CHI4Good or Good4CHI

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Abstract
This paper is a commentary on the place of social good within the context of human–computer interaction, specifically the CHI community. I propose three ways of looking at recent CHI research in this space — application research, crossover work, and community-centric research, and suggest that the structural constraints of the CHI conference impact these differently. Tracing the history social-good-related research at CHI, I contextualize this to the construction of the designer and the technology industry as driven by a social mission. In conclusion, I propose that Good4CHI is a better characterization of the direction of value than conference themes such as CHI4Good.

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Introduction
Many HCI faculty members can expect this year to interact with at least one group of students interested in designing something that will change the world, or some subset of it, for a CHI student design competition. The 2017 call, "Leveling the Playing Field," refers to the choice of target audience for a design artifact:

> *After a design target has been identified, creating an intervention of some sort presents further challenges, often with atypical forms of interaction, in unfamiliar circumstances. The possibilities here are myriad, and part of the contest will be choosing wisely … but the aged, the economically disadvantaged, those with a physical or cognitive anomaly, or those who are marginalized in some other way seem like good places to begin your explorations. That said, it's not necessarily about finding an exotic demographic — members of your*

Figure 1: OLPC pilot Thailand - Ban Samkha

Credit: Kozych/OLPC via Wikimedia Commons

The OLPC (being used by children, in Thailand, pictured above) was a poster child for HCI4D in the early 2000s as its backers claimed that the device would revolutionize education for the poor in low-resource environments. The project has since become a case study for critique on how design, disaggregated from the realities of a community's needs, finds significant challenges in adoption.

> *immediate community may also present possibilities for your efforts.*[1]

The competition, which encourages students to think out of the box, does not require that design be incremental or even within the scope of what is technologically feasible in the present. It does, however, encourage that genuine stakeholders be involved in the design process. The ideas that come from such design challenges frequently find purchase on social media waves.

Design contests are well suited for several elements of student learning. The multi-step process involved in evaluating these projects means they receive more vetting than the typical day-long design jam or hackathon. Yet the ostensible rationale of such an endeavor would be to let students' creativity be relatively unfettered by the exigencies of real-world implementation. Chimerical exercises in classrooms are different from design experiments in the open domain in one important way. In the former, the outside world is exempt from what goes on inside a classroom.

Yet, in a design competition in one of the world's most important human–computer interaction venues, a solution posed is inextricably connected to the performativity of socially-situated design. The design process here constructs the user population as needing the "good", and the designer as its provider.

Accessibility is a complex area of research and user experience practice, which has seen considerable research and usable innovation from the HCI community – the problem with such design contests is not so much the actual output, but the process of framing one community as a source of tech-enabled social or economic benefits, and another, as the recipient. The design contest is a starting point in approaching questions of how we as a community create normative assignation to our work. Specifically, I interrogate the ways in which the construction of 'good' needs to be critiqued as part of a larger worldview that positions design research and practice as inherently benefactory, particularly towards the very populations most excluded from the use of mainstream technology.

The 2016 CHI conference had an explicit call to action, themed CHI4Good, motivating work on design and its role in societal concerns. The notion of a "CHI4Good" world is nested within an ecosystem of institutions and epistemologies that see technology as a necessary if not primary means of social benefit, and in turn promote the engagement of technologists in practical action toward this end. The institutions in this endeavor extend from philanthropies and corporate social responsibility groups to academic departments and inter-government agencies unified in hope that technology can solve wicked social problems.

The question of whether there is anything disconcerting about the CHI community moving toward actively bringing social challenges to the desks of designers is moot. A sufficient number of institutions and careers in the HCI world are driven by this question that at the very least, studying the phenomenon is a good idea.

Instead, we can study the relationship between CHI and "good" as an intentional practice. How do we define

[1] https://chi2017.acm.org/designcompetition.html

Bantu Tribesman Uses IBM Global Uplink Network Modem to Crush Nut

This headline of a story from the satire publication "The Onion" in 1996 is an early example of a take on the early ICT4D related experiments. This story takes a snarky perspective on a teleconference between Japanese students and Bantu tribesmen, suggesting that the tribesmen were better off using the modem as a nut-crusher and the computer as a trap for gazelles.

http://www.theonion.com/article/bantu-tribesman-uses-ibm-global-

"good"? Is it a moral stance, or an umbrella term for a range of projects designed for a population, whose very definition as users implies an off-market design motivation? How do we understand the directionality of value between CHI and good?

I start by historicizing "good" and creating a typology of "good" projects in CHI. I then turn to the discourse of technology as social good through the social construction of the designer as a value object and introspect on our motivations and benefits with the notion of good. I then discuss on the structural shortcomings of the CHI format and rewards structure in engaging with social good, and look at how other disciplines have dealt with similar questions. I conclude with thoughts on how we may be more reflexive in our practice of engaging with contexts of social good.

A brief history of the underserved at CHI

Early engagement of CHI research with underserved, non-mainstream populations often intersected with the discussions from other ACM SIGCAS venues including Computing and Quality of Life, at a time when HCI was a relatively new area still grappling with its identity within engineering and technology. In 1990, Ben Schneiderman proposed a "Declaration of Responsibility" and social impact statement for major computing projects, calling for HCI to be more mindful of, among others, people who are elderly and illiterate [37]. Muller et al. in 1997 proposed bringing together HCI research and practice toward greater emphasis on social responsibility — specifically citing the interface needs of people with disabilities [28].

Such early research was not always pitched as normatively seeking social good. Apple's 1997 CHI papers on graphical user interfaces (GUIs) for rural health care workers in India [12, 14], for instance, were part of the company's work developing software applications for the Indian government that resulted in sales and transfer of $11 million in Apple technology [13]. At the same time, following the break-up of the Eastern Bloc, product development research at CHI focused on market issues for emerging regions [40] and the scope for market expansion through cultural adaptation of products [31].

The cultural turn at CHI venues has been an important contributor to lines of work since the mid-1990s, as GUI-based computing products and services found rapid uptake in the non-Western world [43]. The digital divide discourse of the late 1990s spurred a series of conversations among government, industry, and academia, which frequently featured initiatives by various technology corporations in bringing computers to low-income populations [37]. Later, the digital divide came to be part of universal usability conversations [38] and in commemorating 20 years of CHI in 2002, leading HCI researchers together called for CHI to step up to a social agenda [39]:

The CHI field is more than just technology. We understand that our work can have a profound effect on individuals, families, neighborhoods, corporations, and countries. ... How can we contribute to bridging the digital divides in developed and developing countries? ... How can we truly serve human needs? [39]

In the following decade of sociotechnical research for social good, various populations were constructed as marginal in the work's narrative — e.g., homeless people [24] and ethnic and racial groups [17, 21] — but the most significant area of growth was in HCI4D (human–

computer interaction for development), which since the early 2000s has brought out research on design for users in parts of the Global South. This work grew following research by Ghosh, Lahiri and Parikh on usability and design considerations in low-resource settings [10, 30], and work by Marsden and collaborators in South Africa [42] on interactions on small interfaces and digital libraries. These works coincided with a larger movement in the industry, around Bottom of the Pyramid thinking on bringing wealth and services to the poor through corporate engagement; in the academy, with high-profile funding from the National Science Foundation aimed at looking at the role of technology in development;[2] and with several technology research labs including HP, Microsoft Research, and IBM Research setting up in various parts of the Global South. All of these led to the creation of pockets of technology and social good research in various departments in several major institutions including Georgia Tech, UC Berkeley, University of Washington, and University of Colorado, several of which had fairly robust existing HCI programs.

Two constituencies whose work has most frequently been framed as presenting social good are HCI4D and accessibility. Both have separate conferences: ICTD and ACM-DEV for HCI4D and ASSETS for accessibility. One distinction separates the two: accessibility research has been driven more by interaction design challenges with non-standard technology interfaces, whereas HCI4D research has focused more on the populations themselves and sociotechnical concerns around their technology use.

[2]https://www.nsf.gov/awardsearch/showAward?AWD_ID=0326582

Typologies in design and doing good

Over the years, several scholars have offered typologies for classifying projects within the social good space, a majority of which have focused on HCI4D research. These include geography, academic discipline, methodology, object of examination, maturity of work, and field components in work [6, 11]. What these works have not done is a closer interrogation of what motivates such work.

I propose a typology for projects in this space to help critically situate such work within the notion of social good, in the context of a design venue that is driven by academic rigor and publication. These are more relevant to HCI4D, but there are clearly implications for other fields within the broader social good area.

First, there is crossover research in tech for good — research that grew out of interest in a specific underserved community but is of interest outside the primary domain of that community. Examples of this include work on non-visual interfaces, which emerged in the HCI4D before smartphones with visual touch interfaces became the norm [26], and work on voice-based interfaces [30]. This has also had implications for accessibility research, which appeals to the CHI community in multimodal interfaces for non-disabled technology users. However, it is important that the majority of such work has avoided social good framing. The object of examination in crossover research is usually the interface.

Skin in the Game

It is not unheard of for researchers in an academic sub-field to invest themselves significantly in gaining first-hand knowledge of the practice or experience of the subject populations of their work. This has traditionally been required experience for anthropologists. In the CHI world, there are examples of accessibility researchers who are themselves expert or daily users of accessible technology. In HCI4D, there exist a few examples such as Rajesh Veeraraghavan of Georgetown University, who spent a year living as a rural day laborer to understand the impact of technology on a rural employment scheme in India. Microsoft Research India's HCI4D practice invested in or partnered with scholar-professionals who worked in the social sector for extended periods of time, including Randy Wang, the Digital Study Hall innovator who lived in rural India running a teacher training program using technology or Shubranshu Choudhary, a rural journalist who partnered in the creation of a voice-based citizen forum, CGNet Swara.

The second area is application research, in which the technological agenda is driven by increasing the efficiencies of an existing organized activity in which the beneficiaries of the immediate design artifact, or the systems that are impacted by it, are underserved populations. Examples include information gathering or dissemination in service areas like health care, financial services, and investment [1, 29, 30]. Such work, while not necessarily value-neutral, is often driven by metrics of efficiency such as time, data, and cost. Contributions in this space have included insights into the design and deployment approaches that do not work [8], which helps in our understanding of HCI practice. The object of examination in such application research is usually the function (such as data collection or financial services) that a design artifact sets out to perform.

The third area, community research, focuses on providing thick descriptions of a sociotechnical setting. These include accounts of technology use [34] or of the communities themselves of existing or future users [3, 28], qualitative accounts of the challenges of design practice in atypical (read non-Western) settings [2, 4, 32], or steps in theory-building, making sense of the normative underpinnings of research framed for good within the practice of design [18, 23]. The object of examination in such community research is usually the context in which a design artifact exists.

There is intersection among these areas, but we can broadly divide the three by realms of benefit. The first, crossover research, is in the realm of exploratory science, where it isn't clear that the fundamental technology has a long-term market potential, but it is likely of interest to the larger research community for its innovation. Here, the novelty of the interface is often central to the design process and discussion, and there is usually widespread acceptance on what makes such work CHI-related.

The second area, application research, is more centrally driven by a business case, particularly as more corporations, research institutions, and governments automate operations that require usable interfaces. This work, while not necessarily of interest for its innovation in the design process itself, can be of interest on implementation or user experience.

The third, community research, is that in which authors (as with much other sociotechnical work) must contend with having to answer the question, "What are the implications for design?" The community research with a user population or setting for technology adoption that comprises underserved populations is one that venues like CHI in its current structure may not be well equipped to evaluate, for two reasons.

First, we are (generally) not domain experts, on the issue of population itself, so we don't often have the tools or background to adequately comment on what facets of certain work are building on the right foundations. While an inappropriately cited paper on design or research methodology will likely be caught and critiqued in a research submission, the same is unlikely to be true for study domains such as farming, homelessness, or development.

Second, application and crossover as defined here need not have "social good" justification for being in the CHI community because they are essentially about design, irrespective of the context. There is, however, a separate danger in framing them as being about social

Figure 2: Indigenous Bolivian use the internet to research sustainable farming practices

Credit: IICD via Wikimedia Commons

Part of the visual ethic of early "ICTD" or "HCI4D" work was the placement of technological artifacts alongside human users whose appearance is used in the image to construct a notion of distance from modernity. Here, an image of traditionally dressed Bolivians, ostensibly using the internet to research sustainable agricultural practices constructs the technology artifact in normative terms as an instrument of knowledge and geographical extension. The setting thus conveys global good in action.

good, especially if the social good is used as a foil for the complexity of design innovation. The stories of design work in social good settings may have reportage value in and of themselves, but if so that needs to be disaggregated from the validity of the design innovation itself.

The CHI form of being is rewarded for volume of incremental work, driven by tenure and promotion structures that reward numbers. Real-world social research is likely to be mundane unless it comes from the point of ignorance. Seeking to engineer allure in such work leads us to risk selective reportage and representation, design grandstanding, or fetishizing the population to eke out the novelty factor.

Social good in other academic communities

This last decade, CHI work on global good has increased in several domains. Yet there has been a bias, sometimes to the point of research fatigue, in a few urban locations such as the slums of Bangalore, Khayelitsha in Cape Town, and Kibera in Nairobi, places where it is relatively easy to conduct quick design studies. The existence of institutional capacity to conduct such research, the ability of (largely) Anglophone researchers conducting work in English or through assistants, and the locus of researchers with links to these countries drive some of this bias.

This is not unlike development research in other domains. Indeed, the research shows that sampling biases that allow researchers to selectively employ the easiest available subjects lead to bias across scholarly work [16]. Ethical issues on power differentials between researchers and subjects have long been a concern among psychologists [26], thus the work of the researcher may itself appear benevolent to the participants. This has been captured in the work of Dell et al., who while working on an HCI4D project found that their presence in the field as (often) Western researchers working with people from disadvantaged populations in and of itself biased their research subjects into perceiving their work in positive ways [7]. Respondent agency not only muddies the outcomes of the research, but more fundamentally alienates the field site from the objectives of the engagement.

Other disciplines have engaged with issues of social good, and in many cases have norms on how to approach social engagement. Economists work with aggregated or RCT data, anthropologists approach social engagement through significant periods of field engagement, sociologists and political scientists study groups or institutions through extensive data collection, while practice-driven fields iteratively intervene and study the impacts of their work. Besides field-specific methodological norms, what is frequently common in the practice of these disciplines with regard to issues of social good is that scholars profess expertise in either the domain of social good — e.g., education, healthcare — or in geography to which their work speaks. In addition, these disciplines have looked at themselves critically -- the development literature in particular has been scathingly critical of its own constructions of social good and separation from communities [9].

Some facets of specialization across domains is true for HCI, particularly with its inter-disciplinary roots. There are researchers who specialize in one or another user population. It is, however, relatively more common in a typical HCI career to specialize in a kind of interaction, and within that domain to move through various design

Bad4Beneficiaries

It is hard to measure whether the "social good" leanings in CHI and the technology for good movement have had direct, measurable negative consequences such as the re-routing of development outlays. However, one potentially damaging outcomes has been the dilution of what is involved in doing good, especially where the tools of doing good are equated with the structural and human endeavor needed in creating social equity and access. The notion that lack of technology, and not the lack of resources or structural scaffolding, is the main impediment to enabling a more just society not only overvalues the technology artifact, but more dangerously, can offer an excuse for why institutions need not act. The libertarian ethic in the "Teach a man to fish" idiom, that one often encounters in the technology and development world risks oversimplifying the role of both the technical artifact, and the agency of the individual using it. The real risk is when such platitudes become accepted truths.

artifacts and settings. Two factors typically prevent us from engaging with the field in quite the same way.

First, design or user-experience research, especially the kind that involves people's interactions with technology, often involves qualitative research that requires the researcher interact one-on-one with the subject in a visceral way. Second, the reward structure in HCI work in the academy, and CHI in particular, is around a short paper format, which is ill-suited for deep examination of a social phenomenon. CHI studies are rewarded for their contribution to our understanding of impact on design rather than the understanding of some facet specific to the community being studied, though increasingly there are sociotechnical and social-theoretical works in mainstream HCI venues.

Designer as artifact

The notion of reducing social development to a technical problem is not new. The intentionality inherent in the "4" in the HCI4D or CHI4Good implies that the value flows from designer to community. The intentionality of social benefit, inherent in the idea of design leading to development, is about both the vocation of design and the designer or design researcher.

Less is discussed about the HCI researcher and designer stacking the supply side of technology doing social good. This supply side, comprising the professionals, artifacts, and collectives such as corporations and governments, has been critiqued by scholars of science and technology studying techno-fetishism through the decades. More recently, though, such work has been speaking directly to the notions of good within the HCI community. Work from Kentaro Toyama proposes that technology offers no more than an amplification of existing possibilities [42], whereas work on postcolonial computing by Lilly Irani, Kavita Philip, and others has problematized the subjectivity of HCI4D projects through colonial tropes characterizing the population in the "D" as people in need of enlightened civilization [19] and taken on the politics of hackathons carving an entrepreneurial space for participating in social good [18].

These and other works examining the social interventionist turn in HCI work [15] critique an engineering culture, particularly with the mission of the technology collective at its heart. Big tech has built some engagement with social good around its organizational missions for much of two decades. Consumer computing products, an important face of the technology industry, have been at the forefront of this mission. We have long accepted the child in front of a computer as representing knowledge, power, and the potential for change. The risky corollary is that the opposite, undesirable conditions may thus be mitigated by putting the child in front of a computer.

This industry is different from others in that it has sold products that have themselves come to represent learning and social aspiration. Thus, the early corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiatives that donated computers to poor populations came to represent more than a company fulfilling a fiscal requirement. Through the image of the computer alongside the typically marginalized person, the tech sector became a calling card for its own brand. When the tech industry started donating its write-offs, it carried the weight of a device that was not only promoted as valuable to the end recipient, but was also valuable to the gaze of a civilizing citizen who had come to appreciate the value

Bad4Designers

While working with atypical technology users usually makes for good design learning, overstating the social value of design is detrimental to our work as design researchers or practitioners. Instead of focusing on what we know how to do – build products or research their use by populations, by abstracting to the normative value of our practice we risk being not being thorough with the task at hand – of building or evaluating well. In our role, we are qualified to speak for the interactions we examine, not for the people who participate in our work in broader contexts. The case for appropriately recognizing the limits of design does not just build humility, it gives us a sense of what we can impact through our work, and what may lie beyond it.

of his or her own interface with digital technology. This made for a much more enduring image of hope than consumer goods corporations donating soap for better hygiene as part of their CSR [25].

The benevolent hacker ethic of free software, the Google.org notion of a day's donated work, and indeed the turning of Bill Gates into a global development figure are all part of a universalizing Silicon Valley epistemology of modernity, in which global citizenship is tied to the ability to participate in a technology-mediated public. As the professional with global concerns, the modern technologist is crafted as distinct from the automaton factory worker or soulless executive. CHI4Good thus carries forth a pervasive discourse of benevolent engineering in a domain that has come to rally around aphorisms like Google's "Don't be Evil."

In addition to the companies themselves often promoting a global mission, the visible face of this industry is a relatively high number of elite-educated, younger, and global professionals, often with geographical or ethnic origins to the object populations of tech-for-good initiatives. This subset of engineers and designers provides a symbolic representation of what technology can do — their economic trajectory comes to epitomize the promise of the technology; they themselves become a symbolic artifact for aspiration.

This, by extension, offers a means for re-imagining the possibilities of the constructed other — the individual or collective excluded from modernity because of separation from resources or aspiration. The relationship between individuals and their achievement is mediated not by the social structures that govern achievement but by something that directly interfaces with the individual. The successful technology professional's being thus becomes a self-referential roadmap for a global vision, and the designer who enables this by extension becomes a force of good.

The intentionality of good

The intent of doing good for underserved populations is generally not a rhetorical motivation. Through this frame, conversations about what is good have value but arguably are limited compared to product and policy changes that directly impact the underserved.

The drive to innovate has been an important contributor to fairly experimental design, far removed from the realities of the real-world-situated interactions of the purported users themselves. However, a great deal of research that has contributed to work or products has come out of threads of work represented in the canon of CHI4Good. Research from CHI venues has been important in global accessibility — some of the pioneering work on eye tracking [20] has influenced products over the years, and work on eyes-free interfaces has been central to improvements in several accessibility features in off-the-shelf mobiles [22].

In the three areas of crossover, application, and community research, the two former categories have had relatively more product relevance. Work on interactive voice forums used for farmers in India [30] are now being considered for potential applications in citizen journalism and mobile voice services. Work on interfaces for illiterate device users [26] has been found to be instructive in speech-based security on mobile devices [35].

The Reviewer Pool

Within the limitations of the CHI publication format, one of the challenges of effectively evaluating development work is selecting the right reviewers. There needs to be a means of incorporating people from the community which is the subject of the research project into the review process. This may take one of two things. First reviewers who are professionals in, or part of the "social good" context thus defined would need to be able (or more interestingly, willing) to respond to scholarly work. We could of course invest in the "Skin in the Game" philosophy by training our own. Alternately, we may decide that submissions should include addenda for specific review and commentary for experts who may not wish to comment on some of the more academic elements of submissions. This is of course not novel – the NSF for instance routinely requests reviewers to show real world impacts for which partners groups are brought into academic grant proposals and participate accordingly.

Application research has enabled deeper understanding of interface appropriateness in a specific context rather than further normative ideals of beneficial usage [1, 30]. Design artifact researchers have gone on to contribute to existing products or influence the field implementations of products that replace analog systems with digital technology [5] or inform our understanding of intermediated technology use where interfaces were not directly usable by those whose lives the technology was intended to impact [33].

The community-related research is harder to pin down in terms of direct good to underserved people. Much of the value in this work has been to further our understanding of geographies or specific communities within them, rather than what is necessarily good for them [3, 28]. However. one can speculate why this would be beneficial for the CHI community, outside of research alone. Besides feel-good facets and public recognition for socially-relevant design, such work gives designers expertise breadth through insight into user experience contexts outside the 'typical", or introduces them to new milieus that expand the geographical implications of their work. As the expanding international practice of most major technology companies would suggest, there are economic opportunities in the "global development" space, just as the need for compliance can be an important drive for the accessibility work "market." Whether or not CHI4Good, there is a case that this is Good4CHI.

Conclusion

In early 2016, Microsoft Researcher Ed Cuttrell presented a talk at the Stanford HCI seminar titled, "Cultural Learning of India for Make Benefit Glorious Field of HCI." The ironic title was portentous of the main idea to follow in the work — HCI benefits more from global research than the other way around.

With both a locus of researchers and the institutional investment for continued work, CHI4Good and its variants are here to stay. The ability to work in atypical circumstances, such as understanding trust, usability, or co-design in new settings, is unarguably good preparation for an HCI professional. Furthermore, the burgeoning technology market and HCI research and practice extending to various underserved populations and geographies means that such research contributes to professional opportunities.

The problems of global good are very serious — we live in a world in which hunger, violence, lack of basic health care and education, and extreme forms of political repression are part of the daily experiences of the majority of the world. We, in the academy, for the most part live in extreme privilege, and are often by extension working with others, including students, who are equally separated from the problems so defined. And yet, there are other pieces to the definition of good outside of the economic — depression, illness, exclusion that are very much part of our daily experiences. Clearly, the first-hand experience of a problem need not be a necessary prerequisite to working toward solving it, but a deep involvement in it is.

There are precedents for this. The accessibility community has rallied around the "nothing about us without us" cry, the net impact of which has been a significant presence of people with disabilities in the intellectual output about disability. Likewise gender and ethnic studies have emphasized the voices and cultures of the populations they comprise. However if we are

Social Good as Related Work

It is now widely accepted that research papers are not considered in the review process without being very closely evaluated on "related work", "motivation" or "methodology" sections. There needs to be a similar framework in which ethics and engagement with social good issues need to be justified, in the same way that motivations or literature reviews are. Approaches to the work need to be discussed in the same way as a methodology section may be constructed, contextualized within what is happening in that field. Finally shortcomings of the research must be seen in the same light as research limitations. This may seem like a tall order for a 10-pager, which may precisely be one of the critiques of effective work in this space.

unable to move towards a more inclusive engagement in "good" and both the format and reward of what we do as a community stays as is, it may be time to consider Good4CHI as an apt alternative to describe the directionality of our work's impact.

My goal is not to specifically attack CHI4Good as a conference or notion. The terminology merely offers a useful handle to explore our thinking around good. The motive of this paper is to make us as a community contemplative about the ways we perceive our place in the world, where these are rooted, and how awareness of these may help us be responsible about representing our community and the work it puts forth.

The social construction of professional practice and engineering has long been a subject of critical reflection by social theorists; it is time to revisit such work. The question is not whether design can bring social good. What we must ask ourselves is whether we as designers can reflect on why it matters to us that it can.

Examining how other fields have approached the idea of good within research helps us to be cognizant of the structural impediments that the CHI format poses to serious work in this space. CHI studies are rewarded for their contribution to our understanding of design rather than our understanding of a specific community. Likewise, glory in design is often in innovation and entrepreneurship, very different from the rewards in doing work on issues of social good.

The quest for goodness as currently constructed will invariably hit the wall of what narrower definitions of design may view as valid research. The first generation of HCI4D researchers will continue to battle through the question of "how is this CHI?" from reviewers who take a widget approach to design. Those reviewers, in turn, were once at the receiving end of "how is this computer science?" back when CHI was struggling to carve its space as an emerging field.

In these circumstances, an inversion that working in development is good for HCI is probably the more apt position; likewise, whether CHI can engineer good is less answerable than whether working for good does something for CHI.

When we self-assign a social mission, we also appropriate ways of discussing it. We must ask ourselves whether the seriousness of a social problem will be defined, at least in some measure, by the clarity with which a design artifact claims to tackle it. This, if anything, is the greatest risk of assuming that our community, or any design artifact that emerges from it, may be representative of the ways a certain social challenge is tackled.

We are responsible for ensuring that the gravity of social good is adequately reflected in the ways we approach the subject. Social good is serious business, and working toward social good cannot be a by-product of a technological intervention, nor can it be a means for us to pat ourselves on the back for another day of a job well done.

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