

Blaise On-the-Go: Using Blaise IS With Mobile Devices

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Blaise IS provides a mechanism for respondents to complete their questionnaires over the web. The interface is designed for respondents with a mouse, using a web browser running on full-sized screen. However, people are increasingly accessing the internet with touch-screen mobile devices, such as smartphones and tablets. For mobile respondents, answering Blaise questionnaires should be as natural and comfortable as any other app on their device. The unique characteristics of mobile devices require a different type of user interface, which the standard Blaise IS stylesheets do not offer.

CentERdata is developing a customized XSLT stylesheet to create a mobile version of Blaise questionnaires. The stylesheet integrates a mobile web framework to create a web interface with the look and feel similar to that of a native app. This is a solution that seamlessly fits in the Blaise IS architecture and can provide many of the benefits of a fully native app, but at a fraction of the development time and effort.

The mobile version of the questionnaire is optimized for small screens. This includes layout of the question and answer categories, but also includes placement of back/next buttons to mimic a native app. Special attention is given to large layouts, such as tables, which do not easily fit onto a small screen.

The mobile version will also be designed for touch screen devices. This includes support for gestures to scroll, navigate and perform other actions with the questionnaire. The mobile version adapts the onscreen keyboard to match the different open question types (like numbers or text).

With these improvements, answering Blaise questionnaires becomes easier and more intuitive for mobile respondents.