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‘SIGuiendo’ Each Other Steps

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ABSTRACT

Connecting with each other on the basis of research interests, geographies or identity has shown to be an important aspect of community development within HCI. The advent of a variety of committees and Special Interest Groups (SIG) are a testament to this need of connecting with each other. As members of the nascent SIGCHI LATAM committee, we see an opportunity in learning together with different communities across the HCI field about how we are working to attract more practitioners, academics, and students to work together and grow research surrounding HCI. With this SIG, we want to promote an environment for discussing and exchanging practices among different collectives within SIGCHI worldwide. We propose inviting community leaders from different geographies, sub-fields and identities to discuss their strategies and experiences growing their communities. The event is open to all members interested in gaining insight into how to grow communities within HCI.

CCS CONCEPTS

• **Human-centered computing** → **Human computer interaction (HCI)**; *HCI theory, concepts and models*.

KEYWORDS

HCI; Collaboration; Community bridges

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1 INTRODUCTION

There is a concerted effort by the SIGCHI community in creating the conditions for strengthening the community’s inclusiveness towards members of all geographies. Current SIGCHI committees on two major locations (Asia and Latin America), the SIGCHI Development Fund, a variety of inclusion teams, and a growing list of local chapters, attest to this intention.

As members of the SIGCHI Latin American committee, our goal with this SIG is to draw lessons from these various groups regarding the creation and fostering of their respective communities. This wealth of knowledge can benefit the process of growing our nascent community while offering lessons, strategies and inspiration to other CHI attendees and collectives looking to engage in community-building.

The SIG will be structured to offer the prospective attendees group a space for sharing their experiences as collectives, followed by an open discussion, and concluding with a dialogue along with CHI attendees. Drawing on the results of these conversations, we will develop a series of recommendations and insights that can help guide future community-building endeavors. To that end, we propose framing the SIG’s conversations around three main topics: *Building Communities in Latin America*, *Learning with Other Communities*, and *Creating Community Bridges*.

2 BUILDING COMMUNITIES IN LATIN AMERICA

For more than 20 years, Human-Computer Interaction (HCI) groups and communities in LATAM have designed and shared resources and knowledge about how their different populations in the region adopt, use and relate to technologies [5]. These efforts from the HCI community in LATAM include the Latin American Conference on Human Computer Interaction (CLIHIC)¹, local chapters and conferences[10][9], CSCW workshops[4] [8] [12] [11], panels [3] [5], SIG meetings [6], [1], summer schools, among others.

In the last years, Latin American scholars from institutions around the world have engaged in multiple efforts to make and strengthen a community focus on Latin American HCI scholarship. In addition to the previously mentioned formal efforts such

¹<https://clihc2021.laihc.org/>

as workshops, panels, and conferences, we have also created online communities through WhatsApp and Slack that have allowed us to start collaborations through more frequent communication. Additionally, as a result of a recent workshop in CSCW [11], we created an online directory as an alternative channel that hopefully will become a reference to the diversity of researchers across Latin America.

Indeed, our community-building efforts are growing and hold an important potential to strengthen HCI research and practice in the region. However, in its current state, Latin American HCI work still struggles to attain the same level of visibility than work from other, more dominant parts of the world [2]. Critical factors to that regard are the mainstream understanding of global impact, the dominance of English as the publication language, and the lack of funding for research in the region [7] [13].

Thus, it is vital to continue supporting the creation of resources and spaces for research and practice communities in LATAM to analyze and reflect on the opportunities and challenges of the region. Specifically, it is relevant to continue discussing possible actions towards fostering research and educational collaborations. Similarly, it is essential to find effective pathways for rendering research for and by LATAM visible for the region and beyond.

3 LEARNING FROM AND WITH OTHER COMMUNITIES

In recent years, there has been an important effort to support the formation and strengthening its regional and topic-based communities. Amongst these efforts, for example, the creation of the SIGCHI Asia and Latin America committees.

The growth of these communities hold important promises to the quality of HCI research and practice worldwide. However, so far there has been a practice to support these communities' operations in silos, mostly fostering events where their members can come together and discuss their particular goals and challenges with no intervention of other communities. While this support has allowed for communities to become more specialized, it has also tended to prevent them from learning about the knowledge and experiences that each has developed so far.

We seek to promote this SIG as a space for LATAM to share its knowledge and learn from other communities' experiences. In particular, we will recruit participants from across regions and topics of interest. We will also invite leaders from other communities to share and discuss their particular experiences and struggles bringing together HCI researchers. Finally, we seek to promote activities for attendants to identify how their work aligns with others from across regions and to envision future collaborations.

4 CREATING COMMUNITY BRIDGES

As previous work on HCI in Latin America have explored, the region holds a great variety of vibrant and growing tech-related communities of all kinds [5]. Amongst some are groups that explore the use of data for civic purposes, propose AI educational programs for local communities and industry, and promote critical and reflexive uses of technology in the region. While conversing with these groups can be of great benefit for HCI Latin American

research, there is currently very little connection between them and SIGCHI.

Building bridges across research communities in LATAM has been a recurrent goal across SIGCHI-related events and initiatives. For example, the last SIG for LATAM held various topic-specific sessions to allow for attendants to discuss their particular concerns and shared documents were created to elicit cross-pollination of ideas across groups. The SIGCHI Latin American committee has also proposed an initiative for keeping a database of Latin American researchers and their publications in SIGCHI venues.

As these efforts in building and consolidating bridges across the HCI communities in Latin America keep growing, it is necessary to discuss their impact and future. To ensure an HCI scholarship that responds to the region's highly-diverse social, cultural, political, and economic needs, we will promote a discussion on how to increase the visibility of ongoing efforts and combine them to achieve the expected impact.

5 EXPECTED OUTCOMES

In this SIG we expect to have the following outcomes:

- Strengthen the contacts and render more visible the potential connections amongst members of the communities.
- Envision more concrete cross-regional collaborations
- Insights/Guidelines for community-building that different regions can build on. SIGCHI inclusion teams
- Pathways for creating platforms that can keep us all more connected.

6 PROSPECTIVE ATTENDEES

Our aim is to include in this conversations members connected with the following groups:

- SIGCHI committees across different geographies
- Organizers and participants of SIGCHI local chapters
- Members of SIGCHI inclusion teams
- CHI attendees interested in building and connecting with Latin American focused communities
- Researchers and practitioners actively building communities in connection to Latin America

Even though ensuring attendance and participation of members from all these groups is key to the conversation we seek to foster with this SIG, the event will be open to all CHI attendees. In a way, all CHI attendees are engaged in a process of building community. We hope the discussions we facilitate as part of this SIG can be of use to a wide range of attendees.

7 CONCLUSION

Belonging is crucial to thriving in academia and beyond. SIGCHI is no exception. As SIGCHI continues to grow globally, the establishment of communities across geographies, identities and academic interests is key for members to gain a sense of connection. Building community, however, requires an intention and a methodology for it to grow and flourish. This SIG event is geared towards making visible strategies groups within SIGCHI are using to build their communities. It also seeks to provide guidelines and insight to

informing community building processes within the SIGCHI community. We will do this by foregrounding experiences of members across the SIGCHI community and through open forums throughout the event.

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