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Panel: Broadening the Discussion of Ethics in the Interaction Design and Children Community

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ABSTRACT

Interaction Design and Children (IDC) as an academic field, and as a community, has a responsibility to engage with the many and diverse ethical challenges that arise from work that concerns the creation of digital technology for and with children – both in terms of research and industry contexts. This panel builds on a short history of similar events at previous conferences and aims to foster and strengthen the debate about ethical conduct and moral responsibilities in IDC. In this year's panel, we seek to broaden the discussion by collecting ethical concerns, issues or dilemmas from within the community to be discussed at the conference. To this end, we will issue an open call for input that will be publicised via the usual channels. The organisers then will synthesise the responses and facilitate the discussion and debate at the panel.

CCS CONCEPTS

• **Computer systems organization** → **Embedded systems**; *Redundancy*; Robotics; • **Networks** → Network reliability.

KEYWORDS

ethics, children, interaction design

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INTRODUCTION

Technology is a ubiquitous part of many children's lives. Child-Computer Interaction (CCI) encompasses expertise from various disciplines, and focuses on understanding and designing technologies that best meet children's needs. Many of the design methods commonly used within CCI involve children in the process which is generally viewed as beneficial [3]. However, the context of that involvement including the varying power dynamics and value propositions can impact the collaboration processes and outcomes (e.g., [2, 5]).

Consequently, research, as much as design work, for and with children is highly sensitive and requires practitioners to be mindful and critically reflective. The annual Interaction Design and Children (IDC) conference has started not only to be the prime venue for presenting academic research in the field, but also to provide opportunities to members of this community to exchange and discuss ethical perspectives on their work. Beginning with an informal gathering at IDC 2017,

following an inspirational keynote by Alissa Antle which spoke to many of the ethical and moral tensions that can arise in this work [1], the first panel discussion was included in the IDC 2018 programme [4]. The panel aimed to focus on three specific questions: 1) what do children gain from participating in our research? 2) How do we explain our research to the children who participate? and 3) What are our responsibilities once our engagement ends? A full report on this panel for the SIGCHI Research Ethics Committee is available at their Medium channel[1]. The panel provoked a lively discussion and, despite the fact it had three focus areas, it was obvious that many attendees had many more ethical issues, questions or concerns that they were eager to discuss.

So, this year's panel aims to achieve two objectives: (1) to sustain the momentum and to foster a debate by continuing to offer a space at the IDC conference where the community can discuss the ethical and moral implications of our work; and (2) to broaden the perspectives by facilitating a process by which we collect issues and topics through an open call for input and then synthesise and discuss these at the panel.

[1]https://bit.ly/2Ngh8hw

GOALS, SCOPE AND PROCESS

As this panel is reacting to concerns brought by, or found within, the community, the goals are to develop the communities ability to explore, reflect on, and appropriately deal with, ethical challenges of our work. We will consider the success of the panel will be best measured by changes in perspectives, views and behaviours of those attending and of those in the panel.

In terms of scope we will consider work with infants through to teens, work in schools, in homes and in public places, we do not want to discuss experiments ON children or intrusive technologies but we do not expect these to be raised as they are outside the remit of IDC.

The process leading up to this panel will involve issuing a call for input through the following channels: social media (FB group, twitter, etc.) and mailing lists (CCI list, CHI-KIDS, etc.). We will also install a designated collection box for anonymous suggestions during the conference. The call will ask to submit ethical tensions, issues, challenges, cases or questions in whatever format seems appropriate to the sender. While we will avoid to make any connections between specific cases submitted and any of the synthesised topics to be discussed in the panel, we also cannot guarantee full anonymity. The call will therefore make clear that any input should be protecting any participants privacy and rights and consider the level of detail that is necessary to discuss the issue in a public venue.

Just before the conference, the organisers will review all input and synthesise a number of themes that they bring to the panel. This will be augmented with any suggestions submitted during the conference, up to the panel. While members of the panel will certainly have something to say about these themes, we will not be giving initial statements, but instead focus on scaffolding the discussion and involving voices from the audience. As with the previous ethics panel, we will have a designated note-taker in the audience to make sure we capture the discussion for the report.

OUTCOMES AND IMPACT

The primary outcome of this panel will be the rich discussion about the ethical dimensions of researching and developing interactive technologies for and with children. We see this panel as a way to foster ethical awareness and hope to prompt critical reflection in the field. However, it is intended only to open up the ethical space for discussion and in doing so acts as a stepping stone to further dialogue and awareness in the CCI/IDC communities of the importance of promoting and acknowledging ethical conduct.

There are several ways in which we intend to make the outcomes of this panel discussion available: firstly, we will produce a written report and aim to publish it in an appropriate venue to reach members of the community who were not able to attend at this year's panel. Secondly, we will share these results with the ACM SIGCHI Ethics Committee, which supports and provides guidance for conferences across SIGCHI. Thirdly, we will engage the IDC board and future organisers of IDC conferences to discuss ways in which the results can impact on the processes and structures by which we identify and reward excellent work. Finally, we hope to develop guidance for such panels and similar formats to inform future organisers of ethics events at IDC.

PANELLISTS

Christopher Frauenberger (Moderator) is Senior Researcher at the Human-Computer Interaction Group, TU Wien (Vienna University of Technology). His research focuses on designing technology with and for marginalised user groups, in particular children with autism. He is committed to participatory design approaches and builds on theories and methods from diverse fields such as the action research, disability studies, philosophy of science, research ethics amongst others.

Jerry Alan Fails is an Associate Professor in the Computer Science Department at Boise State University in Boise, Idaho. He has been actively designing technologies with and for children utilising, and further developing,participatory design methods for children since 2003. His research focuses on technologies that promote children's creativity, activity, mobility, collaboration, and exploration of the world around them. He is also collaborating with researchers to improve search interfaces for children.

Alissa N. Antle is an innovator and scholar, whose research pushes the boundaries of computation to augment the ways we think and learn. As a designer and builder of interactive technologies, her goal is to explore the ways in which these innovations can improve, augment, and support children's development. Her interactive technologies have been deployed to facilitate collaborative learning about aboriginal heritage, sustainability and social justice; improve learning outcomes for children with dyslexia; and teach self-regulation to disadvantaged children. Alissa was inducted into the Royal

Society of Canada's College of New Scholars, Artists and Scientists in 2015, acknowledging her as one of Canada's intellectual leaders.

Monica Landoni is a senior researcher in the Faculty of Informatics, USI (Università della Svizzera italiana, Switzerland). She has worked in many research projects looking at how technology can support children in reading and writing, for education and leisure. In doing so, she has devised new ways to engage children in co-design activities and studied the many roles children can play, from informants to co-researchers, and beyond, always making sure they get acknowledged for their contribution, and benefit from their experiences in co-design. Thus, it is no surprise ethics is one of her core interests.

Janet C Read is a Professor in Child Computer Interaction and is the Director of the Child Computer Interaction (ChiCI) research group at UCLan. Since 2002 she has been concerned with how children participate in IDC and CCI research and has written on ethical work in textbooks as well as in academic papers. Her current work is focusing on empowering children in participatory work and also on ensuring ways in which their participation can be valued. She is the Editor in Chief of the International Journal of Child Computer Interaction and has twice chaired the IDC Conference.

Pauline Gourlet works as a designer and a scholar; she focuses on organisational change within public institutions. With a developmental perspective, she investigates the transformative power of design processes, mainly its ability to (re)open dialogues on collective activities. An important aspect of her research revolves around reflective practices and the design of materials and tools to best support them. After being embedded within the French education system, she is currently pursuing her research at the United Nations. She is also the co-founder of l'Atelier des chercheurs, a collective dedicated to the design of software and tangible tools for learning.

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