Inclusive Design & Accessibility: Week 7 Hritika Kucheriya

What is Inclusive Design?

Inclusive Design is a design methodology that focuses on creating products, services, and experiences that accommodate a wide range of people, including those with disabilities, different cultural backgrounds, languages, and socioeconomic statuses. The goal is to design for equity and diversity, ensuring that no one is excluded due to their physical, cognitive, or situational limitations.

Key principles of inclusive design include:

Recognizing Exclusion – Understanding that exclusion often arises unintentionally due to limited perspectives in design.

Learning from Diversity – Incorporating feedback from diverse users to build adaptable solutions.

Solving for One, Extending to Many – Addressing specific needs that can improve the experience for all users.

What is Accessible Design?

Accessible Design is a subset of Inclusive Design that specifically ensures products are usable by individuals with disabilities. It follows standards such as WCAG (Web Content Accessibility Guidelines) and ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) to provide accessibility in digital and physical spaces.

Key aspects of Accessible Design:

- Providing alternative text for images to assist visually impaired users.
- Ensuring keyboard navigation for users who cannot use a mouse.
- Using high-contrast color schemes for readability.
- Adding closed captions and transcripts for videos.

How Are Inclusive Design and Accessible Design Different?

Accessible Design primarily ensures compliance with disability-focused regulations and guidelines.

Inclusive Design goes beyond disability, addressing broader barriers related to culture, language, gender identity, financial limitations, and temporary impairments (e.g., a parent holding a baby who needs hands-free navigation).

- Microsoft emphasizes designing for diversity and ensuring products work for as many people as possible.

- The video demonstrated real-life scenarios where inclusive design helps not only people with disabilities but also those in situational impairments (e.g., using captions in a noisy environment).
- A major lesson is that small changes, like voice commands or customizable UI elements, can significantly enhance inclusivity.

Section Two: Personal Experience with Non-Inclusive Technology

Technology: Mobile Banking Apps

Many mobile banking apps are not fully inclusive or accessible, particularly for:

- Visually impaired users who struggle with small text and poor color contrast.
- People with motor impairments who find it difficult to navigate the app without voice control or large tappable areas.
- Users with limited digital literacy, such as elderly individuals, who face complex user interfaces and financial jargon.

Why This Technology is Not Accessible or Inclusive:

- Many banking apps lack full screen reader compatibility, making navigation difficult for users who rely on text-to-speech.
- Some apps use CAPTCHAs that are not voice-compatible, restricting access for blind users.
- Multi-factor authentication sometimes relies solely on text-based verification, excluding users with hearing impairments.

How This Technology Can Be Improved:

1. Enhancing Screen Reader Support – Ensure all buttons, icons, and fields are properly labeled for text-to-speech navigation.
2. Alternative Authentication Methods – Provide voice authentication or biometric login options for users with hearing impairments.
3. Simplified Interface Mode – A dedicated "easy access mode" for elderly users with larger buttons, simplified navigation, and jargon-free text.
4. Color Contrast Customization – Allow users to adjust text size and color schemes to enhance readability.
5. 5. Voice-Activated Banking – Integrate voice commands for users with limited motor skills, enabling actions like checking balances and making transfers hands-free.