

HCI Community in the USA

The introduction of computers in our daily activities and the massive daily use of the Internet by millions of people around the world require user-interfaces that are very easy to use. Consequently, building any application, ranging from a cell phone or a remote control to a complex computer system, requires the involvement of professionals with knowledge and expertise in Human-Computer Interaction (HCI). The market demand to hire more professionals with expertise in this field has expanded the HCI community around the world.

In a series of short articles, we are going to review the HCI community around the world. In this issue we will explore the composition of the HCI community in the United States of America.

The HCI community in the US is organized around two major organizations: the Association for Computing Machinery -ACM (<http://www.acm.org/>) and its Special Interest Groups, particularly the Computer-Human Interaction SIG (<http://sigchi.org/>), and the Human Factors and Ergonomics Society - HFES (<http://www.hfes.org> <<http://www.hfes.org/>>). During the last two decades, several newly formed organizations were also founded and represent a variety of professionals in this field. These organizations include the Usability Professionals' Association, the Association for Information Systems, the Interaction Design Association, and the Information Architecture Institute.

ACM, one of the major associations for people working in this field, was founded in 1947, and has around 80,000 members. It has 34 Special Interest Groups (SIGs) which address the varied needs of today's IT professionals.

The ACM's Special Interest Group on Computer-Human Interaction brings together people working on the design, evaluation, implementation, and study of interactive computing systems for human use. It seems that, although ACM and its SIGs are international organizations, the majority of their members are from the US. Another major organization representing professionals in the HCI community is HFES, which was founded in 1957 and has over 4300 members. HFES defines its mission as a society "to promote the discovery and exchange of knowledge concerning the characteristics of human beings that are applicable to the design of systems and devices of all kinds". HFES has 22 technical groups and numerous local and student chapters.

The Usability Professionals' Association - UPA (<http://www.upassoc.org> <<http://www.upassoc.org/>>) was founded in 1991 and has more than 1800 members worldwide. UPA promotes usability concepts and techniques through its publications, conferences, and its local chapters. The Association for Information Systems (<http://plone.aisnet.org> <<http://plone.aisnet.org/>>), founded in 1994, is a professional organization whose purpose is to serve the academics specializing in Information Systems and has around 4000 members. Of those members, 55% are affiliated with universities in the US. The Interaction Design Association (<http://www.ixda.org> <<http://www.ixda.org/>>) was founded in 2003. They do not have paid membership but have around 3000 subscribers with the great majority coming from the US.

The Information Architecture Institute (<http://www.iainstitute.org> <<http://www.iainstitute.org/>>), which was founded in 2002, has over 800 members.

In addition organizations such as the Industrial Designers Society of America (<http://www.idsa.org/>), the American Institute of Graphic Arts (<http://www.aiga.org/>) and a number of smaller groups, local chapters, and virtual groups in the US create an impressive and growing network of professionals in the HCI field.

Abbas Moallem