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Reading Assignment Four

How to Implement Gestures into Your Mobile Design – *Carrie Cousins*
Gestures, as the article explained, are ways for users to interact with devices of varying sizes. Generally speaking, they are hand movements, but can also include shaking, tilting or moving a device. I'm very familiar with all of these things, as I utilize gestures on my smart phone daily. The most common gestures implemented are the tap, double tap, pinch, spread, press and flick. Many of these are done intuitively (which is the goal) but in certain situations the user may be very aware of themselves using a gesture. For example, double tapping a picture on Instagram allows a user to "like" it.

As a designer, the variety of users that are going to be interacting with these gestures should be kept in mind. Gestures should be intuitive and large enough for any size finger. They should also be placed on the screen in a convenient place, taking into account the "thumb zone" and how users may hold their devices.

The article goes on to explain how gestures are regularly linked to animation. Animation is the primary way to signal that an action has been completed to a user. Without animations, users wouldn't have feedback informing them if they've successfully completed a gesture action. In sum, it is important to understand gestures coupled with animations. Understanding how the two operate together can create a satisfying and simplified user experience.

The State of Mobile User Experience – *Raluca Budiu*
This article explored the question: "What's produced the current change in mobile usability?" Though not one answer alone satisfies this question, the author suggested three potential solutions. The first is that people are simply becoming exposed to mobile design. As more designers are exposed to the medium, the more apt they are to explore and design in a mobile fashion. The second reason is most companies now understand that they cannot deliver their full site experience on a mobile device; it is not user friendly or visually appealing. The last proposal to the question was that the use of responsive web design is positively influencing mobile usability.

Different from responsive web design, mobile-dedicated sites are another version (or a copy) of a site built for a smaller screen. Due to the fact that responsive web design often starts with designing for mobile, most sites now understand that mobile content cannot be arbitrarily limited. The answer to any question should be the same regardless of the device type or size. Responsive design has made content prioritization and parity relevant, overall benefitting mobile design.

Four Ways to Build a Mobile Application, Part 3: PhoneGap – *Peter Traeg*
Though this article was rich in content, I was mainly interested in the sections that explained what PhoneGap is/used for. I learned that PhoneGap is a platform that allows a developer to

create an app that can run on a variety of mobile devices. More formally, PhoneGap's development tools make platform-specific packages out of the developer's HTML, CSS and JavasScript files. One of the things I found most interesting is that PhoneGap comes complete with plugins to support device capabilities (i.e. accelerometer, camera, contacts, network availability etc.). On top of these capabilities, PhoneGap can be extended with plugins that enable more device features such as Bluetooth, push notification, calendars, Facebook etc.

Furthermore, by coupling PhoneGap with a UI framework (like jQuery Mobile), building a multiplatform application is easy. It seems as though PhoneGap is the solution for overcoming the difficulty of designing a cross-device hybrid application.