
Moving Towards a Journal-centric Publication Model for CHI: Possible Paths, Opportunities and Risks

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ABSTRACT

As a scholarly field, the ACM SIGCHI community maintains a strong focus on conferences as its main outlet for scholarly publication. Historically, this originates in how the field of computer science adopted a conference-centric publication model as well as in the organizational focus of ACM. Lately, this model has become increasingly challenged for a number of reasons, and multiple alternatives are emerging within the SIGCHI community as well as in adjacent communities. Through revisiting examples from other conferences and neighboring communities, this panel explores alternative publication paths and their opportunities and risks.

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KEYWORDS

ACM proceedings; conference; journal; hybrid publication model;

1 INTRODUCTION

In line with the development of many computer science conferences, the proceedings of CHI are held in high regards as a scientific publication outlet. The central role of the CHI conference within the ACM SIGCHI community contributes to an, in general, highly conference-centric publication strategy. As SIGCHI scholars, our publication strategies tend to be governed by a calendar of conference submission deadlines, and our community service tends to be directed towards serving, in different roles, on the committees and organizing boards for large international conferences.

While the model has worked very well to establish a solid international research community, it has recently come under scrutiny for a number of reasons. A conference-centric publication focus is rare in academia more generally, requiring researchers to constantly explain and motivate their choice of publication venues for university managers and funding agencies. Many academics also experience an increased focus on comparable and measurable research outcomes including publications. But the conference-centric publication process has faced critique also from within HCI and adjacent fields that maintain a strong focus on conferences. In a meta-analysis of computer systems research, Anderson argued that their conference review process was inherently unpredictable [1].

The HCI field is still a young field, we have issues with coherency, with recognising and solidifying ‘paradigms’ of knowledge, and with substantiating theoretical positions and critical perspectives. Within SIGCHI, moves towards a more journal-centric model have been ongoing for a long time, going back to the creation of ToCHI and the Interactions magazine [7]. More recently, multiple conferences in the intersection of Information Systems and HCI have begun developing hybrid formats, in which the proceedings are also journal issues [4,5].

2 PANEL

The purpose of this interactive panel is to explore various ideas for, and experiences with, alternative formats for conference proceedings that move towards hybrid models for publication. The panel will be structured around a set of questions, to which the invited panelists contribute with their own experiences and perspectives. The audience will be invited to contribute towards each of the questions.

The following questions will be used to structure the panel, each expected to invite an approximately ten-minute discussion.

- 1) What are the benefits and risks of the conference-centric publication model?
- 2) What alternative publication models for conferences have you experienced?
- 3) What is the experience of publishing under (one of) these models? Of reviewing and organizing alternative approaches?
- 4) Is there an impact on publication quality from the publication model? If so, what impact do you see?

Audience participation will be organized by the moderator. In order to structure the discussion according to the topics, comments will need to be handed in on paper to the moderator, but the authors will be called up to further detail their comments ensuring that they can become part of a true discussion. Furthermore, a system of hand-signs will be used to signal agreement and dissent with speakers.

2.1 Panel participants

The following panel participants are suggested and confirmed, representing different experiences and perspectives on the topic. The panel proposers are open to suggestions for changes and additions to this group, to better reflect key perspectives and considerations within SIGCHI and ACM.

Annika Waern will act as moderator of the panel. She will speak about her experiences with conferences, where the proceedings are not considered terminal publications but articles are expected to eventually be accepted into a journal. One example is the ‘basket of eight’ strategy implemented by the Association for Information Systems [2].

Gilbert Cockton will present the PACM [6] model, and the experiences that the EICS conference has with increasing the number of deadlines to four per year. He will also propose a more interactive social dynamic format for publications that is more suitable for creative design research [3].

Kristina Höök recently became Editor-in-Chief (EIC) of the ACM Transactions on Computer-Human Interaction (TOCHI). She is concerned that SIGCHI has not seen enough (or properly appreciated) synthesis work, that is, bringing together all the work that has been done in some subfield into a coherent framework, describing the state of knowledge achieved so far. She would like to hear creative suggestions for how TOCHI can help improve the quality of HCI—fostering cohesion as well as diversity in our research questions, aims, results and impact on academia as well as society.

Jofish Kay will discuss data and evidence around current reviewing and publication processes.

Eleanor Wynn will discuss the findings of a recently published review article comparing academic cultures between IS and HCI [8], with focus on publication models and their effects on reputation and the adoption of new theory. She argues that the open model of IS journals and working groups have given alternative perspectives a platform to develop on, specifically qualitative methods and critical theory.

The publication model of CHI appears to have delayed the latter and constrained the former, although recent publications on critical and postcolonial theory seem to have overturned that constraint.

Julie Williamson is the SIGCHI Vice President for Publications and a member of the ACM Publications Board. She will present the policy concerns for a shift towards a journal model and the practical implications on workload and process.

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