business

The A’s: Ability, Attitude Aptitude

- **Ability:** Prefers Spanish language sites, when she can find them; needs information and instructions written clearly
- **Aptitude:** Adventurous, but not very proficient; husband and daughter set up bookmarks for her
- **Attitude:** Thinks it’s wonderful to be able to have her favorite websites with her at all times

Assistive Technology

- Skype
- Translation sites

The Bigger Picture

Source: National Center for Health Statistics and U.S. Census, [Marketing Charts \(http://www.marketingcharts.com/direct/hispanics-more-likely-to-use-new-mobile-devices-17164/\)](http://www.marketingcharts.com/direct/hispanics-more-likely-to-use-new-mobile-devices-17164/)

- 17.8 million people in the U.S. speak English “less than well.”
- Hispanic U.S. adults are more likely to use mobile devices and mobile search. They are more likely to take mobile pictures and video.

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