



Association for
Computing Machinery

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NEWS RELEASE

Contact: Jim Ormond
212-626-0505
ormond@acm.org

PREMIER HUMAN-COMPUTER INTERACTION CONFERENCE RETURNS IN VIRTUAL FORMAT

***Largest-ever ACM CHI Conference to Include More than 800 Research Papers, Workshops and Panels,
Part of ACM CHI Efforts to Showcase Tomorrow's Technologies***

New York, NY, April 29, 2021 – The Association for Computing Machinery's Special Interest Group on Computer-Human Interaction (ACM SIGCHI) will hold its annual flagship conference, the [ACM Conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems \(CHI 2021\)](#), virtually from May 8-13. The conference, which has run yearly since 1982, is resuming after a one-year hiatus due to the Covid pandemic. CHI 2021 will be the biggest ever, with more than 4,500 participants from 75 countries registered. By contrast, the largest CHI to date, in 2019, had 3,800 participants.

CHI, widely recognized as the most important global showcase for human-computer interaction, provides researchers and practitioners from around the world the opportunity to gather to discuss the latest in interactive technology.

Dozens of widely-used products and technologies have debuted at CHI prior to market deployment, including various foundational AI technologies, Internet of Things (IoT), smart homes, wearable devices, fitness tracking devices, social networking, instant text messaging, human-robot interaction, multi-touch and 3D interaction, and tangible interfaces, among others.

“This is the first year that CHI will be an entirely online conference,” said Yoshifumi Kitamura, CHI 2021 general Co-chair. “So, as organizers, we put a good deal of effort into making it the best possible experience for attendees. We observed and got feedback from other virtual conferences that were held in 2020, to get a sense of best practices. For example, we learned that it was easier to manage sessions that had pre-recorded videos, but that attendees preferred live Q&A sessions. We also learned that, with global conferences, many attendees couldn't stay up late for presentations they were interested in. We factored all these considerations into the CHI 2021 schedule. We divided the global “ ‘day’ so that any attendee of CHI 2021 would get a chance to see most of the main program content without being up all night.”

A [CHI Global Schedule](#) has been designed to preserve the equity of access to content, regardless of where a person is situated geographically.

Also, the fact that this will be the first fully virtual CHI opens new opportunities for global participation. There will be [lower registration rates for all attendees and significantly reduced rates](#) to widen participation from economically developing countries.

“This year’s theme—Making Waves, Combining Strengths—encourages authors and delegates to make waves as they feature the latest discoveries and advances in HCI and shake up the existing state of affairs,” said Aaron Quigley, CHI 2021 general Co-chair. “From the first-time student author to the seasoned industry delegate, different people with different interests, experience and expectations all come together at CHI to share and learn from one another. People approach CHI with different research interests, varying educational perspectives or with specific and unique industry needs. As a result, CHI becomes a platform to combine the strengths of different people from different perspectives.”

The organizers added that what they learn from this experience will help shape future CHI conferences. “We hope to learn from the experience of synchronous vs asynchronous interactions,” added Quigley. “This will impact our plans to meet physically, to interact with physical experiences, or generate new ideas such as regional hubs or even 365-day hybrid events.”

HIGHLIGHTS OF CHI 2021

Below is a partial list of events. For a complete calendar of accepted papers, workshops, and courses, visit the [CHI 2021 Full Schedule of Events](#).

Keynote Speakers

“See What I Mean: Making Waves with the Blind”

Chieko Asakawa, IBM Fellow and IBM Distinguished Service Professor at Carnegie Mellon University

Asakawa works in the area of accessibility and who herself is blind, will present on how emerging technologies have improved the quality of her life, showing various examples through her daily life. She will also describe her latest work on NavCog, a smartphone-based navigation system, and AI Suitcase, a navigational robot to help the blind navigate in the world. In her keynote, Asakawa will discuss new needs that became apparent under the pandemic and the potential ways to address these needs. Finally, she will discuss how the implementation of new technologies into our society can be accelerated and what will be expected of the CHI community to make our world accessible and inclusive.

“Which Humans? Innovation, Equity, and Imagination in Human-Centered Design”

Ruha Benjamin, Princeton University

Human-centered design, without careful consideration, could reinforce longstanding forms of inequity and injustice, and even producing new forms of discrimination and exclusion. In her keynote, Benjamin, will examine a range of technologies used in education, healthcare, employment and more, and present conceptual tools we can use to think about the social values embedded in our research, pedagogy, and designs. Benjamin has studied the social dimensions of science, technology, and medicine for more than 15 years and speaks widely on issues of innovation, equity, health and justice.

CHI 2021 Best Papers and Honorable Mentions

The SIGCHI [“Best of CHI” awards](#) honor the top 5% of conference submissions. This year, 28 papers were selected to receive a Best Paper award, and 114 papers were selected to receive an honorable mention.

CHI 2021 Workshops

The conference will feature more than [50 workshops](#).

About the ACM CHI Conference

Originally a small conference for psychologists interested in user interface design, the annual CHI conference has grown to include a diverse group of interaction designers, computer scientists, engineering psychologists,

developers, and performing artists. CHI also addresses the organizational integration of technology, and the use of technology in all areas of life.

About SIGCHI

[SIGCHI, the ACM Special Interest Group on Computer-Human Interaction](#), is the premier international society for professionals, academics and students who are interested in human-technology and human-computer interaction (HCI). SIGCHI serves as a forum for ideas on how people communicate and interact with computer systems. This interdisciplinary group of computer scientists, software engineers, psychologists, interaction designers, graphic designers, sociologists, and anthropologists is committed to designing useful, usable technology which has the potential to transform individual lives.

About ACM

[ACM, the Association for Computing Machinery](#), is the world's largest educational and scientific computing society, uniting computing educators, researchers and professionals to inspire dialogue, share resources and address the field's challenges. ACM strengthens the computing profession's collective voice through strong leadership, promotion of the highest standards, and recognition of technical excellence. ACM supports the professional growth of its members by providing opportunities for life-long learning, career development, and professional networking.

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