[Create-contact] CREATE Digest - February 2023: SIGCHI honors, Race and diversity initiative, Open source for developers

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CENTER FOR RESEARCH AND EDUCATION ON ACCESSIBLE TECHNOLOGY AND EXPERIENCES
UNIVERSITY of WASHINGTON

Issue 9, February 2023

As a community, CREATE leadership gathered last month to brainstorm next steps as the center has moved past its infancy and is zooming right into young adulthood. Our 'family' continues to garner praise – most recently in the form of SIGCHI awards – and grow as we build strong partnerships. This month, CREATE hosted a cross-campus meeting to learn about intersection of race and disability and consider innovative solutions. And we continue to work with community partners like The Here and Now Project to learn from the lived experiences of people with disabilities. We're excited that our story is being told in a feature article by the UW College of Engineering.

CREATE NEWS

Postdoctoral Fellowship opening

CREATE, the Paul G. Allen School of Computer Science & Engineering, the College of Engineering, and the Department of Rehabilitation Medicine have an opening for a Postdoctoral Scholar. The goal of this fellowship is to train leaders in accessibility research who can harness advances in physical computing and fabrication to enhance community living and participation with people with disabilities.

Applications are due March 1!

UW and CREATE extended family shines in SIGCHI Awards

UW and CREATE faculty (and our extended family) are proudly prominent in the recently announced 2023 SIGCHI Awards. All three winners of the SIGCHI dissertation award, which recognizes "the most outstanding research contributions from recently graduated Ph.D. students within the HCI community" are associated with the UW, CREATE and/or UW DUB.

Dhruv Jain, '22 Ph.D. UW Computer Science & Engineering and Makeability Lab alum advised by CREATE associate directors Leah Findlater and Jon Froehlich. Jain's dissertation was honored for advancing the design and evaluation of interactive systems to improve sound awareness for people who are deaf or hard of hearing (DHH).

Megan Hofmann, former CREATE and UW DUB member earned her Ph.D. in Human-Computer Interaction from Carnegie Mellon. Hofmann's research, through a strong interdisciplinary approach and substantive technical contributions, makes contributions in accessibility, software tools, and digital fabrication.

Kai Lukoff, '22 Ph.D., UW Human Centered Design & Engineering and UW DUB member. Lukoff addresses the problem that many people are dissatisfied with how much and when they use the mobile devices that are omnipresent in many people's lives.

Nicola Dell, '15 Ph.D. UW Computer Science and Engineering. Dell received a Societal Impact Award for exemplary work in an unusually 'full stack' model of intervention and social impact. She has been the driving force in exposing tech-related Intimate Partner Violence abuses and has produced real-world changes to combat this pervasive and insidious problem.

Gregory Abowd – who mentored or advised some of the most influential leaders in accessibility, usability, and HCI at the UW, including [Anind Dey](#), [Julie Kientz](#), [Shwetak Patel](#), and CREATE co-director [Jennifer Mankoff](#) – received the Lifetime Research Award. Abowd is currently the [dean of the College of Engineering](#) and a professor of electrical and computer engineering at Northeastern University.

- **[More about the researchers and their work: CREATE article](#)**
- **[2023 SIGCHI Awards page](#)**

RESEARCH NEWS

[Rethinking disability and advancing access](#)

The UW College of Engineering is showcasing CREATE's mission, moonshots, and collaborative successes in a [feature article](#). Just a sample: "For even greater impact, CREATE has situated their research moonshots within a practical framework for change that involves education initiatives, translation work and research funding.

"Seminars, conversations, courses, clubs and internship opportunities all advance the knowledge and expertise of the next generation of accessibility leaders. Translation work ensures that ideas get shaped and brought to life by community stakeholders and through collaborations with UW entities like the [TASKAR Center for Accessible Technology](#), [HuskyADAPT](#) and the [UW Disability Studies Program](#), as well as through collaborations with industry leaders like Microsoft, Google and Meta."

[Open Source profile: Sonifier](#)

Using the [Sonifier](#) open source code, developers can now generate sonified responses to improve the online data visualization experience and add features and optimizations to enhance the accessibility of complex online data visualizations for screen-reader users.

In a CREATE collaboration, Ph.D. student Ather Sharif, co-director Jacob O. Wobbrock, and faculty member Katharina Reinecke developed a JavaScript plug-in that generates sonified responses – or audio graphs – from two-dimensional data using additional sound types, including mono synthesizers and envelopes. Sonifier also allows modification of configuration options, such as oscillator choices, waveforms, and the number of harmonics to generate the waveform. Co-collaborators include Olivia H. Wang and Alida T. Muongchan.

Sonification is commonly used to make online data visualizations accessible to screen-reader users through auditory means. While current sonification solutions are useful to screen-reader users in exploring data visualizations, the usability of the sonified responses has been lacking.

Future efforts, as requested by users, should include the ability to personalize the sonified responses based on individual preferences.

- **Learn about Sonifier open source code on github**
- **Read about the research on the ACM digital library**

PROFILES OF CREATE

Community Partner profile: The Here and Now Project

With the mission to connect and empower the paralysis community in the Pacific Northwest, The Here and Now Project has been working with CREATE to share the lived experience of paralyzed people and inform research on the accessibility of living spaces, devices, and technology.

- **Read about the inspiration for this effective organization, their goals, and their recent successes**

EVENTS

Recap: Race, Diversity & Technology

In February, CREATE hosted a cross-university conversation about the intersection of race, disability and technology. The goal was to build community connections and cross-disciplinary collaborations that can support research on the experiences, outcomes, technology needs, and opportunities available to people of color with disabilities.

A panel discussion featured speakers from the community and campus and addressed the importance of the topic in general and highlighted opportunities for technological improvement: access to technology, captioning systems for multilingual speakers, and representation of people of color with disabilities in the research process – not only as researchers, but also as community members.

Participants and panelists then broke into groups to discuss topics such as institutional bias, education, and healthcare and to identify innovations, data, and studies that could help improve our understanding of and support for people of color with disabilities.

Next steps: CREATE is launching a call for **submission of proposals for funding** to CREATE and our collaborators. The first deadline is for Letters of Intent for Tier II proposals that have strong stakeholder representation.

- **Learn more about CREATE's Race, Disability & Technology initiative**
- **February event recap with slidedeck from panelists**
- **Read about submitting proposals to CREATE and our partners**

We were lucky to have the support of multiple partners across UW, in particularly the Paul G. Allen School of Computer Science & Engineering, the Population Health Initiative, and the Simpson Center for the Humanities.

STUDENT NEWS

New course! Civil and Human Rights Law for Disabled People

A new course in Disability Studies, Civil and Human Rights Law for Disabled People is offered this spring and may be of interest to CREATE students. Designed for new Disability Studies students, veteran scholars, and activists, the course examines disability rights law, and policy —from a

cross-disability perspective that includes an understanding of disabled persons' access to public accommodations, workplaces, education, assistive technology and interaction with the built environment.

- **Course description in MyPlan**
- **Email instructor Prof. Stephen Rosenbaum at srosenb@uw.edu with questions**
- **Learn about other accessibility courses at the UW**

CREATE's mission is to make technology accessible, and to make the world accessible through technology. Please join us in our mission!

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