
Policy Impacts on the HCI Research Community

Jofish Kaye (Moderator)

Mozilla
Mountain View, CA
acm@jofish.com

Neha Kumar

Georgia Institute of Technology
Atlanta, GA
neha.kumar@cc.gatech.edu

Casey Fiesler

University of Colorado Boulder
Boulder, CO
casey.fiesler@colorado.edu

Bryan Semaan

Syracuse University
Syracuse, NY
bsemaan@syr.edu

Abstract

Recent policy developments in both the United States and elsewhere have sparked significant concern within the HCI research community. Predominantly, increasing isolationism can have a serious impact on collaboration, community engagement and wellness, and knowledge sharing. Policy shifts also have the potential to affect

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freedom of scientific inquiry, the free flow of information, and funding for computing research. Moreover, what can SIGCHI as an organization do to best support the community under current conditions? In this panel discussion, designed to be heavily participatory, we will take on these issues and discuss what we can do to support our strong, diverse community of researchers.

Author Keywords

Diversity; Policy; HCI research community

ACM Classification Keywords

K.4.1 Computers and Society: Public Policy Issues

Introduction

CHI embraces a diverse, international community of researchers in HCI and related areas of work. Therefore, recent policy developments that suggest increasing isolationism—when policies begin to isolate one country's affairs from the affairs of others--have sparked serious concern within the CHI community. Notably, the travel ban currently being proposed and debated in the United States in January 2017 [3] has directly impacted many HCI researchers. Combined with related developments such as the "Brexit" vote of 2016, we may be seeing a global shift in the political

climate that will be significant for our international community.

As researchers, we see the potential to address our changing world using research collaborations and design [1,4,5], and the CHI community is already investigating ways of addressing civic and social issues [2,6]. However, it is also important that we consider concerns around access and participation for members of our global community and identify ways in which we might erect advocacy and support systems in response.

In the panel we propose, we aim for a deeper understanding of the challenges that diverse members of our community are facing and might continue to face. We also intend to engage collectively in a deeper dialog on advocacy, activism, and policy-making for change, so as to ensure that our community continues to provide a safe space through which diverse ideas are exchanged among a diverse group of people. That is, the innovations that continue to propel the HCI community forward are in part the result of our diversity, and together, we plan to devise approaches to address the challenges that emerge from the existing and evolving political scenario, with particular focus on how SIGCHI and the larger HCI community might protect and continue to foster international collaborations and conference travel.

The Panel

The panelists all have experience and expertise related to the concerns described. They will speak briefly to highlight these, but most of the session will solicit audience commentary and collective brainstorming around questions and ideas.

We recognize that panel attendees may not necessarily feel comfortable sharing things that may be personal, make them vulnerable, or might potentially be viewed negatively. In coordination with the related SIG taking place at the conference, both during the panel and prior to the conference, we will provide ways for community members to provide questions and commentary anonymously, and also provide avenues for those unable to attend the conference to participate.

This panel is designed to be an open, inclusive conversation about issues that are pertinent to the preservation and growth of our research community in the immediate and distant futures.

Panelists

Jofish Kaye is Principal Research Scientist in the Emerging Technologies Group at Mozilla. His research explores the rich connections between people and the tools to support those connections, and he is currently exploring systems to support easy privacy, encryption, and security on the web. He has a PhD from Cornell University.

Casey Fiesler is an assistant professor in the Department of Information Science at University of Colorado Boulder. She holds a JD from Vanderbilt Law School and a PhD in Human-Centered Computing from Georgia Tech. Her research area generally is the relationship between people, technology, and policy, and she studies in part information literacy around law in online communities.

Neha Kumar is an assistant professor at Georgia Tech. She focuses on human-centered computing and sustainable development. She got her PhD at UC Berkeley's School of Information and was a postdoc at

University of Washington and University of Southern California.

Bryan Semaan is an assistant professor in the School of Information Studies (iSchool) at Syracuse University (SU). He obtained his Ph.D. in Information and Computer Science from the University of California, Irvine. His research examines technology for the social good, whereby he explores the role of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) in challenging contexts, such as working with marginalized populations or choosing domains of our social life (i.e. civic participation) through which ICTs can enhance the lives of citizens and effect positive societal impact.

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