

# WRITING A SUCCESSFUL CHI PAPER (IN TWO PARTS)

or, my perspective on it...

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# OUTLINE

- **Part 1:**
  - **About CHI**
  - **What makes CHI different**
  - **Anatomy of a CHI paper**
- **Part 2:**
  - CHI submission quirks
  - Tips & tricks
  - Other CHI venues to consider

**TODAY**

**Next time! Feb  
10, 2015**

# WRITING A SUCCESSFUL CHI PAPER (PART 1)

01/13/2015

# OUTLINE

- About CHI
  - CHI reviewing process
- What makes CHI different
  - Note vs Paper
- Anatomy of a CHI paper
  - Start with your Abstract
  - Make sure to generalize!

# ABOUT CHI

# CHI CONFERENCE HISTORY

- CHI = “ACM SIGCHI Conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems”
  - Cite it in full this way, or “CHI’XXXX”
- Primary **human-computer interaction** conference
  - Arguable about **human-centered computing** since that is broader, but CHI has become broader than HCI
  - I’d say it’s biggest, most important, general HC\* conference out there: best place for high-impact work, networking, jobs
- Trivia:
  - First conference was in 1981 in MD
  - Rotates between US/Canada locations and Europe/Asia
  - 900 attendees in 1982; **3,400 in 2013**

Check out Twitter account  
[@CHIalreadydidit](#) – should be  
tweeting for 2015 soon!

# TYPES OF PAPERS

- Submission lengths:
  - **Full Papers**: 10 pages (20 min talk at conference)
  - **Notes**: 4 pages (10 min talk at conference)
- Both in ACM SIGCHI double-column format
- If accepted, submit also:
  - statement of contributions + benefits (30 words)
  - 30-second video preview
  - thumbnail image for ACM DL
- (will talk about other submission types in part 2...)

# SUBCOMMITTEES REFLECT TOPICS

- User Experience and Usability (e.g., general contributions)
- Specific Application Areas (e.g., special populations or domains)
- Interaction Beyond the Individual (CSCW-ish)
- Design (e.g., methods, research)
- Interaction Using Specific Capabilities or Modalities (e.g., future interface tech -- hardware)
- Understanding People: Theory, Concepts, Methods (e.g., cognitive psych, psych)
- Interaction Techniques and Devices (e.g., future interface tech - - software)
- Technology, Systems and Engineering (e.g., systems, software engineering)
- (more on selecting the right one of these in part 2...)



# CHI REVIEWING PROCESS

- Papers due ~September 20<sup>th</sup>
- Double-blind reviews by 1-2 external reviewers, +1 meta reviewer
  - What does **double-blind review** mean?
- Rebuttal process ~1 week long in mid-November
  - What is a **rebuttal**?
- Final reviews include 2<sup>nd</sup> meta reviewer and possible discussion at PC
- Final decisions mid-December
- Camera ready papers due mid-January
  - What is a **camera-ready** paper? What kinds of changes can you make?
- Conference in mid-to-late April

# WHAT MAKES CHI DIFFERENT?

# GENERAL VS NICHE CONFERENCE

- What are some other conferences you all submit to?
- CHI is a **general** conference rather than a **niche** conference, e.g., compare to:
  - Interaction Design and Children
  - Intelligent Virtual Agents
  - Mobile HCI
  - Conference on Computers & Accessibility
- So: contributions are judged more strictly at CHI
  - Must be a **general contribution** that tells the entire field of HCI something
  - Must be work that has **no major flaws** and **clearly identifies limitations and scope** of the contributions

# IS MY PAPER RIGHT FOR CHI?

- Ask yourself: what is my expected contribution?
  - Can the field of HCI learn something in general about **usability or designing systems for people** from my paper?
  - You will have more success the more **generalizable** you can be.
- A CHI paper should be the “**last word**” on a topic, e.g.:
  - You haven't left open too many remaining questions
  - You have considered all the main variables or design questions
  - You have advanced the potential usability of future systems
- Some limitations in scope are ok – but make sure you are open and clear about them in your paper!
  - Reviewers **love** to point out limitations as grounds for rejection.
  - If you mention them first, you establish the realistic bounds of the contribution and reviewers judge **that** instead.

# ACCEPTANCE RATES AT CHI

- CHI is a **highly selective** conference, ~20%
  - 2014: 23%
  - 2013: 20%
  - 2012: 23%
  - 2011: 26%
  - 2010: 22%
  - 2009: 25%
  - 2008: 22%
  - 2007: 25%
- Typically, CHI receives almost 2,000 submissions (about 400 Papers & Notes appear).

# NOTES VS PAPERS AT CHI

- Many conferences delineate short vs long papers differently.
  - CHI has Papers and Notes.
- It's critical to understand that a Note is **not**:
  - A report on work in progress or not yet complete.
  - A high-level report with little detail on completed work.
  - A shorter version of a longer journal or conference paper.
- The standard of judgment is the same for both, but a Note is recognized as a “focused and succinct contribution.”
  - But the contribution must still be **significant** and stand on its own to advance the field of HCI.

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