



**Ben Bederson**  
**Position Paper**  
**CHI 2006 – Workshop on Public Policy**  
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As lead organizer of this workshop, and chair of the SIGCHI U.S. Public Policy Committee, I see two kinds of challenges. The first is based on societal issues where HCI plays a role. These issues are well represented in the attendees of this workshop and their position papers. The second issue, though, is an organizational one – which is how to make this committee effective. We all have our domain interests and current projects related to public policy and HCI. We also tend to have personal commitments to the “public good”. At the same time, we also are exceedingly busy and need to focus on our personal priorities such as professional advancement, making money and enjoying our non-work lives.

There is also an issue of what SIGCHI as an organization can do through this committee and group of interested people. We can write documents communicating design guidelines, participate in public forums and educate our leaders, work on specific projects we care about, etc. But what will be the most productive and long-lasting benefit that we can accomplish?

Figuring out how to harness our collective energy to make progress in these issues when such work often requires effort beyond our available time and current expertise remains a challenge. I hope that this workshop will help push this group to deciding what and how SIGCHI should move forward in public policy-related issues. I expect that in bringing together this critical mass, we will find natural areas of strength and shared passion. As such, I’m looking forward to meeting all the workshop participants and pushing these issues ahead.

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He is chair of the SIGCHI U.S. Public Policy Committee. He has a long-standing interest in applying technology to societal challenges. Two major current related projects are the International Children’s Digital Library ([www.icdlbooks.org](http://www.icdlbooks.org)) which offers over 800 complete children’s books in 34 languages in a child-friendly interface on the web. This brings up issues of rights and universal usability. He also works on a project to look at usability of modern voting machines ([www.capc.umd.edu/rpts/VotingTech\\_par.html](http://www.capc.umd.edu/rpts/VotingTech_par.html)).