Research Ethics Roundtable

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ABSTRACT

An ongoing challenge within CSCW research communities is understanding research ethics' norms and expectations as our methods and technologies evolve. This panel provides an annual opportunity to interface with SIGCHI's research ethics committee, which advises SIGCHI reviewers on changing norms in HCI and social computing research ethics. Although the panel is open to questions about research ethics and the broad work of the committee, this year, we will have a particular focus on *research power and voice*.

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KEYWORDS
Research ethics; power; voice

INTRODUCTION

Research ethics continues to be an important and controversial topic in CSCW [1,3,6]. Each year, the ACM SIGCHI Research Ethics committee works with reviewers and ACs to navigate complex questions about how digital methods and emerging research practices are changing the ethical expectations of participants, researchers, and research regulators.

Over the last five years, we have held regular research ethics townhalls at SIGCHI conferences to discuss the changing state of research ethics in HCI, CSCW, and social computing research [2,4,5]. We use these as an opportunity to share topics and themes that the committee has encountered, build understanding of how the committee assists reviewers, answer questions raised by the research community, and learn from the community about emerging or neglected ethical concerns. This year, with global attention turned to privilege, systemic oppression, and anti-racism, we will particularly focus on questions such as:

- How should qualitative and quantitative CSCW researchers consider their own power as researchers? (e.g. institutional and hierarchical positions, methodological orientation, and social identity privileges...)
- How can researchers in powerful positions do ethical research that involves those in less powerful positions?
- Whose legacies are silenced or valued by current research ethics regulations and norms?
- What are ways to increase the representation and voice of participants in research, and who makes these decisions?
- When should positionality statements be part of research publications and reviews, and can such statements be harmful as well as helpful?
- How are notions of consent challenged by digital methods, and should our definitions of consent be evolving as both research and social norms evolve?
- What are best practices for reviewing work from outside of one's own cultural context?
- How well do current ethics guidelines (e.g. Respect for Persons, Justice) help researchers think about the unintended consequences of their work, and in particular the ways that unintended consequences of research, design and technology tend to apply unequally?

FORMAT

The townhall organizers will prepare 3-4 very short live presentations (3 min max). We will then use a synchronous session to have both breakout small group and full-panel discussions of the questions we have raised, as well as questions submitted by the audience in advance and during the panel. Leveraging the online format, we aim to closely listen to participants to understand how our shared cultural norms and experiences should shape our collective approach to conducting ethical research. During the breakout groups, panelists will take the role of active listeners, not directing the

discussions, but instead acting only as conversation enablers. Through this, we hope to enable safe sharing of experiences and concerns with the ethical conduct of CSCW research.

PARTICIPANTS

Melissa Densmore a Senior Lecturer in the University of Cape Town Department of Computer Science. She is a human-computer interaction for development (HCI4D) researcher, with a specific focus on the uses of new information technology and interfaces for healthcare in Africa. Her work experience is in user interface and web application design, and her research also involves human-computer interaction, participatory design, and action research.

Casey Fiesler is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Information Science at University of Colorado Boulder. Her research largely falls into the area of social computing, with an emphasis on law, ethics, and social norms. She is currently part of a multi-institution National Science Foundation supported project devoted to empirical studies of the ethics of research involving big, pervasive data.

Cosmin Munteanu is an Assistant Professor at the Institute for Communication, Culture, Information, and Technology at University of Toronto Mississauga, and Director of the Technologies for Ageing Gracefully lab. His area of expertise is at the intersection of Human-Computer Interaction, Voice User Interfaces, Mobile Computing, Ethics in Computing Research, Assistive Technologies, and Gerontechnology. Cosmin's multidisciplinary interests include speech and multimodal interaction for mobile devices, mixed reality systems, learning technologies for marginalized users, usable privacy and cyber-safety, assistive technologies for older adults, and ethics in human-computer interaction research. Cosmin has previously served as scientific reviewer for applications submitted for ethics review. He has lead courses and training workshops for graduate and faculty researchers at SIGCHI conferences and at several universities in Canada and abroad. Additionally, Cosmin has conducted and published research on the ethical conduct of research with human participant in emerging techno-centric fieldwork, and has held a Canadian Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) grant for this research.

Michael Muller works as a research staff member in IBM Research AI in Cambridge MA USA. His current work involves understanding how humans individually and collaboratively shape the data and the algorithms of data science, to strengthen data science as a necessarily and beneficially human undertaking. Previous work included several values-oriented or value sensitive projects – most recently one of the methodologies for value sensitive participatory design. Michael serves on SIGCHI CARES and has worked on diversity, inclusion, and equity activities in several conferences.

Katie Shilton is an associate professor at the University of Maryland, College Park. Her research explores ethics and policy for the design of information technologies.

She is the PI of the PERVADE project, a multi-campus collaboration focused on big data research ethics. Other projects include developing privacy-sensitive search for email collections; analyzing ethical cultures in computer security research; and building tools to facilitate ethics discussions in mobile application development.

Janet C Read is a Full Professor at the University of Central Lancashire in the UK where she leads the Child Computer Interaction (ChiCI) group. Her interest in ethics is primarily around the full inclusion of, and the attribution of contribution from, children as they work with HCI related researchers. Emphasizing children's assent and dissemination of results to children, her position is that researchers need to justify asking children to participate and need to be open about their motives. Her group have developed a toolkit to provoke researchers into thinking about the ethical aspects of their work.

Özge Subaşı is an Assistant Professor at the College of Social Sciences and Humanities at Koc University, and the Director of the Futurewell: Co-creation and Wellbeing Group, the first participatory design research and wellbeing lab in Turkey. Ozge's research is on co-creation with underserved populations, based on design anthropology fieldwork in community settings on topics such as assistive technologies, gerontechnology, social and situational aspects of access and the new forms of neighborhoods. Ozge has led ethics work in multiple European Union funded projects, and coordinated cross cultural human computer interaction fieldwork and evaluations.

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