

# Accessibility Within SIGCHI 2015

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## Introduction

This report represents the first effort of the SIGCHI Accessibility Community to document and understand SIGCHI's successes and failures with respect to accessibility. **This is a topic SIGCHI cares deeply about, indeed CHI had an accessibility chair as early as 1994<sup>1</sup>.** However there is still room for improvement. Our goal is to understand where things stand now, so that we can make informed decisions in the future and set goals that are responsive to the best practices and biggest problems facing our community, including specifically SIGCHI's 'physical' services (conferences and meetings) and 'digital' services (websites, videos, papers, etc.), as well as its overall inclusiveness for people with disabilities.

About 15% of people worldwide have a disability<sup>2</sup> and the likelihood of experiencing disability naturally increases with age. **SIGCHI can attract new members, and make current members feel welcome by making its events and resources more inclusive. This in turn will enrich SIGCHI, and help it to live up to the ideal of inclusiveness central to the concept of user-centered design.** It will also help SIGCHI to better understand an important and growing trend, drive innovation (technologies such as speech recognition originated in accessibility efforts), and better prepare its members to meet the legal requirements for accessibility imposed on many software artifacts.

ACM has clearly stated in its conference manual<sup>3</sup> that *'all accommodations that are possible be made to individuals with disabilities'* by meeting planners, emphasizing that *'compliance should not be taken lightly.'* Among other things, this goal is driven by the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities,<sup>4</sup> as the ACM code of ethics<sup>5</sup> asks ACM members to obey not only local but also national and international laws. More generally, for both legal and ethical reasons, **ACM's conference manual explicitly states that *'Discrimination on the basis of race, sex, religion, age, disability, national origin, or other such factors ... will not be tolerated.'*** In

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<sup>1</sup> <http://old.sigchi.org/bulletin/1996.1/conf-chairs.html#HDR11>

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.un.org/disabilities/default.asp/default.asp?id=18>

<sup>3</sup> [http://www.acm.org/sigs/volunteer\\_resources/conference\\_manual/5-7-5dis](http://www.acm.org/sigs/volunteer_resources/conference_manual/5-7-5dis)

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.un.org/disabilities/default.asp/default.asp?id=150>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.acm.org/about/code-of-ethics>

respect of people with disabilities<sup>6</sup>, discrimination does not just include direct refusals to include people because of their disabilities, but also refers to failures to make reasonable accommodations, and to adapt existing practices that indirectly disadvantage them. With respect to SIGCHI, as this report will show, **although there are solutions available to common challenges that may affect the use of SIGCHI resources, there are also many challenges that prevent some people from fully participating in SIGCHI.**

## Executive Summary

The Accessibility Community documented the current state of accessibility within SIGCHI through a combination of survey data, data from recently held conferences, and input from the community at large. Our findings demonstrate that accessibility has only been taken up in a small number of SIGCHI venues (**only 4 of 17 conferences held in 2014 that we surveyed had accessibility chairs**). Even at conferences with accessibility chairs, **disabled attendees face hurdles to participation and key online resources such as conference papers are not accessible.**

Our recommendations are detailed in the report, but at a high level, our recommendations are that ACM work toward achieving the following. Strategies for achieving these goals are detailed in the description of these recommendations in the body of the report.

- **R1: Ensure that 100% of conferences are accessible, have an accessibility policy and have a clear chain of command for addressing accessibility issues.**
- **R2. Ensure that 100% of new content such as videos and papers meets established standards for accessibility and develop a process for achieving this**
- **R3. Create a process for handling accessibility requests within SIGCHI**
- **R4. Increase representation of people with disabilities within SIGCHI**
- **R5. Assess SIGCHI's success in meeting accessibility guidelines at least once every 2 years.**

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<sup>6</sup> There is an ongoing and unresolved debate about labeling around terms such as 'person with a disability' and 'disabled person' which is orthogonal to this effort. We use the post identity label 'with a disability' in this report but acknowledge the complexities that come with any label.

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## Background on Accessibility in General

In this document, we adopt the definition of disability put forth in the Americans with Disabilities Act,<sup>7</sup> namely that someone has ‘*a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities of such individual.*’ This includes a very diverse range of impairments, ranging from the more well known mobility, visual and hearing impairments to mental health conditions, HIV, cancer and autism.

The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 is the first piece of mainstream disability discrimination legislation which recognizes the right of people with disabilities to be fully included in all aspects of society. This has subsequently been followed by the UN Convention of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities<sup>8</sup> (the “UN CRPD”), introduced by Mexico to the UN in 2006, and now ratified by over 150 countries<sup>9</sup>. The UN CRPD is strongly aspirational, introducing a sweeping range of obligations for its members to actively include people with disabilities in wider society as equals, and emphasizing the notion of “reasonable accommodation”.

In response to this changed legislative environment, most “first world” countries now have strong anti-discrimination law aimed at protecting the rights of people with disabilities. This generally includes the protection from discrimination - both direct and indirect - that other protected minorities have. Compared to other minorities, disability discrimination law also provides some additional protections. Principally this is encapsulated in the duty of “reasonable accommodation”. This involves taking steps to provide auxiliary aids and human support, as well as to change existing practices, if this would likely improve the inclusion or accessibility of a service or opportunity for one or more people with disabilities. This duty can be anticipatory, for instance in the provision of an accessible website, or apply in response to an individual request.

**The duty of reasonable accommodation normally has a significant degree of strength behind it; steps can be obliged by the law even if they cause disruption and**

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<sup>7</sup> <http://www.ada.gov/pubs/adastatute08.htm#12111>

<sup>8</sup> <http://www.un.org/disabilities/convention/conventionfull.shtml>

<sup>9</sup> At present, the UN CRPD has not been ratified by the USA and some other ‘first world’ nations. However, the Americans with Disabilities Act served as the inspiration for the CRPD and in the coming years will likely address these issues, meaning the UN CRPD will become an increasingly sound framework for measuring inclusiveness of the people with disabilities.

**inconvenience.** Accessibility is in effect the realization of these principles. It now applies not only to objects (as it was traditionally conceived), but to processes and practices.

Accessibility has long been a focus of the community of scholars and practitioners affiliated with SIGCHI. The ASSETS conference was organized by the ACM Special Interest Group on Accessible Computing (SIGACCESS), and began in 1994, also the first year that SIGCHI's flagship conference CHI had an accessibility chair. The CHI conference has a large number of papers dealing with accessibility (9%<sup>10</sup> of papers in CHI 2015 were accessibility or disability related). **The inclusion of researchers and participants with disabilities within the SIGCHI community has led to advances in general technologies<sup>11</sup> and in research practices** (e.g., Ability-Based Design<sup>12</sup>). However, meta-reflections on the accessibility of our scientific processes<sup>13</sup> and outputs<sup>14</sup>, and reports and experiences from members of our community with disabilities have revealed a gap in the accessibility of conferences, research papers, and other aspects SIGCHI, spurring the creation of the SIGCHI Accessibility Community.

## The SIGCHI Accessibility Community

The ACM SIGCHI Accessibility Community was created in 2014. **The mission of the Accessibility Community is to improve the accessibility of SIGCHI conferences and meetings (which includes awards ceremonies, program committee meetings, conferences and so on) and the digital accessibility of SIGCHI web sites and publications.** Its priorities include providing clear support and information to conferences and meetings and their leadership about accessibility, providing support for SIGCHI members who are facing accessibility issues, advocating for accessibility issues, and liaising with other communities such as SIGACCESS. The SIGCHI Accessibility community<sup>15</sup> currently has 49 members, and the SIGCHI Accessibility Community facebook group<sup>16</sup> currently has 72 followers (please join our community at [www.sigchi.org/communities/access](http://www.sigchi.org/communities/access)).

SIGCHI also has an active group of people engaged in improving its accessibility. Although not all are directly affiliated with the SIGCHI Accessibility Community, SIGCHI members have responded to the accessibility issues that have occurred in an ad-hoc fashion by volunteering to manage accessibility at some SIGCHI conferences and meetings, and have begun the work of writing down some of the things that need to be done for future conferences and meetings, among other things. Many of these individuals have engaged in this work because they faced

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<sup>10</sup> 34 of 379 papers, listed here: <http://cs.rochester.edu/u/brady/chi2015accessibility.html>

<sup>11</sup> For example, speech synthesis and OCR have early roots in the Kurzweil Reader, a reading tool for people with visual impairments.

<sup>12</sup> Wobbrock, J. O., Kane, S. K., Gajos, K. Z., Harada, S., & Froehlich, J. (2011). Ability-based design: Concept, principles and examples. *ACM Transactions on Accessible Computing (TACCESS)*, 3(3), 9.

<sup>13</sup> Brady, E., Zhong, Y., & Bigham, J. P. (2015, May). Creating accessible PDFs for conference proceedings. In *Proceedings of the 12th Web for All Conference* (p. 34). ACM. <http://dl.acm.org/citation.cfm?id=2746665>

<sup>14</sup> Reuben Kirkham, John Vines, and Patrick Olivier. 2015. Being Reasonable: A Manifesto for Improving the Inclusion of Disabled People in SIGCHI Conferences. In *Proceedings of the 33rd Annual ACM Conference Extended Abstracts on Human Factors in Computing Systems* (CHI EA '15). ACM, New York, NY, USA, 601-612. <http://doi.acm.org/10.1145/2702613.2732497>

<sup>15</sup> <http://www.sigchi.org/communities/access>

<sup>16</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/groups/SIGCHIaccess/>

accessibility challenges themselves in attending SIGCHI events, or because they knew of others who faced such challenges. While this is a great starting place, as this report will show, much more could be done.

We currently meet bi-monthly and try to hold a gathering at CHI each year. **Anyone who has the time and interest to help us is invited to join our meetings.**

## The Current State of Accessibility within SIGCHI

To form a solid basis for recommendations going forwards, we begin with an examination of the state of affairs currently present within SIGCHI. In doing so, we concentrate on two specific groups of stakeholders:

- Those who already are able to use SIGCHI resources and attend SIGCHI conferences and meetings, and have a disability that limits their participation or makes it more difficult. These individuals may find attendance more difficult but do-able with the help of either SIGCHI accommodations, arrangements they make on their own, or perhaps even without accessibility accommodations. We include in this group those who are already members of the SIGCHI community but have since acquired a disability that limits their participation or makes it more difficult. These individuals may include students, faculty, and industry members who may take on various roles within SIGCHI (e.g., attendee, author, review, presenter, student volunteer, committee member). These individuals may in some cases benefit from being more senior members of the SIGCHI community in their quest for accommodation, but otherwise face similar challenges to the second group.
- Those who would like to be members of the SIGCHI community but are unable to use many of its resources or attend its conferences and meetings due to accessibility challenges. This group is the hardest to study, and its challenges are critical to address. In addition many of the issues they face spill over into the first group, so while this group may never be able to participate in SIGCHI because of a direct accessibility issue, secondary issues related to their disability, or lack of confidence that their needs will be met, the very same issues may cause reduced attendance or participation in the other group.

## Data Used in this Report

To study these groups, the Accessibility Community combined several different sources of data. Unfortunately, our efforts to reach the second group (those who are not yet part of SIGCHI, perhaps because of accessibility issues) were largely unsuccessful. Below we summarize the types and amount of data that we collected. Much of our data collection focuses on conference and meeting participation, primarily because of the great deal of uncertainty and complexity associated with attendance at such events. In reporting our results, we will use the names [Direct] [Survey] [Conferences] [Community] to refer to the different types of data

- [Direct] First, we studied multiple SIGCHI resources directly to assess their attention to accessibility. Our perspective here includes the resources available to planners who

enact accessibility for SIGCHI members as well as the potential problematic experiences of SIGCHI members who are making use of SIGCHI resources.

- [Community] In addition, our community and more specifically the authors of this report include members of the CHI community who have disabilities and have faced challenges in being part of the SIGCHI community. Again, this data sheds light on both the experience of planners and organizers as well as SIGCHI members.
- [Survey] Next, we collected data from the community at large through a survey. Our survey data included 11 participants (mean age = 43, median=37, STDEV=15) who reported having some kind of disability or impairment (of whom all had attended a SIGCHI sponsored conference). Participants included students (3), industry researchers (4) and full professors (3). This data sheds light on the experiences and challenges faced by SIGCHI members in making use of SIGCHI resources.
- [Conferences] In addition, we were given access to the accessibility questions that were answered as part of the post-conference surveys from two years of CHI (2014 and 2013). In addition, we had the opportunity to hear about accessibility challenges during CSCW 2015 and CHI 2015, two large conferences that occurred after the SIGCHI Accessibility Community became large enough that attendees reported problems to us or our members. This data sheds light on the challenges faced by SIGCHI conference attendees. Related to this, we conducted a brief digital analysis of 2014 conferences sponsored by SIGCHI to assess the prevalence of accessibility chairs and considerations.

## Results

Overall, SIGCHI is to be commended for the effort that it and its volunteers have made over the years to address issues of accessibility. While this report will point to some very significant areas that need to be addressed, there are also some important steps that have been taken so far. At the same time, **the challenges faced by SIGCHI members are real and significant**, and they point to the difficulty of solving this problem without a concerted and organized effort to do so. Below we discuss conference and meeting accessibility and then the accessibility of other resources.

### Conference and Meeting Accessibility

ACM conferences are typically run by a conference chair and a group of supporting volunteers such as a program chair, local organizer or student volunteer chair. **In our online study of 2014 conferences sponsored by SIGCHI, only 4 of 17 included an accessibility chair among their conference organizers**<sup>17</sup>. In addition, ACM provides conference services such as help with publishing (provided by Sheridan); and help running the conference at various levels depending on the conference size. However, as far as the committee knows, accessibility is not a focus of the contracts with these services and thus not supported by them.

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<sup>17</sup> The four with accessibility chairs were CHI, CSCW, TVX, and Ubicomp. TEI, HRI, IUI, IDC, C&C, EICS, SUI, MobileHCI, RECSys, CHI Play, UIST, ICMI, and ITS did not have accessibility chairs in 2014, as far as we could determine.

Despite the small number of conferences with accessibility chairs, there are some promising signs that SIGCHI is ready to take this issue on. **Awareness of the need for SIGCHI conference accessibility has been increasing over recent years.** Accessibility can be addressed in multiple, complementary ways throughout SIGCHI. Accessibility is mentioned in the conference guide<sup>18</sup> provided to conference chairs. This guide also links to the the SIGACCESS guidelines<sup>19</sup>, which are quite comprehensive. When conferences elect to assign an accessibility chair, that person can help to work towards increased accessibility. Such chairs are given varying amounts of control, budget, and time to address accessibility needs [Community]. In addition, SIGCHI has recently made the effort to invest money in accessibility. Such special funds and arrangements have enabled telepresence robots to be provided at a small number of conferences<sup>20</sup>. The efficacy of this approach, and the potential for replacing accessibility with remote participation are issues that still require study, however it clearly has great potential as one of many approaches to increasing accessibility. SIGCHI paid for some videos to be captioned, and the UIST conference is paying to make its PDFs accessible in 2015.

However, for attendees of conferences, these advances are not yet enough to meet their needs. Here we summarize the challenges reported by conference attendees in [Survey] and [Conferences]. Our summary was created by grouping reported issues in a bottom up fashion. As such, this data is reflective of the types of issues that were reported but not necessarily of the full range of accessibility issues that were experienced by conference attendees.

At a very high level, participants were grateful for the presence of an accessibility chair, which at a minimum creates a line of communication for accessibility needs where otherwise none currently exists. However, **even when accessibility chairs were present, a lack of clear information about how and when to request accommodations or what is provided can lead to problems** (CHI15). In addition, as detailed below, accessibility issues were reported in multiple significant categories.

### Physical Accessibility

Physical accessibility refers to issues that arise during movement around a space or within a space. For example, an individual who uses a wheelchair or has trouble walking or standing for long periods of time might face physical accessibility challenges.

There were numerous reports of difficulties moving around between the many spaces that are part of conferences. For example there were reports of an over reliance on stairs (CHI14; CHI13; CSCW15) which for example made changing levels in multi-level conference centers and/or receptions difficult. However there were also reports of difficulty getting to/from the convention center (from a hotel) as well as among conference events such as workshops, reception (CHI13; CSCW15). For example, sometimes an attendee had made plans for getting

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<sup>18</sup> [http://www.acm.org/sigs/volunteer\\_resources/conference\\_manual/5-7-5dis](http://www.acm.org/sigs/volunteer_resources/conference_manual/5-7-5dis)

<sup>19</sup> <http://www.sigaccess.org/welcome-to-sigaccess/resources/accessible-conference-guide/>

<sup>20</sup> <https://www.washington.edu/doiit/attending-conferences-robots>

between the hotel and conference location, but could not get to an external event like a reception and was not given any help finding transport (*'Transportation was provided for participants, but for wheelchair users, this had to be handled independently.'* [Survey]), meaning that wheelchair users had to arrange their own transport in a foreign city without any help. This lack meant that a networking opportunity that is easily accessible to almost all attendees was either unavailable to wheelchair users, or likely to require that they trade off their budget, energy, and time available for participation in other equally important aspects of the conference.

Seating is another important issue that can present physical accessibility challenges. For example, attendees complained about too little seating in public spaces or presentation spaces (CHI14; CHI13; CSCW15), accessible seating placed where hearing/seeing is difficult (CSCW15), and over crowding/lighting/aisle width/other (CSCW15). Badly placed seating can also affect mobility, for example if aisles are overcrowded (CSCW15).

Other physical accessibility issues in our data included problems with stage accessibility (such as requiring that speakers climb stairs to get on stage (CHI13), or stand at a podium with a fixed height (a problem easily solved with a clip-on mic) [Community] and inoperable bathrooms/escalators/stairs due to size or maintenance issues (CHI13, CSCW15).

We asked Survey participants to give examples of conference policies that positively affected their accessibility. Some of the positive examples that we heard about included multiple comments about the telepresence robots, student volunteers assigned specifically to help attendees access presentations, and an assistance service for mobility and guidance.

#### Audio Accessibility

Audio accessibility refers to the issues that arise when an attendee is hard of hearing or deaf. For example, one survey participant wrote, *'Receptions and break areas tend to be too noisy for conversation. Off-site events are often completely inaccessible for the hard of hearing,'* because the conference interpreter only attended the technical talks even though informal discussions about research can be equally or more valuable.

#### Conference Location

For some people, conferences that are too far away are impossible to attend. For example, the need to fly [Survey] or deal with the stress of multiple timezone travel [Community] (both of which can be problems for people with certain disabilities) can be a barrier to attendance, as can location-specific issues such as air quality [Community]. The issue of location is a very complex one, as SIGCHI is an international community and one person's local event is another's difficult travel problem.

#### Food

For some attendees, food allergies and food intolerances were serious obstacles, due to incorrect or incomplete labeling, or unavailability of appropriate foods (CHI14, CSCW15, Survey).



### Other

Other things brought to our attention include a lack of clear information about accessibility on conference websites (attributed in part to lack of good local research). An example was unclear information about the safety of recommended options such as scooters in a highly area where they were unsafe to drive (CHI13). In addition, other types of meetings (such as program committee meetings) have paid little or no attention to accessibility issues and this has directly affected participation [Community].

### SV issues

Previous conferences have assigned specific student volunteers to address individual and collective accessibility needs of the community - at CHI 2015, two sighted SVs were guides for an attendee with a visual impairment, and many SVs were involved in captioning talks. When given actionable instructions and guidance, the student volunteer community can be enthusiastic about making the event more accessible.

However, there are a limited number of student volunteers, each of whom are scheduled to work a certain number of hours (typically no more than 20 throughout the conference). The SV Chairs need to be aware of accommodation requests as far in advance as possible to properly allocate SVs, and may benefit from an extra SV or two who is specifically assigned to check accessibility of the space and respond to requests.

The student volunteers also struggle with a lack of knowledge in identifying accessibility issues, and a lack of agency or chain of command with which to fix problems. Many SVs are not familiar with accessibility and cannot notice an issue until too late. In prior years (CSCW14), the Accessibility Chair spoke to the SVs at their orientation to highlight common issues and solutions. However, SVs often did not feel comfortable taking the initiative to solve problems themselves or did not know how to reach an authority to get a change made - for example, at a reception with no seating, no specific SV knew if they should be trying to fix the problem, and they had no access to the hotel staff who could provide more chairs.

At CSCW15, many SVs became aware of accessibility problems at the event, and were disappointed and frustrated that issues continued to arise, but didn't know how to improve things. Providing information at the beginning of a conference about common accessibility issues, and developing a clearer path for SVs to report and solve accessibility problems, would allow them to more effectively deal with problems as they arise.

### **Digital accessibility right now**

In the context of the SIGCHI community, digital accessibility refers to a range of resources which are available online, including videos, conference papers and conference websites. As with conferences, responsibility for these resources is both in the hands of volunteers and ACM (for example, the digital library website is managed by ACM, while the accessibility of PDFs in the library is primarily the responsibility of paper authors).

ACM in general and SIGCHI in particular have invested considerable resources in digital accessibility. For example, the new ACM.org website is being designed with accessibility in mind from the beginning [Community]. In addition, SIGCHI is currently engaged in a video captioning effort, a costly but important change in accessibility.

One of the most commonly mentioned accessibility issues, however, is the accessibility of paper PDFs [Community, Survey]. For example, one survey participant commented *'The two-column format makes adapting size and font (as I need to do), very difficult.'* (survey). One solution that has been adopted by some magazines is HTML alternatives to articles. **In some cases, volunteers have attempted to ensure that papers conform to PDF accessibility guidelines, while in others authors have been asked to do this. Neither approach has been very effective**<sup>21</sup>. In addition, the formatting requirements for papers can be a challenging accessibility issue for some paper authors [Community], since writing a paper that meets those guidelines requires a level of control over formatting that is not easily available for example to a blind author.

### A larger mandate?

Although the focus of this report is on accessibility for people with disabilities, in almost every set of data we considered, accessibility was construed more broadly than that (e.g., CHI13, CSCW15, Survey). For example, numerous survey participants mentioned the challenges they face as parents (from arranging childcare to finding a place to pump breast milk or to store pumped milk), one survey participant mentioned religious concerns around food and timing of events, and the issue of cost arose frequently as well. Participants also reported examples of conference policies that relieve these burdens including a conference that *'offered caregiver funds to help parents of young children be able to actually attend instead of constantly running off to deal with their child'* [Survey] and another held at Facebook, who *'allowed conference attendees to use its Mother's Room or breast pumping facilities. There ended up being around 10 women who ended up using the room, many of whom did not think to ask about facilities for pumping during registration.'* [Survey]. While these issues are outside the scope of this report, we can hope that one of the positive side effects of anticipatory practices for people with disabilities will be a general increase in SIGCHI's ability to address a wide range of issues of inclusiveness.

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<sup>21</sup> Brady, E., Zhong, Y., & Bigham, J. P. (2015, May). Creating accessible PDFs for conference proceedings. In *Proceedings of the 12th Web for All Conference* (p. 34). ACM. <http://dl.acm.org/citation.cfm?id=2746665>

## Conclusions & Vision for long term accessibility

*'It is the mission of SIGCHI to advance the state of knowledge and practice in the field of human-computer interaction.'*<sup>22</sup>

There are **endemic accessibility problems within SIGCHI**, and they have a **major impact on disabled attendees, not only at the conference itself, but also on their ability to conduct critical career-related activities** such as networking and publication. This situation raises ethical as well as potentially legal problems for ACM.

Consonant with the mission of SIGCHI, **we envision a future in which the knowledge and practice, as well as membership and participation, within SIGCHI is accessible to as broad a community as possible, inclusive of all of SIGCHI's stakeholders.** As a starting place, both digital and conference accessibility should be a community norm, and where any of our members, disabled or not, are included and welcomed within the culture of SIGCHI. Ideally there is structural support for ensuring accessibility integrated into the conference and digital resource production process. This includes support and guidance from ACM throughout the planning process, as well as accessibility chairs who can help to monitor the breadth and depth of accessibility within SIGCHI. An unavoidable consequence of this vision is financial investment by ACM, ultimately including accessibility in contract negotiations with services such as Sheridan and conference venues, as well as budgeting for interpreters, seating and so on at conferences and investing in accessible web services.

## Recommendations

Below we present a set of concrete recommended goals for SIGCHI. For each goal, we give a specific aim, and then suggest short term and long terms steps that can be taken to achieve that aim.

### **R1: Ensure that 100% of conferences are accessible, have an accessibility policy and have a clear chain of command for addressing accessibility issues.**

*R1 Short term.* SIGCHI should set a goal of having an accessibility chair for every conference by the end of 2017. To support this, the Accessibility Community will provide support to conference chairs, and educate the community about enacting accessibility. In addition, the Accessibility Community aims to update the guidelines provided to conference chairs to include SVs and talk giving. Finally, in collaboration with SIGACCESS we are working to fold SIGCHI conference accessibility guidelines into the existing SIGACCESS guide for running an accessible conference and to ensure that the result is as broadly applicable and useful as possible.

*R1 Long term.* A study of best practices and financially viable opportunities should take place. This study should focus on the best way to ensure that accessibility support for conferences is more centralized to ensure better consistency for attendees. Ultimately,

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<sup>22</sup> <http://www.sigchi.org/about>

all conferences and meetings should be expected to include accessibility in their plans from the beginning (host/venue selection) to the end of the event.

**R2. Ensure that 100% of new content such as videos and papers meets established standards for accessibility and develop a process for achieving this**

*R2 Short term:* Assess the current status of these resources. Create guidelines for authors and/or conferences to use as a standard (for paper accessibility, for example) in concert with the ACM Publications Committee. Develop a process for addressing accessibility issues. For example, a process change may be to make papers available at least two weeks before the conference; this will assist those with specific learning disabilities, as well as helping foster the inclusion of those who are unable to access some talks in the conference (either because of the speakers - or in that they can only go to half the conference).

*R2 Long term:* Scale up the process and develop a centralized solution (such as a contract with a company willing to help). Aim to caption all new videos within a month of when they are posted. Further develop the process to ensure that both submissions and submission formats are accessible.

**R3. Create a process for handling accessibility requests within SIGCHI**

*R3 Short term.* The contact information for a group (possibly the Accessibility Community) that will answer accessibility questions and advocate for those with accessibility needs should be advertised SIGCHI-wide. This would help to unify support for accessibility since volunteer accessibility chairs may have variable training and knowledge, and would also save on duplicate requests, especially if someone has to renegotiate complex needs several times a year (which would be a very unfair burden to place upon a requestor, and naturally exclude them from the community). The Accessibility Community should study the best way to take the legal context in which SIGCHI operates into account.

*R3 Long term.* A position among the SIGCHI leadership specifically focused on accessibility could help to create a more uniform and visible opportunity for such requests to be handled, as well as an organization-wide budget for addressing issues that come up over and over again in a unified fashion.

**R4. Increase representation of people with disabilities within SIGCHI**

*R4 Short term.* The Accessibility Community could organize a networking event of some sort, similar to the very successful CHI Women event that now takes place every year. This would help to draw attention to SIGCHI's efforts in this domain, but also provide on-site contacts for anyone needing help at the conference.

*R4 Long term.* The Accessibility Community should work with SIGCHI to encourage attendance of people with disabilities. This can be part of a larger effort to increase the diversity of SIGCHI events to include more underrepresented minorities of all types. For example, the community could raise funds to sponsor fellowships for people with disabilities to attend SIGCHI events, and work to provide increased mentorship for

people with disabilities during the year leading up conference attendance. An example of this might be creating a pool of mentors that can help with the preparation of papers or posters for submission. An additional long term goal is to increase the scope of our outreach to support other SIGCHI stakeholders such as industry and nonprofit organizations, and reaching out to other organizations such as CSUN, SDS, and other venues that are more integrated.

**R5. Assess SIGCHI's success in meeting accessibility guidelines at least once every 2 years.**

*R5 Short term:* The SIGCHI Accessibility Community will begin a practice of producing regular reports about the progress of accessibility within SIGCHI. Related to this, we will collect post-conference surveys and other data that can help us to assess progress on these fronts.

*R5 Long term:* Invest in hiring a professional service to assess SIGCHI's webpage and conference accessibility. As with R1, this may require some study to identify funds and minimize costs needed to accomplish this. In addition, it may make sense to unify this effort with an overall goal of assessing equality and diversity in general within SIGCHI on all fronts from awards to program committee selection to conference attendance.