
Untold Stories: Working with Third Sector Organisations

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Introduction and Background

Research collaborations are an important part of performing research in HCI, particularly when the research is situated in socio-culturally, or ethically complex and sensitive spaces. For example, research has been carried out in physician-assisted suicide [22] and there is a growing literature around working with people experiencing homelessness [3,13,20], sex workers [14,19], genocide [5] and substance use recovery support, focusing on the alcoholics anonymous programmes [21]. One way of addressing these topics is through the involvement of Third Sector Organisations (TSOs); a term used to describe a variety of Non-Profit enterprises, service providers, and movements that exist independently from Government and (for-profit) Private Enterprises [8,12]. They often exist to provide services in areas that both the Government and Private sectors have typically been seen to leave unattended [8], and are thus incredibly heterogeneous in both organisational structure and nature of work performed [12].

Previous examples of collaborations between HCI researchers and TSOs include using open data to

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construct narratives to build a case for support for grant applications [6], or to explore volunteering support within organisations [18]. Others have explored the ways in which charities function, exploring digital opportunities for transparency [10] or supporting infrastructure requirements [16,17], whilst others have worked alongside TSOs to address larger research themes such as genocide awareness [5,11], de-colonising research and literature [1], and post-colonial discourses [9].

What becomes clear through these processes, is that TSOs function in a huge variety of social, cultural, political, economic, or otherwise unique spaces. Working with these particular organizations when designing, developing, or evaluating technologies provides a breadth of potential benefits, but also unique challenges for projects. When working in these spaces, it is imperative to achieve 'fair partnerships' with collaborators [7].

Challenges of working with TSOs

Engaging with TSOs in HCI research is done for a variety of purposes, and each engagement presents both mutual benefits and challenges for the researchers and participating organizations. Whilst the differences between individual research contexts and organizations can mean that some of these challenges and opportunities are unique to the context, these engagements do often share characteristics that can be drawn upon to illustrate the benefits and tension points across HCI-TSO relationships.

In HCI we have engaged with TSOs in numerous ways. Examples of these are: by directly studying the organisations [15,17]; or entering in partnerships with them to work with participants, settings, or spaces [4]. TSOs are inherently value-driven and play an important

role in society, making engagement with them a double-edged sword; HCI can affect real change through this engagement, but in doing so it must take extra care that this change is positive and fruitful for all stakeholders. While research always has the potential for unforeseen or negative outcomes that can possibly cause harm, the risk of this is magnified when engaging with TSOs. They are often directly involved in sensitive or at-risk settings, so all research outcomes are felt more acutely when they are intertwined with their service delivery, organisational practice, or the political discourse they engage with either inherently or through advocacy. Despite these potentially challenging implications, the experiences of HCI researchers in these settings remain untold stories.

Workshop Themes

While HCI researchers have often called for a more nuanced discussion of the ethical, social, cultural, or other issues that arise when doing this kind of work [15,17], there are few publications that address the non-tangible concerns of working with the third sector. Within this workshop, we aim to address these issues, focusing in particular on the ways in which this research impacts the TSOs we engage with, how the collaborations affect the research process and project as a whole, and how our engagement with this space shapes us as people, practitioners, and researchers. Developing, evaluating, or deploying technologies in this space inflates these considerations in a number of complex ways—as issues of safeguarding service users, control over how these technologies may be used, or the risks associated with technologies 'replacing' the personal touch of service provision often arise. Having said this, technologies also provide an opportunity for improvement in service delivery, improvement in transparency, or widening reach for TSOs. Working with

TSOs can be risky for the TSOs and researchers alike. In our workshop, we aim to bring together a number of researchers to share their stories and discuss opportunities for improvement in research practice with TSOs. Through these discussions, we will develop a framework for good practice, providing guidance on conducting research with TSOs, their staff, and their beneficiaries through ethical methodologies and methods. We will do this by discussing three ways in which working with TSOs impact the work we do: (1) the ways in which this kind of work impacts the third sector; (2) the ways in which it impacts the research itself; and (3) the ways in which it impacts us as researchers and people.

Impacting the Third Sector

The workshop will bring together researchers from multiple different areas within HCI to discuss their experiences of engaging with TSOs. We aim to investigate how different methods of engagement can impact TSOs; affecting the ways in which the TSO works, regardless of the type of involvement or partnership agreement. To encourage reflection around what researchers are asking of TSOs as part of their involvement in the research process, we ask: How much time and resources are TSOs currently being expected to invest in projects, and what are they receiving in return? What are the risks to them as an organisation in involvement, deployment, or other facilitation of the research? And finally, what risk does research pose to their service users, clients, or other stakeholders, and how does the research impact on their practice?

Impacting the Research

In exploring the expectations and impact that TSOs are currently experiencing, we will then be better able to

move to exploring the impact that working with TSOs can have on the research itself and the methods and methodologies that we, as researchers, are choosing to use with them. The act of choosing to work (or not) with TSOs, the politics associated with these decisions, and the meaningfulness of these relationships can have an impact on the theoretical framings of research. As such, collaborative research projects require design methods and practices to adapt to the setting in which they are performed, in order to maximise the potential of the researchers engaged, while also keeping in mind power struggles when working in this way [2]. The workshop will serve to open up a space for participants to reflect on the ways in which their research is affected through working with/for/in/via TSO partners. In order to facilitate this reflection, we ask: In what ways does the value-driven nature of TSO work affect the research's methodologies and methods? In what ways are research outcomes shaped by a need to be sustainable in the TSO, and what are the implications if they are not? And finally, how does research navigate pragmatic issues with method, such as engaging participants in design processes with limited available time?

Impacting the Researcher

As research projects develop, the researchers involved in them grow and are impacted in a variety of ways. When working on projects with partners such as TSOs ethical, political, or methodological dilemmas will inevitably present themselves. As many TSOs engage in sensitive, often turbulent, matters then reflection on how these situations may affect the researcher is necessary. In order to support a guided discussion around these complexities, the final theme of our workshop explores the impact on the researchers who are working within this space. We question: If the

research involves heavy participation and engagement in work practice (e.g. volunteering), in what ways are the roles of researcher and worker blurred and what are individual obligations in such a value-charged setting? What are the boundaries between work performed through an organisation and research when the work is value-driven or sensitive, and how do researchers distinguish this boundary? And finally, what are potential situations, ethical conundrums, and complications a researcher might encounter that are not covered by formal ethics procedures, and how do researchers experience these?

In this workshop, we will address these questions and hope to raise further ways in which we can reflect on the impact that the work we are conducting with TSOs affects their service delivery, funding opportunities, and involvement in policy development.

Workshop Goals

The workshop will offer a space for attendees:

- To present their research experiences to peers, and engage in a subsequent structured discussion of their engagements with the third sector, contributing to methodological debates.
- To critique and discuss methodologies and methods currently used with TSOs.
- To build and develop a community of researchers working in a similar space, where ideas can be shared in a safe space, and methodological, ethical, impact, or other concerns can be raised for peer-feedback.
- To make a framework for good practice in HCI that, when utilised, will engender more considerate and productive research for all parties.

Organisers

Angelika Strohmayr is a PhD candidate in Digital Civics at Newcastle University in the UK. She has

worked with and in a number of third sector organisations in sensitive settings in European and International Development contexts both in practitioner and researcher roles. She has interests in feminist, creative, and reflexive methodologies and the ways in which we co-design and co-research with charities.

Matthew Marshall is a PhD candidate in Digital Civics at Newcastle University in the UK. His work focuses on how charities can use technology to develop new ways of becoming transparent and accountable to their stakeholders through interactions around work, outcomes and money. He has interests in Marxist modes of production where workers own the value of their labour, and likes to perform research through fieldwork and getting “stuck in”.

Nitya Verma is a PhD candidate in the Human-Centered Computing department at Indiana University in Indianapolis. Her work focuses on how human-services organizations and their varied stakeholders participate in the big data phenomena and its implications for use and design of these technologies. More specifically, she has interests in the lived experience of the big data rhetoric and technologies in the policing context (i.e. non-profits, activist groups and police departments), and likes to conduct qualitative fieldwork.

Chris Bopp is a PhD student at the University of Colorado Boulder. He works with human services nonprofit organizations as a community-based researcher to understand the challenges of using information systems to measure social impact. He is interested in the connections between aggregation of data and measurement of community level change, and the potential for data to accurately represent nonprofit work and social impact.

Róisín McNaney is a Lecturer in Digital Healthcare Technologies at Lancaster University in the UK. She has extensive experience engaging multiple self-organized health charities, relating to Parkinson's and Stroke, in HCI research, spending two years as the vice chair of the Parkinson's UK Newcastle Branch support group. She has experience organizing previous CHI workshops within the themes of ethics and vulnerability.

Amy Volda is a founding Assistant Professor in the Department of Information Science at the University of Colorado Boulder. She also holds an adjunct appointment with the Lilly Family School of Philanthropy at Indiana University. Dr. Volda conducts empirical and design research in human-computer interaction with a focus on philanthropic informatics—an interdisciplinary domain exploring the role of information and communication technologies in supporting and provoking initiatives for the public good.

David Kirk is Professor of Digital Living at Northumbria University in the UK. He has worked with a number of cultural institutions and third sector organisations in sensitive settings. He has interests in research ethics and value-centred design and has recently been exploring accounting practices in small charities. He has extensive experience of organising and running successful CHI workshops, across a range of topics.

Nic Bidwell is a Professor at the Universities of Namibia and Pretoria, and part of the team for the Association of Progressive Communications (APC) new Local Access Project. Her research focuses on designing and understanding interactions with technologies that suit the communication and knowledge ecologies of rural, Indigenous and African people. Nic pursues a located accountability in co-generating methods, situated within local discourses, to empower local

inhabitants and early-career scholars in research. She has partnered with several NGOs and indigenous groups in projects, received the first IFIP TC 13 award for contributions to Interaction Design for International Development and was technical co-chair for the inaugural AfriCHI.

Website

The website (<http://thirdsector-hci.club>) will include information on the workshop; the proposed programme, the call for participation, and the full workshop proposal, as well as a list of attendants and their contributions to the workshop once this has been determined.

The website will also function as a means for disseminating the framework of good practice, and for sharing stories of working with charities in HCI research. We would like to use the website as a tool for community-building before and after the workshop and to use it to help coordinate and facilitate post-workshop plans. We would like to see it grow into a space for researchers to share their stories, reflections, and ideas around working with TSOs.

Pre-Workshop Plans

We are currently engaging in efforts to build a community surrounding HCI work in the third sector, and see this workshop opportunity as an extension of this movement. Participants will be recruited through professional and topic-specific mailing lists in academic and non-academic spaces, the workshop's website, and social media.

Deadlines

15th of December: Early submission deadline

20th of December: Early acceptance

2nd of February: Workshop submission deadline.

22nd of February: Feedback and notifications to authors.

21st or 22nd of April: Workshop at CHI 2018.

Workshop Structure

This one-day workshop consists of two parts: In the morning we will engage in a structured, reflexive, discussion of our experiences of working in the third sector. This is enacted through an 'ice-breaker' presentation from each participant on their own work and experiences to lay the groundwork for following discussions to reflect on the ethics, methods, and methodologies that affected them and their research. In the afternoon, we develop a framework for future HCI researchers through discussion, the creation of a 'symbol of good practice' with craft supplies, and the writing of our good practice guidance.

Programme

09:00 Welcome and Introductions from the organisers
09:15 Presentations from Participants (Ice-breaker)
10:00 Small group discussions on methods and methodologies
10:45 BREAK
11:00 Presentation of previous group discussions
12:30 LUNCH
14:00 Welcome back from organisers
14:15 Crafting a 'symbol of good practice'
15:00 Group presentations and discussion
16:30 Developing good practice guidance
16:50 Discussion of future work
17:00 Dinner

Outcomes

After this intensive day of reflection, discussion, and making, we will have personal, community, and discipline wide outcomes:

- Participants will have reflected on their personal research approaches and methods when working with the third sector, and the

effects this has had or is having on the charities they engage with, their own research practice, and their personal engagement and development.

- We will have collected personal stories of researchers working with TSOs.
- We will have discussed and reflected on the diversity of research that takes place in collaboration with the third sector across HCI research.
- We will have established a community of HCI researchers engaged in a variety of projects with TSOs.
- We will have developed a prototype of a framework of good practice for engaging in HCI research with TSOs that incorporates the stories, reflections, and discussions we will have had throughout the day.
- We will have discussed the ways in which this prototype needs to be developed, how this can take place, and how we will disseminate the information beyond our community of HCI researchers working with TSOs.

Post-Workshop Plans

Participants should build upon the work produced in the workshop by facilitating subsequent events with academics and TSOs in their local context. We will also create a mailing list to share the experiences of running these events, as well as the outcomes, among the workshop community. As such, we will continue to develop the Code of Good Practice, also inviting members of the ACM and BCS (British Computer Society) to participate. We will also share our learning through the website, and seek to publish a book. Decisions will be finalised with workshop participants

Call for Participation

This workshop will develop the first version of a *Code of Good Practice* for HCI research involving third sector organisations (TSOs), a term used to describe a variety

of Non-Profit enterprises, service providers, and movements that exist independently from Government and (for-profit) Private Enterprises. The workshop offers a space to discuss how collaborations with TSOs impact (1) the third sector, (2) the research, and (3) the researchers.

We first focus on group reflections of researcher experiences when working in or with TSOs to explore ethical and pragmatic tensions regarding the performance of this work. Secondly, we will produce an initial draft of a *Code of Good Practice* that will inform further work in this space.

We welcome submissions in both creative formats (+short bio) and short papers written in the SIGCHI Extended Abstract format (max. 3 pages + references + short bio). Submissions should address one or more of the below topics and should be sent to a.strohmaye@ncl.ac.uk by the 15th December 2017:

- Reflections of personal experiences of working in this space
- Critiques of methodologies and methods that are used when working or engaging with TSOs
- Any other factors, impacts, or outcomes that arise from engagement with TSOs that the authors feel are important to address, but are not necessarily named here.

Admittance will be on the basis of workshop relevance, and the potential of contribution to discussions, as reviewed by the workshop organisers. If accepted, we require that at least one author of the paper attends the workshop, who must also register for at least one day of the conference. We ask accepted participants to prepare two slides (one about themselves and one on their research) for the introductory presentations.

For more information on the workshop, please visit: <http://thirdsector-hci.club>.

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