

# Workshop on SIGCHI Public Policy

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## Important Issues

There are so many important public policy issues in which human-computer interaction plays a role, it is difficult to know where to start. If forced to choose three issues of greatest importance, I choose:

- *Voting reliability and usability*: Democracy depends on voters having confidence that they can cast their votes as intended, and that their votes will be counted as cast. The trend towards electronic voting systems is eroding this confidence rather than bolstering it. Participating in the development and deployment of the Election Incident Reporting System gave me a front-row view of the difficulty many voters have casting their votes as intended.
- *Universal usability*: Information technology has become so pervasive in the developed world that it is difficult to avoid using it. This raises two issues. First, if IT-based products and services are ubiquitous, they should be easy to use, and accessible to all, but many aren't. Second, the benefits of IT-based products and services are still mostly unavailable to people in the developing world.
- *Usable privacy*: Using information technology, particularly the Internet, creates a potential for massive losses of privacy. Individuals need ways of controlling the release of personal information. Methods and tools exist, but most are still in the "for geeks only" stage; they aren't yet suitable for most people.

## CHI Policy Experience

- Chair, Computer Professionals for Social Responsibility, 1990-94
- Founding Co-Chair: Participatory Design conference, PDC'90, Seattle, April 1990.
- Co-organizer (with Ben Shneiderman) of CHI'92 Session on Social Responsibility and Social Action.
- Co-author: CPSR whitepaper: "Serving the Community: A Public-Interest Vision of the National Information Infrastructure" in response to request from White House Office of Science and Technology Policy, 1994.
- Author: "Scenarios of People Using the NII", *CPSR Newsletter*, 1994.
- Author: "The Information Superhighway: A Worst-Case Scenario", *CACM*, Feb. 1996.
- Submitted written and verbal testimony to state and federal government hearings on telecommunications policy issues.
- Invited Talk: "Universal Access to the Net: Requirements and Social Impact", CHI1997, (also published in *Computers and Society*, March 1998).
- Netiquette Training: Whose Responsibility?", *CPSR Newsletter*, Summer 1998.
- Co-author: "National Identification Schemes (NIDS): A Remedy Against Terrorist Attack?", in Brunstein, K. & Berleur, J. (editors), *Human Choice and Computers: Issues of Choice and Quality of Life in the Information Society, IFIP 17*, World Computer Congress, Kluwer Academic Publishers, Boston, 2002, pp 195-205.
- UI Team Lead: Election Incident Reporting System, a web-based system that was used to help monitor voting problems in the 2004 U.S. presidential elections, and was upgraded and used in 2005

for state and municipal elections. Also, Co-author: "Convergent Usability Evaluation: A Case Study from the EIRS Project", *Proceedings of ACM CHI2005*.

- Member: SIGCHI U.S. Public Policy Committee, 2005-present.