

Workshop on HCI Research and Practice Agenda Based on Human Needs and Social Responsibility

Michael J. Muller*

Cathleen Wharton**

U S WEST Advanced Technologies
4001 Discovery Drive, Suite 340
Boulder CO 80303 U.S.A.

*+1 303 541 6564

michael@advtech.uswest.com
mullerm@acm.org

**+1 303 541 6292

cwharton@advtech.uswest.com
cwharton.chi@xerox.com

KEYWORDS

Future, HCI research, HCI practice, social responsibility

THEME AND GOALS OF WORKSHOP

The purpose of this workshop is to bring together HCI researchers and practitioners from diverse backgrounds, to explore and define new opportunities in HCI research and practice. We adopt the strategy of motivating our discussion of research and practice goals through a consideration of human needs and social responsibility. The rich diversity of human needs, and the intricate dialogues of socially responsible work, provide dramatic challenges to advance the state of research and practice in our field. The outcome will be new issues and projects of both theoretical and applied value. These issues and challenges will provide opportunities for developments and innovations of primary importance to our field.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF WORKSHOP TOPIC

It has become common to hear concerns regarding the alleged weakness of research in the field of Human Computer Interaction (HCI) [2, 3]. In this workshop, we seek to remedy this alleged weakness through a particular strategy or heuristic:

To examine human needs and social responsibility for challenges that will not only improve peoples' lives, but that will also provide opportunities to mature the field of HCI through taking on research and practice questions of richness, complexity, and significance.

Our goal is to describe research and practice opportunities that would be compelling for the intellectual challenge that they provide, and that *also* would improve human life.

Promising Research and Practice Topics

In a companion paper, we outlined several research topics that are consistent with the theme of the workshop [1]. We briefly review these topics here, *not* because they form the basis of the workshop, but as an example of the nature of the contributions by the workshop participants:

- **Disability Access and People With Disabling Conditions.** Motivated by concerns to enfranchise people with disabilities, we outlined a series of research and practice challenges in the areas of user interface architectures; intelligent agents; design methodologies; anthropology; and linguistics.
- **Information and Communication Poverty.** Motivated by concerns for universal and equitable access to the

Global Information Infrastructure, we propose research and practice questions in the areas of communication, value, accessibility, and enfranchisement; research and design with distributed and unorganized constituencies (e.g., users of the Web); information retrieval, filtration, and intelligent agents; privacy and fair information practices; aggregation and disaggregation; quality of decisions; quality of participation in decision-making; and quality of democratic and other group processes.

- **Criteria for Evaluation.** Motivated by concerns to measure human performance and systems in richer terms than those of Taylorism (which emphasizes productivity and efficiency), we propose to focus on issues of quality in areas such as: work product; work life; interaction experience; education, and communication.

We emphasize that we have included our own topics as examples only. The workshop participants will bring other topics, reflecting their own interests and concerns.

WORKSHOP ORGANIZATION

The workshop will follow a modified version of the Future Workshop format (Critique of the present situation, Visioning futures, Implementation of the future visions, and Plan for action), moving between plenary discussions and small group working sessions.

WORKSHOP RESULTS

We anticipate producing a report of the workshop, and the evolution of the position papers into materials suitable for a special issue of a journal, or a book.

REFERENCES

- [1] Muller, M.J., Wharton, C., McIver, W.J., and Laux, L. (1996). *Toward an HCI Research and Practice Agenda Based on Human Needs and Social Responsibility*. To appear in *Proceedings of CHI 97*.
- [2] Strong, G.W., with Gasen, J.B., Hewett, T., Hix, D., Morris, J., Muller, M.J., and Novick, D.G. (1994). *New directions in human-computer interaction education, research, and practice*. Washington DC: National Science Foundation.
- [3] Sutcliffe, A., Carroll, J., Young, R., and Long, J. (1991). HCI theory on trial. In *CHI'91 Conference Proceedings*. New Orleans LA: ACM, 399-400.