Chrome for Android: Accelerating the Mobile Web

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You've probably already heard that Chrome for Android Beta launched today. This new browser is based on the Chromium open source project, and brings with it many of the latest HTML5 features that Chrome developers have come to know and love. For an overview of the new hotness, see the launch announcement on blog.chromium.org and a more detailed overview on code.google.com. I'll quickly go through the stuff I personally find most interesting:

UI Improvements

Chrome for Android makes it easy for developers to create modern mobile web user interfaces using fixed positioning, and `overflow: scroll` for individually scrollable elements. In addition, native-like scroll behavior is enabled by default. Chrome for Android supports the old flexbox model, though be aware that the original flexbox model is deprecated in favor of a new one. Also supported are DateTime pickers, and early support for `<input type="range">`.

Fast graphics

Chrome for Android also supports hardware accelerated canvas, and performs quite well. There's also support for requestAnimationFrame, which is important for mobile, letting the browser decide when to render, giving it a chance to manage battery life more efficiently in GPU intensive applications. Chrome for Android introduces a slew of other notable HTML5 features including File System API, IndexedDB, Web Workers and Web Sockets.

Remote debugging

Hands down, my personal favorite feature of Chrome for Android is remote debugging through the Chrome Developer Tools. Remote debugging makes it very easy for web developers to debug their application as it's running live on their mobile device, without having to resort to clever hacks such as Weinre. Here's a quick screencast showing this feature in action:

For more information about remote debugging, see this remote debugging article.

Try Chrome for Android Beta for yourself by downloading it from the Android Market. If you've written a mobile web app to use a feature, but Chrome for Android doesn't support it, keep in mind that this is a beta release, and see if this is already a known issue, and star it if it is. Otherwise, please log a bug via new.mcrbug.com.

I'm stoked about the positive impact Chrome for Android will make on the mobile web developer community, and looking forward to see the great things we can build together! If you have additional questions, see if they are already answered in this FAQ. Otherwise, if you have a Chrome-specific mobile web development question, please post it on Stack Overflow, tagged with the google-chrome and android tags.