Being a Session Chair at CHI2004

Thank you for volunteering to serve as a Session Chair for CHI2004! We greatly appreciate you taking on this job and supporting the Conference.

The primary goal of a session chair is to ensure that sessions run smoothly and that the session is a success for both the presenters and the audience. Your duties, in summary, include:

In advance of the conference:
- advising presenters about how to prepare before the conference (please direct them to http://www.chi2004.org/program/prog_presenting.html for details on presenting at CHI2004)
- informing presenters of the order of presentations
- confirming AV/Logistics with presenters
- answering questions about how the session will be run
- identifying any special needs (i.e., assistive technology, mobility limitations, etc.) that may be required by your presenters

At the conference:
- introducing the session
- introducing each presenter
- managing the time
- facilitating the question and answer period(s)

In order to do this, you're going to need to personally contact each presenter and let them know who you are. Even those who have presented many times at previous CHI conferences must be contacted, since AV/Logistics has changed.

As the session chair, you can minimize transition time between speakers, eliminate confusion at microphones, and show an interest in the topic of the session and the speakers.

As a session chair, you report to the Venue Chair for the venue of your session. For example, Papers sessions report to Dan Olsen and Andrew Monk, the CHI2004 papers chairs. A list of the venue chairs is at the end of this document for your reference.

Thank you, and good luck!

Responsibilities of the Job

Responsiveness and Responsibility

Please respond promptly to email. Responses such as "I'm overwhelmed and can't do anything until Monday" are understandable; non-responses create stress, lead to further pings and more email, and create more work for the venue chairs. Second, should anything happen that makes it difficult or impossible for you to perform your duties, please let your venue chairs know as soon as possible.

Before the Conference: Contact Your Presenters

One of your roles is to serve as a liaison to those in your session. Please contact them at least 4 weeks prior to the conference. Your main function is to let them know what to expect, and answer questions and ensure that everyone is prepared for their session. While this is particularly useful for first time presenters, even 'old hands' may, at times, have questions.

new for CHI2004

Speakers appreciate being acknowledged. Please introduce your speakers with a sentence or two about them and their work. Our conference theme is CONNECT and we'd like you to help the audience connect with the speaker by introducing them with a meaningful remark or two. One way to do this is to ask all of your speakers in advance typical questions such as:
- What is the primary focus of your work: research? Applied research? Practice?
- Is this your first time presenting at CHI?
- Does this work follow on with other work previously published or presented?
- Are there other sessions in which this work will be referenced? Should we guide the audience there to hear more?

At the Conference: Attend the Speakers' Meeting

At the Speakers' Meeting on Tuesday morning (8am/08:00), please:
- Make sure you understand how A/V support (including handling A/V emergencies) is being handled. Scooter Morris is our Logistics Chair. Please contact him directly for more information (see contact details at the end of this document).
- Meet and greet your presenters. Please ensure they understand they should be at the session **at least** fifteen minutes ahead of time, they understand the time constraints under which they will speak, and share how you will inform them that their time is up. You will be

introducing your speakers, so please learn to pronounce their names correctly! We know that this can sometimes be challenging, so please be prepared and learn this in advance.

- **new for CHI2004** Prepare at least **one question** for each presenter that you can ask in the session's Q&A period. A session without any questions at all can be very disappointing to presenters.

At the Conference: Run the Session

At a session, your goal is to make sure that the session runs smoothly, begins and ends on time, and that it is a success for both the presenters and the audience.

Before the session

Be at the session 15 minutes early and meet with your presenters before the session begins. Please answer any last minute questions or concerns they have, demonstrate how they will be informed of the time they have left, and make sure they understand the technology (e.g. how to turn the lavaliere microphones on and off, and how 'unusual' technologies such as switching to video and/or controlling the volume of recorded sound, will be handled). Because CHI2004 is not providing computers, you will need to establish how your presenters will transition from one talk to the next. They can share the same laptop if all are amenable to this, or they can swap each time, but this will cause distractions and delays in between presentations.

Be prepared to summon aid in case an A/V emergency arises (this probably involves telling the student volunteer to summon aid).

Opening the session

Call the session to order on time by announcing the name of the session and saying a few words about the session theme. It's OK to wait a minute or two if something is delaying the arrival of many people (e.g. a plenary session running over time). Please remember that the theme of the conference is CONNECT. We'd like you to welcome attendees, encourage them to ask questions at the end of the session, and engage with the material.

For each paper

Introduce the paper title and the presenter. Typically this involves reading the paper title, the names and affiliations of the authors, and noting who will be delivering the presentation. Please make every effort to offer something interesting and meaningful about the presenter but please, make sure that the presenters know what you are going to say. Stagefright is no laughing matter and you do not want to paralyze your speakers!

1. Time the speaker and provide five and one minute warnings when the allotted time is running out. Please print this document and use the "sign" pages – there is no guarantee that timing signs will be waiting for you at the session.
2. Politely cut off the talk if the speaker goes over the time limit.
3. Thank the speaker and lead the applause.
4. Invite the audience to ask questions.
5. If there appear to be no questions, ask your prepared question. Please don't leave the audience and presenter staring at each other wondering what to do next.
6. Politely cut off questioners who appear to be using the question period to deliver a talk rather than ask a question. You can interrupt and suggest that the question brings up several points that can be discussed at the break following the session.
7. Bring the question period to an end when the time is up.
8. Lead a final round of applause for the paper/presenters.

End the session

Close the session by thanking the authors, other participants if appropriate, and the audience for attending. Please invite the audience to connect with the presenters and continue questions and discussions with the authors afterwards. You should also be prepared to indicate to attendees that other sessions will be presenting material on similar topics.

If necessary, please request that the audience move to clear the room in preparation for the next session.

Contact Information

CHI2004 AV/Logistics Chair
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CHI2004 Fringe Co-Chairs
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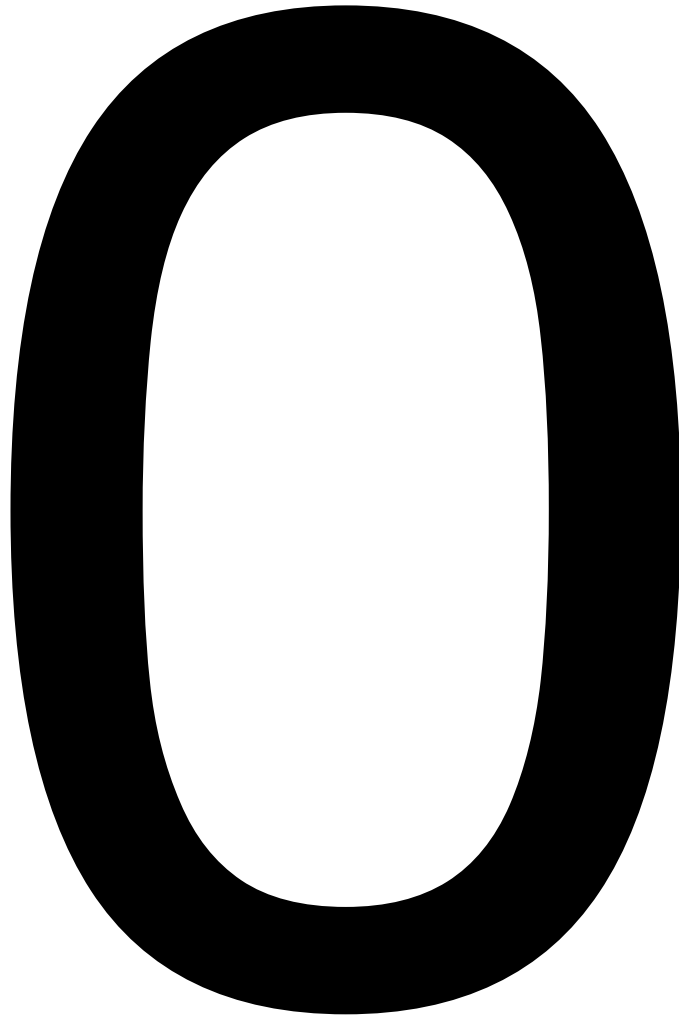chi2004-ambient-intelligence@acm.org

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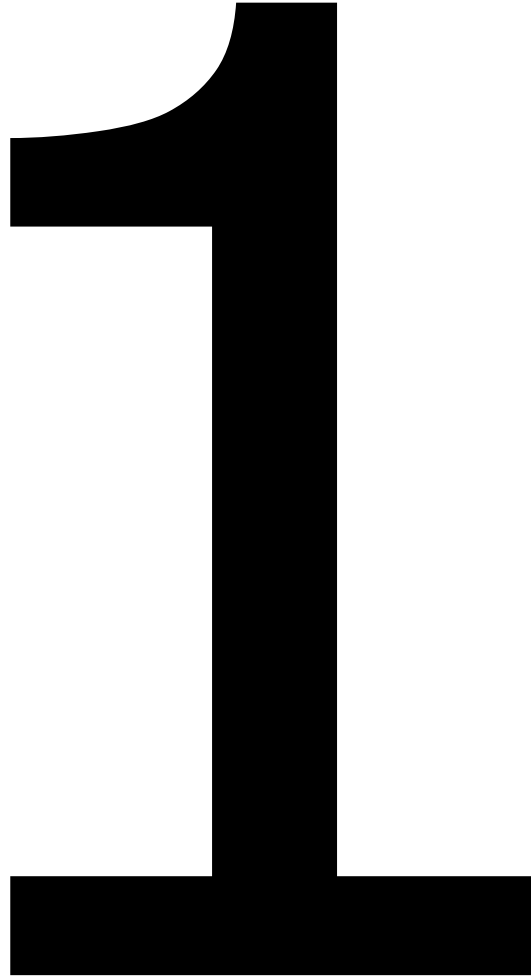Gerd Szwillus, University Paderborn, Germany
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