European Chapter Initiative: More HCI Speakers in ACM's DSP

One of the initiatives taken by ACM Europe in the past few years has been to make contact with chapters and act on their feedback (through a chapter-leaders committee). Two European chapters workshops have been held, with a third scheduled for Prague this August, and a fourth set for Barcelona in 2017. The workshops are a way to gather feedback from chapters, share best practices, forge links between chapters, and kickstart new initiatives, including a successful drive toward establishing more ACM-W chapters to support and advocate for greater engagement of women in computing. These efforts complement the work being done within the SIGs, such as the chapters workshop held at CHI every year.

One topic that came up recently was the ACM Distinguished Speakers Program (DSP), a potentially great asset for chapters and local conferences that provides visibility for the terrific work being done within our research and practice communities. Under the DSP, ACM will cover travel costs for approved speakers subject to some (very achievable) target audience sizes.

However, the program has not been widely used, partly because of the limited choice of speakers in major areas such as HCI. An exciting DSP lineup would be helpful for running local and chapter events. A good example is the Irish HCI Conference run by our SIGCHI chapter, which had a mix of invited talks (with thanks to Sriram Subramanian, John McCarthy, Anna Cox, and Aaron Quigley for speaking this year) and talks by Ireland-based researchers recently given at major international venues, allowing this work to be seen by a local audience. In a small country like ours, we should not have to go to CHI to see each other's work!

Given that there are many excellent HCI researchers and practitioners worldwide, it also makes sense from practical, economic, and environmental perspectives to have a better regional distribution of speakers. With support from members of the SIGCHI Executive Committee, more than 20 new HCI speakers located in Europe and representing major topics of interest to SIGCHI members have been added to the DSP roster, with another 10 to come. New speakers include Michel Beaudouin-Lafon, Ann Blandford, Keith Cheverst, Jean-

Daniel Fekete, Kristina Höök, Panos Markopoulos, Philippe Palanque, Fabio Paterno, Pearl Pu, Harold Thimbleby, Laurence Nigay, Effie Law, Andre Tricot, Jean Vanderdonckt, Regina Bernhaupt, Pete Wright, Geraldine Fitzpatrick, Luca Chittaro, and Stephen Brewster. There is a good case for expanding this to other regions, and some initial steps have been taken.

One thing I have learned from being involved with this program: While things never happen as fast as I would like, it is possible to change things within ACM, a simple example being the introduction of more flexible audience requirements for DSP events. If you have ideas for distinguished speakers or would like help in accessing the DSP program, we'd be happy to hear from you.

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🔗 <http://dsp.acm.org/>
🔗 <http://europe.acm.org/chapters.html>
🔗 <https://women.acm.org/chapter>

The ACM DSP is a great asset for chapters and local conferences that provides visibility for the terrific work being done within our research and practice communities.