



## **SIGDOC FY '22 Annual Report**

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### **Overview**

The ACM Special Interest Group for Design of Communication (SIGDOC) provides a forum for researchers and practitioners of the design of communication, including but not limited to those doing work in information architecture, information design, content management, user experience, user documentation (traditional and user-contributed), as well as governmental, scientific, and public participatory contexts. SIGDOC's overall mission is to: advance the state of knowledge; encourage the research; and support the interdisciplinary practice of the design of communication.

### **Health and Viability of SIGDOC**

SIGDOC remains a consistently healthy organization, holding steady at around 200 members. Most of our members attend and participate actively in our yearly conference. For example, 200 participants registered for our virtual event (and regional in-person meet-ups) last October 2021, even though we only have 172 active members. The numbers for this year's October conference—our first in-person one since 2019—are higher so far in terms of submissions. Since our membership is so intimately tied to conference registration, we hope to have a slight uptick in membership for 2022. In terms of finances, SIGDOC continues to rest upon a significant surplus.

The current SIGDOC Executive Committee (EC) is entering into its final year of a four-year stint. The consistency over the past four years has been good for the organization, given that there was a bit of a quick turnover from the past couple chairs. The consistency has allowed for the EC to revise bylaws to reflect current best practices and develop more robust documentation to aid in onboarding more easily volunteers for conferences. The revision of our bylaws (approved June 2022) reflects SIGDOC's commitment to equity and diversity and a vision towards building in more technical committees to extend its reach into other corners of industry.

Our main publication, *Communication Design Quarterly (CDQ)*, has continued to evolve into one of the more reputable publications in the field of technical communication, in no small part due to its commitment to publishing and reviewing in more equitable ways. As *CDQ* approaches its 11<sup>th</sup> volume in 2023, we expect submission numbers to continue to increase.

We have appointed a new Editor-in-Chief (Jordan Frith) and have created a new editorial position (Associate Editor) to help distribute the workload. The editor has been tasked with building connections with other organizations and creating a broader vision for the publication, while the Associate Editor will focus on the publishing process and our commitment to equitable and fair reviews.

## Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

We continued this past year in our commitments to diversity, equity, and inclusion in three ways.

The first is the continued commitment by the EC as a group and the individual members therein to sign the “Anti-Racist Scholarly Reviewing Practices: A Heuristic for Editors, Reviewers, and Authors.”<sup>1</sup> This living document was composed by a diverse group of major scholars in the field of technical communication and co-signed by nearly all members of the field in significant editorial positions. The open, public document itself gives explicit guidance on how to engage in anti-racist review practices, guiding by the question: *How might we dismantle the existing exclusionary and oppressive philosophies and practices of reviewing in the field of technical and professional communication and replace them with philosophies and practices that are explicitly anti-racist and inclusive?* The SIGDOC EC unequivocally supports this heuristic and is working on integrating its content into our own review practices pertaining to our publications and conference submission systems. The newly appointed Associate Editor will be overseeing these practices.

The second is our formalization of our new annual budgetary line item (\$2000) dedicated to inclusion to support projects forwarding justice-centered initiatives in the fields of communication design and technical communication. This call will be shared with our membership at the 2022 conference.

The third is our formalization of the Access Chair position on our board. This was part of our bylaw revision process, to allow future ECs to have discretion on board positions aimed at attending to equity and inclusion.

Full SIGDOC demographic information can be found in Appendix.

## Awards and Recipients

The following awards and recognitions were given over the past year:

1. **Career Advancement Research Grants:**
  - a. “Readying for Risk: Analyzing and Creating Effective Company Safety Initiatives” — Joseph E. Williams, Ph.D, Louisiana Tech University
  - b. “Increasing Access to and Usability of Health Communications for Alaska Natives in Rural Alaska” — Jessica Lynn Campbell, Ph.D, University of Alabama in Huntsville
2. **Best Paper** (in 2021 conference proceedings):

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<sup>1</sup> Cagle., L. et al. (2021). *Anti-racist scholarly reviewing practices: A heuristic for editors, reviewers, and authors*. Retrieved from <https://tinyurl.com/reviewheuristic>.

- a. Henry Covey. 2021. Disaster Documentation Revisited: The Evolving Damage Assessments of Emergency Management in Oregon. In The 39th ACM International Conference on Design of Communication (SIGDOC '21). Association for Computing Machinery, New York, NY, USA, 70–84.
- b. Soyeon Lee. 2021. Language Minorities' Localization in COVID-19 Recovery: An Ecological Approach to Navigating Community-based User Experience. In The 39th ACM International Conference on Design of Communication (SIGDOC '21). Association for Computing Machinery, New York, NY, USA, 183–189.
3. **Rigo Award**, celebrating an individual's lifetime contribution to the fields of communication design, technical communication, user experience, or another related field. Awarded to Dr. Miriam F. Williams.
4. **Student Research Competitions** (from 2021 Conference):

**Graduate:**

- 1<sup>st</sup> Place: Ian Stark, “Neuro-Positionality in User-Centered Design: The Case of Student Disability Services”
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Place: Jiaxin Zhang, “Designed for Equitable Learning: A Study of UCD and Liquid Syllabus in an Online Synchronous Course”
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Place: Yingying Tang, “A Robot Wrote This?: An Empirical Study of AI's Applications in Writing Practices”

**Undergraduate:**

- 1<sup>st</sup> Place: Hannah Goodsell, “A Jersey for Helmutt: A Videogame Designed to Communicate with Audiences”
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Place: Kylie Call, “Strategies for International Communication: Getting to Know Your Audience”
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Place: Koyo Nakamura, Han Feng, Sebastian Priss, and Hannah Mei, “Designing for Night-Time Reflection: How to Support Night-Time Reflection Through Non-Digital Means”

We plan on given the same awards next year, save for the switching to the Diana Award (alternating years for Diana and Rigo Awards).

## Significant Proceedings Papers

Some significant proceedings papers, based on clicks, downloads (min. 150), and citations, are as follows:

- Rachel Atherton. 2021. Narrative and Numerical: Bridging the Gap Between Quantitative & Qualitative Data through User-Centered Data System Design. In The 39th ACM International Conference on Design of Communication (SIGDOC '21). Association for Computing Machinery, New York, NY, USA, 2–8.  
<https://doi.org/10.1145/3472714.3473616>

- Henry Covey. 2021. Disaster Documentation Revisited: The Evolving Damage Assessments of Emergency Management in Oregon. In The 39th ACM International Conference on Design of Communication (SIGDOC '21). Association for Computing Machinery, New York, NY, USA, 70–84. <https://doi.org/10.1145/3472714.3473625>
- Avery C. Edenfield, Ryan Cheek, and Sam Clem. 2021. Trans\* Vulnerability and Digital Research Ethics: A Qubit Ethical Analysis of Transparency Activism. In The 39th ACM International Conference on Design of Communication (SIGDOC '21). Association for Computing Machinery, New York, NY, USA, 101–107. <https://doi.org/10.1145/3472714.3473628>
- Daniel Hocutt. 2021. Interrogating Alexa: Holding Voice Assistants Accountable for Their Answers. In The 39th ACM International Conference on Design of Communication (SIGDOC '21). Association for Computing Machinery, New York, NY, USA, 142–150. <https://doi.org/10.1145/3472714.3473634>
- Shyam Pandey and Jianfen Chen. 2021. Is Facebook Easier to Use than WeChat? A Critical Comparative Analysis of Interface Features of WeChat and Facebook. In The 39th ACM International Conference on Design of Communication (SIGDOC '21). Association for Computing Machinery, New York, NY, USA, 213–223. <https://doi.org/10.1145/3472714.3473644>
- Aimee Roundtree. 2021. Facial Recognition UX\*: A Case Study of Industry-Academic Partnerships to Promote User-Centered Ethics in Facial Recognition. In The 39th ACM International Conference on Design of Communication (SIGDOC '21). Association for Computing Machinery, New York, NY, USA, 240–246. <https://doi.org/10.1145/3472714.3473647>
- Aimee Roundtree. 2021. Facial Recognition UX\*: A Case Study of Industry-Academic Partnerships to Promote User-Centered Ethics in Facial Recognition. In The 39th ACM International Conference on Design of Communication (SIGDOC '21). Association for Computing Machinery, New York, NY, USA, 240–246. <https://doi.org/10.1145/3472714.3473647>

These pieces also do a good job at representing the various areas of expertise of our members.

## Conference Activity

Our flagship conference is our annual SIGDOC conference, which typically takes place in the summer or fall of each year. The SIGDOC 2021 conference took place in October (12<sup>th</sup> through 14<sup>th</sup>) virtually, with eight in-person hubs around the globe.

The theme was “Building Coalitions...Worldwide.” The conference committee included:

- Conference Chair: Andrew Mara, Arizona State University
- Program Co-Chairs: Liz Lane (University of Memphis) and Halcyon Lawrence (Towson University)
- Student Research Competition Co-Chairs: Jack Labriola (Kennesaw State University) and Sonia Stephens (University of Central Florida)
- Sponsorship Chair: Jordan Frith, Clemson University
- Accessibility Chair: Sean Zdenek, University of Delaware

- Social Media Manager: Jason Tham, Texas Tech University
- Communications Manager: Luke Thominet, Florida International University
- Website Manager: Adam Strantz, Miami University (Ohio)
- Student Representative: Nupoor Ranade

We also had 8 small, in-person meetups globally and various attendance at each, reaching up to 20 participants:

- Lavras, Brazil: Hub Co-Chairs, Andre de Lima Salgado and André Pimenta Freire
- Beijing, China: Hub Chair, Zhijun Gao
- Limerick, Ireland: Hub Co-Chairs, Yvonne Cleary, Darina Slattery, and Ann Marcus-Quinn
- Lisbon, Portugal: Hub Co-Chairs, Manuela Aparicio and Carlos J. Costa
- East Lansing, MI, USA: Hub Chair: Liza Potts
- Tempe, AZ, USA: Hub Chair, Kathryn Lambrecht
- Raleigh, NC, USA: Hub Chair, Jason Swarts
- Tacoma, WA, USA: Hub Co-Chairs, Emma Rose, Enrique Reynoso, and Rebecca Schallon

We had 58 items that were peer reviewed and published in the proceedings, including 52 papers, poster, and panel abstracts and 12 poster abstracts as part of the Student Research Competition. The 64 items represent the highest number of peer reviewed pieces we have ever published in the proceedings. In all, we had 201 attendees registered for the conference (another record). We saw a robust engagement with graduate and undergraduate students who participated in our Microsoft Student Research Competition. At the conference, we included the following features:

- Keynote by Russell J. Branaghan, PhD, President of Research Collective, a Human Factors and User Experience (UX) consulting firm and laboratory in Tempe, AZ.
- Live topical conversations
- Editors' roundtable, including representatives from major journals in the field
- Workshops
- Ignite talks featuring industry practitioners in the greater Tempe, AZ area

The research that our members are presenting at our conference continues to address salient issues and themes in the fields of communication design, user experience, and technical communication.

## Special Projects

There are currently three special projects at various stages of development:

1. *History*. The EC applied for an ACM History Committee Fellowship but did not receive funding. We intend to reapply next year and continue to work towards making our history more visible to new members.

2. *Technical Committees.* We are currently in talks with the OASIS DITA Adoption Committee to facilitate a transition of their team from OASIS to SIGDOC. This would be our first official technical committee.
3. *Open Access Resources.* The SIGDOC Chair and some members are working towards a project titled DART (data repository), which would provide open access data from various publications in the field of technical communication.

## Key Issues for the Future

We have identified the following issues and plans that will occupy our time over the next 2 years:

- *Conference siting.* We will continue to work on formalizing our conference site selection framework. We currently have the PAF submitted for our 2023 conference, which is way ahead of our usual schedule.
- *Connecting to industry.* We are still committed to community partnerships through the development of a Community Liaison position on the board, whose responsibility would be to do outreach for community partners and solicit and program at least one community-driven panel. We also think investing more in Technical Committees can help connect to industry in substantial ways.
- *More than a conference.* I hope to continue to think through offering value for members outside of our annual conference, perhaps through a spring workshop series.

## Appendix

We have included the most recent (August 2022) demographic data below for SIGDOC and all ACM members across the nearly 40 SIGs, for context. They are broken down into five categories:

- 1) Age ranges
- 2) Job functions
- 3) Genders
- 4) Under-represented groups
- 5) Disabilities

<b>SIG</b>	<b>AGE_RANGE</b>	<b>COUNT</b>
DOC	18-25	2
DOC	26-35	28
DOC	36-45	40
DOC	46-55	33
DOC	56-65	28
DOC	66-75	9
DOC	76+	3
DOC	Prefer not to say	16
DOC	NONE	13
ALL	17 and under	22
ALL	18-25	1650
ALL	26-35	4116
ALL	36-45	4819
ALL	46-55	4418
ALL	56-65	3432
ALL	66-75	1280
ALL	76+	266
ALL	Prefer not to say	1183
ALL	Prefer not to submit	2
ALL	NONE	2670

<b>ACRONYM</b>	<b>JOB</b>	<b>COUNT PERC</b>	
DOC	Consultant	17	7
DOC	Educator	87	35
DOC	Manager	16	6
DOC	NONE	22	9
DOC	Other Primary Job Functior	14	6
DOC	Practitioner	31	13
DOC	Researcher	61	25
ALL	Consultant	1458	5
ALL	Educator	7454	23
ALL	Manager	2123	7
ALL	NONE	5843	18
ALL	Other	1	0
ALL	Other Primary Job Functior	1316	4
ALL	Practitioner	4050	13
ALL	Researcher	9809	31



<b>ACRONYM</b>	<b>GENDER</b>	<b>COUNT(*)</b>
DOC	Female	79
DOC	Male	72
DOC	NONE	13
DOC	Other	1
DOC	Prefer not to say	7
ALL	Female	3921
ALL	Male	16123
ALL	NONE	2680
ALL	Other	137
ALL	Prefer not to say	997

<b>ACRONYM</b>	<b>SUMMARY</b>	<b>COUNT</b>
ALL	NO	15660
ALL	NONE	4396
ALL	OTHER	2989
ALL	YES	518
ALL	PREFER NOT TO SUBMIT	295

<b>ACRONYM</b>	<b>GROUP</b>	<b>COUNT</b>
DOC	NO	116
DOC	NONE	23
DOC	PREFER NOT TO SAY	9
DOC	YES	8
DOC	PREFER NOT TO SUBMIT	3
DOC	AFRICAN-AMERICAN AND ASIAN	1
DOC	ASIAN/FEMALE	1
DOC	BLACK	1
DOC	HISPANIC LATINO	1
DOC	INTERNATIONAL, ASIAN	1
DOC	JEWISH - MINORITY RELIGIOUS GR	1
DOC	LATINX	1
DOC	M?ORI	1
DOC	MALE	1
DOC	NATIVE AMERICAN, MEXICAN	1
DOC	SOUTH ASIAN	1
DOC	SOUTH ASIAN PERSON OF COLOR	1
DOC	WOMEN, DISABLED	1

<b>ACRONYM</b>	<b>DISABILITY</b>	<b>COUNT</b>
DOC	NO	143
DOC	NONE	23
DOC	Prefer not to submit	3
DOC	YES	4
ALL	NO	19058
ALL	NONE	4390
ALL	Prefer not to submit	237
ALL	YES	221