Applying the NSF Broader Impacts Criterion to HCI Research

Moderator:
• Janet Davis, Grinnell College

Panelists:
• Juan E. Gilbert, Clemson U.
• Richard E. Ladner, U. Washington
• Margaret Burnett, Oregon State
• Mary Beth Rosson, Penn State
Agenda

• Overview - Juan
• Past, present, & future - Richard
• Models for success - Margaret
• More models for success - Mary Beth
• Q&A, Discussion
Broader Impacts
CHI 2011

Juan E. Gilbert
Clemson University
The broader impacts categories as defined by the NSF are:

1. Advance science while promoting teaching, training and learning

2. Broaden participation of underrepresented groups

3. Enhance infrastructure for research and education

4. Provide broad dissemination to enhance scientific and technological understanding

5. Highlight the benefit to society
America Competes Act

• On January 4, 2011 Pres. Obama signed into law the

• Broader Impacts Criterion were explicitly listed
ACRA Broader Impacts Criterion

1. Increased economic competitiveness of the United States.
2. Development of a globally competitive STEM workforce.
3. Increased participation of women and underrepresented minorities in STEM.
4. Increased partnerships between academia and industry.
5. Improved pre-K-12 STEM education and teacher development.
6. Improved undergraduate STEM education.
7. Increased public scientific literacy.
8. Increased national security.
America Competes Act

• Furthermore, ACRA states,
  – “Not later than 6 months after the date of enactment of this Act, the Director shall develop and implement a policy for the Broader Impacts Review Criterion”
  – Note: It became law on January 4, 2011
    • July 4, 2011 is the deadline
How Can We Have Broader Impacts in Our Work?

Broader Impacts are necessary, and will be taken seriously on NSF proposals. What does this mean for us?
Where Do I Start?

• Broader Impact (BI) activities don’t have to be novel (except for BI-focused grants)

• BI can come out of the research, or not

• You don’t have to do it alone!!!

• You don’t have to cover all 5 categories

• The scale of the BI should be commensurate with the scale of the proposal and with your seniority
Who Can Help?

• Colleagues in CS, Education, …. 

• Department/University support and infrastructure 

• Other organizations: BPC Portal, BPC Alliances, …. 

• Projects-in-a-box
Why Do BI Activities?

• They make the world better

• BI s can lead to better science
  – New ideas, researchers, collaborations, etc.

• They pay the bills
  – American tax payers fund our research

• NSF (and other agencies) won’t fund without them
  – It’s the law
NSF Exemplar BI: Area #1

• Pizza and Consulting

• University faculty could offer a pizza and consulting period for high school teachers.

• This will offer technical knowledge to high school and middle school teachers that they couldn’t get otherwise.
NSF Exemplar BI: Area #2

• Organizing/Helping Out with a Discipline-Specific Workshop (DSW)

• Women in Machine Learning & Women in Theory
  – Provide opportunities for underrepresented graduate students and/or postdocs to network and learn from others in the field

• Check the CRA-W and CDC websites
  – http://www.cdc-computing.org/proposals_dsw/
  – http://cra-w.org/ArticleDetails/ArticleID/52
NSF Exemplar BI: Area #3

• The Southern California Earthquake Center is a shared data repository.
  – Gathers data on earthquakes
  – Integrates data into physics-based understandings of them
  – Communicates to society

• The center collaborates with distributed researchers around the country
• Science cafes - Presentations for the Public

• For the cost of a cup of coffee or a pint of beer, people interested in various scientific topics converge to hear talks by local scientists and engineers.

• Examples
  – Nova ScienceNow webpage sciencecafes.org
  – Cafe Scientifique events in the UK sponsored by the Wellcome Trust

• Many of these events are founded by university groups, such as the Boulder Colorado Cafe Scientifique.
Influencing Policy

Johnathan Lazar's Universal Usability Lab focuses not only on accessibility within human computer interaction (HCI), but also how to affect public policy.

Research activities should seek to inform local regulations and policy as well as inform others within the regulation and standards community of issues to be addressed as found by these activities.
Broader Impacts
CHI 2011

Richard Ladner
University of Washington
History

  – Competence
  – Intrinsic merit
  – Utility or relevance
  – Effect on infrastructure of science and engineering

• 1997 – 2011: 2 NSF Merit Review Criteria
  – Intellectual merit
  – Broader Impacts

• 2011: National Science Board reviewing current criteria
Additional Broader Impacts Criteria

• Science and Technology Centers and Engineering Research Centers
  – Diversity plan
  – Education plan
• Career Awards
  – Education plan
• CISE CE21
  – Broadening participation plan
America COMPETES
Reauthorization Act of 2010

• The Act directs the NSF to apply the Broader Impacts review criterion to achieve the following societal goals:
  1. Increased economic competitiveness of the United States.
  2. Development of a globally competitive STEM workforce.
  3. Increased participation of women and underrepresented minorities in STEM.
  4. Increased partnerships between academia and industry.
  5. Improved pre-K-12 STEM education and teacher development.
  6. Improved undergraduate STEM education.
  7. Increased public scientific literacy.
  8. Increased national security.
The Message

• The people, through its elected officials, want the researchers that it funds to have impact on society.
The Conflict

• Good research is speculative; it may not, in itself, have societal impact.
Possible Resolution

• Grantees participate in research related activities that directly address some of the broader impacts 8 societal goals.
  – Funding: These activities are funded by the grant.
  – Accountability: Activities are reported in the annual and final reports.
  – Infrastructure: Departments, colleges, and universities provide infrastructure that researchers can plug into.
Broader Impacts Activities

• Talk at local high schools.
• Support undergraduate research.
• Recruit and support women, minority, or disabled students.
• Build an exhibit for a science museum.
• Help start a company.
Broader Impacts Panel

Margaret Burnett
Oregon State University

CHI 2011
BI: Making a Difference

“The Saturday Academy is why I’m here today”

- Asst Prof. of CS at Cornell
- former Saturday Academy high-school research intern in Oregon.
  - They know how to recruit, support, mentor, etc. these kids.
  - You include the student on your team.
Context: A Tale of 2 Research Projects

- **Gender HCI:**
  - How gender differences relate to features in software tools.

- **End-User Software Engineering:**
  - End-user programming, phase 2:
    - Helping users with the reliability of the programs they create.
2. Competitive STEM workforce.
3. Underrepresentation in STEM.
3. Underrepresentation in STEM (cont.)

- Software itself can have barriers,
  - prevent interest by underrepresented groups in computing
  - by simply not being a good fit to their problem-solving needs.

- The Gender HCI research recruits interest by women.
4. Partnerships: academia + industry.

- I partnered with IBM.
  - They:
    - provided access to prototypes, data.
    - nominated me for IBM awards ($),
    - hired my students on internships ($).
  - We:
    - coauthored papers.
    - brainstormed a lot.
- Key points:
  - IBM contributed assets and $ to my research effort.
  - In so doing, they gained new ideas.
4. Partnerships (cont.)

- I led building an 8-institution collaboration
- Oregon State, Carnegie Mellon,
  City Univ. London, Drexel, Nebraska,
  Penn State, Univ. Cambridge, IBM,
  Univ. Washington, Saturday Academy.

EUSES
End Users Shaping Effective Software
5. Improved K-12 STEM education, teacher development.

My collaborator (an education professor):
- She teaches teachers, “owns” some continuing ed classes for teachers.
- She:
  - is good at this work.
  - is motivated: aligns with her reward structure.
  - used my ideas: we help end users (here, teachers, students) use SE quality devices (eg, systematic testing)
  - used my prototypes.
- I got:
  - empirical data (without doing the studies myself).
  - Bl.
7. Increased public scientific literacy.

- STEM literacy: End-user programming!
CHI-BI: 
Some approaches & some examples

Mary Beth Rosson 
Center for Human-Computer Interaction 
College of Information Sciences & Technology 
Pennsylvania State University
Some ways of approaching CHI-BI

• Consider population characteristics as a research variable in your HCI project
• Use an educational context to investigate HCI design issues
• Organize an action research project to study HCI as a socio-technical process
Gender & self-efficacy in web EUP

- HCI research: tools but also planning activities as an aid

- Broader impacts: how these issues vary across gender and efficacy
Case-based learning for usability

- HCI research: tools that scaffold complex cases for learning and that support collaboration

- Broader impacts: educating our students plus broad-based dissemination of SBD
Connecting nonprofits with IT

- Broader impacts: IT learning, infrastructure, change processes in local community

HCI research: sociotechnical process of community informatics, iterative technology experiments
Building a developmental community

- Broader impacts: outreach and social support for women at all ages considering or pursuing IT education and/or careers

- HCI research: design rationale for developmental community, plus end-user tools for building dynamic web applications
Q&A Discussion

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More ideas

Research experiences for teachers (RETs) -
  Involve local K-12 teachers in your research

Disseminate data (Data Management Plan)

Speak at a women’s college or HBCU
What can we all do?

Serve on panels.

Promote the idea in your own department of rewarding service on NSF panels. Start the discussion.

Explicitly point out broader impacts in your proposals. Most HCI proposals have good BI but aren’t clearly stated. Give details.

NSF portfolios balance different types of BI - so we shouldn't all address the same one.
Broader impacts are intertwined with science, not separate.

Especially in HCI: intellectual merit tied up with BI. How can we change the culture?

We’re here! And at lots of CISE conferences. We are on NSF panels. We can affect the tone.

This is the law. Our view: There will be change or you won’t get funding.

It is up to us to make those claims strongly & consistently.

The CISE Broader Impact Summit included a discussion on grantsmanship. What will happen with proposals with separate vs intertwined IM & BI?
How does BI relate to intellectual merit?

Remember that NSF is a peer-review agency. Any of us who is on a panel can have an influence.

Panels pick one proposal that will be funded. Concern: first ranking is on intellectual merit; BI is second. Better to select more proposals?

Director says weights should be equal.

Funding from Congress & requirement for accountability may put more pressure to weigh both criteria equally.

Should we do simultaneous independent rankings on broader impacts and intellectual merit? This was discussed at the CISE BI Summit.
Are there any predicted changes around budgeting?

Unofficial prediction (with some substantiation):
You need to budget for broader impacts.
You should explain BI in your budget justification statement to add credibility.

Not too expensive: REUs cost about $6000/year, Saturday Academy about $3000/year.

Other ideas: cost-share with DREU. Collaborate with other organizations. Pay an education prof or teacher to supervise work with teachers. Budget for dissemination workshops: travel, administrative support. Budget to speak at a women’s college or HBCU. Several examples on CISE Broader Impacts web site.
Is it possible to apply for REUs/RETs at the time of the proposal?

You can apply either with proposal or for a supplement later.

(Not technically an REU if it’s in your main budget.)

Also ROAs: Supplement to add underrepresented faculty as investigators.

Some programs to not support REUs.
More on industry collaborations

Emphasize existing industry collaborations.
Take advantage of industry nearby
Tap into international industry connections - global perspectives on ICT (videoconference!)
Internships
Put “jobs” in the title of your proposal
Tension: job creation vs efficiency
Remember you don’t have to do everything!
   Industry collaborations don't make sense for all HCI research.
How to get good support letters?

Not a recommendation letter but a memorandum of understanding. Some kind of commitment.

Every letter has to promise something.

Letters of support should not promise money.
International Broader Impacts

Does the NSF approve of/encourage them? Probably not.
The ARCA focuses on the U.S. Many existing programs (e.g., REU) require US citizenship.
Then again, there will be an emphasis on international collaborations (but it’s not one of the ARCA 8). It needs to reflect back on U.S. somehow.
Interacting with the NSF

Get feedback on your proposal before you submit it - email 1 page to program officers. Address both intellectual merit and broader impacts.

Email program officers about serving on panels.
Other notes

The ARCA requires training for NSF program managers on BI, which will trickle down to panelists. Hopefully there will be more consistency on BI in the future.

Each community is going to develop its own standard for the Data Management Plan.