

ANNUAL REPORT
of the COMMITTEE ON PROFESSIONAL ETHICS
For the Period: July 1, 2020 - June 30, 2021
Submitted by Don Gotterbarn and Marty J. Wolf
Committee Co-Chairs

1. BASIC INFORMATION

1.1 List of committee members, terms of office; begin with chair. As an appendix, attach the address list of the committee's members.

Don Gotterbarn: Co-Chair (term expires June 30, 2022)

Marty J. Wolf: Co-Chair (term expires June 30, 2022)

Michael S. Kirkpatrick, Education Coordinator

Bo Brinkman, Technical Coordinator

Keith W. Miller, Secretary

Karla Carter, Social Media Coordinator

Catherine Flick, Outreach Coordinator

Florence A. Appel

Sally Applin

Richard Blumenthal

Emanuelle Burton

Ken Christensen

Frances S Grodzinsky

Kai Kimppa

Jesmin Jahan

Evelyn Lulis

Denise Oram

Thomas J. Owens

Norberto Patrignani

Tom Yeh

1.2 State the purpose to the committee -- its current charter. If an ad hoc committee, state the termination date.

The Committee on Professional Ethics (COPE) is responsible for 1) promoting ethical conduct among computing professionals by publicizing the Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct and by offering interpretations of the Code, including responding to queries from ACM members, industry professionals, ACM governance bodies, and other key stakeholders about the intersections of computing education, computing practice and ethical behavior reflected in the Code; 2) planning and hosting activities to educate computing professionals in ethical decision making, on issues of professional conduct, computing ethics pedagogy, supporting the public's understanding of computing; and 3) reviewing and recommending updates to the Code of Ethics, its guidelines, and the Code of

Ethics Enforcement Policy; 4) carrying out its role as described in the Code of Ethics Enforcement Policy.

- 1.3 Indicate the organization of the committee into subcommittees or other subunits; give a one-sentence description of each subunit's charter. Name the individual responsible for each subunit.

Generally, the committee functions as a committee of the whole, without any sub-units. Subcommittees are formed to provide leadership on new projects and as the need arises. Work is reviewed by a committee of the whole. There is one technical support sub-unit to maintain social media and COPE's web presence. Ad hoc subcommittees are formed to conduct investigations when violations of the Code are reported.

- 1.4 List dates of committee meetings.

Skype, Zoom email, and telephone meetings occurred as the need arose

2. PROJECT SUMMARY

List all projects, of the committee or its subunits that have been active at any time during the fiscal year.

Please list active projects before passive or completed ones; and list the most important projects first.

COPE projects are of two kinds, reactive and proactive. COPE responds to concerns about behavior by individuals, organizations, or Professional Societies which are alleged to be inconsistent with the Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct, ACM's anti-harassment policy, and so on. Issues are brought to us by individuals, internal ACM committees like the Pubs Board, and by ACM HQ. Proactively COPE engages in a variety of projects to promote professionalism and ethical behavior consistent with and supportive of the ACM's position on professional ethics. The ACM Committee on Professional Ethics works to nurture an ethical stance by practitioners and those who employ practitioners.

On-going projects:

1. Promote the Code: With the update to the Code, we have undertaken numerous efforts to ensure that members and computing professionals, in general, are made aware of the Code, the changes proposed and adopted, and were able to contribute to the update process. Responsible people: Gotterbarn/Wolf, with the help of other COPE members. This has been a primary responsibility of COPE since its inception.
2. Adjudicate complaints of alleged ethics and anti-harassment violations reported to the ACM including 7 major complaints consuming hundreds of person-hours and numerous minor complaints.
3. Facilitate the adoption of the ACM Code of Ethics by other organizations including business and other professional societies also assisting in the development of supporting materials.
4. Participates in other National Computer Societies Ethics groups, e.g. BCS Ethics Expert Forum.

5. ACM representative to the International Federation for Information Processing TC 9 and supports other relevant IFIP groups. Responsible people: Gotterbarn. This has been ongoing for many years.
6. Maintain COPE's Internet presence. This includes developing case studies, general website maintenance ethics.acm.org, as well as using Twitter to engage with a broad audience. Responsible people: Brinkman, Kirkpatrick, Carter. This has been ongoing since 2016.
7. Provide support for other international computing organizations developing a code of ethics. Responsible people: Gotterbarn/Wolf and others as appropriate. This happens on an as-requested basis.
8. Development of Code poster. Responsible person: Gotterbarn.
9. Maintain a direct relationship with ACM Pubs Board. Responsible person: Kirkpatrick.
10. Work with the Professional Development Committee. Responsible person: Gotterbarn
11. Work with ACM and IEEE Computer Society to update Computer Science curricula: Responsible persons Blumenthal and Patrignani

Completed projects:

1. Presentation of ACM Tech Talk – Leveraging the ACM Code of Ethics. Responsible people: Gotterbarn, Wolf.
2. Development of a proactive ethical analysis technique for using the Code- Proactive CARE. Responsible people: Gotterbarn, Wolf, Miller, Kirkpatrick, Jahan
3. Development of Case studies using Proactive CARE. Responsible people: Gotterbarn, Wolf, Miller, Kirkpatrick.
4. UNESCO World Summit on the Information Society conference presentation on the ACM Code.
5. Keynote Zoom presentation on codes of ethics at ETHICOMP conference Spain. Responsible person: Wolf
6. Zoom presentations in New Zealand about the ACM Code of Ethics and working through case studies. Responsible person: Gotterbarn.
7. Presentations to and support of international groups developing codes of ethics, consulting with groups in Australia, Canada, Italy, New Zealand, South Africa, and the UK. Responsible people: Gotterbarn, Flick.
8. Numerous investigations of complaints. Responsible people: Gotterbarn, Wolf, Kirkpatrick, Flick, Burton, Carter.
9. Participate in the development of Ethics Conferences. Responsible people; Blumenthal, Carter, Gotterbarn, Miller, Wolf.
10. Study of the ACM Code and Data Science. Responsible people: Gotterbarn
11. Work with Computer Society of Sri Lanka and Finland adopting the ACM Code of Ethics; Responsible person: Gotterbarn
12. Presentation on Computing Ethics and the ACM Code: Responsible people: Flick, Gotterbarn, Grodzinsky, Miller, Wolf,
13. Participate in ACM Distinguished Speaker Program emphasizing Computing Ethics; Responsible person: Gotterbarn
14. Participate in the Joint Investigative Committee and the subsequent Code violation complaint: Responsible people: Gotterbarn, Kirkpatrick, Wolf

15. Presentation to Brazilian Computer Society on AI and the ACM Code of Ethics Responsible people: Gotterbarn
16. Participate in the National Academy of Sciences panel for the Action Collaborative on Preventing Sexual Harassment in Higher Education. The panel focused on the topic of Benefits, Challenges, and Approaches for Sharing Information about Case Outcomes with Departmental Communities. Responsible person: Wolf
17. Chair the ACM special Committee on Disclosure. Responsible person: Wolf

3. PLANS

- 3.1 List projects that will be completed or terminated in the coming year.
 1. Support smooth incorporation of the adoption of the ACM Code of Ethics as the International Federation for Information Processing Code of Ethics including vetting translations.
 2. Support for ACM curricula by producing documents relating ACM curricula elements to the ACM Code and producing a framework for integrating ethics into course modules.
 3. Write a history of the ACM's work in computer ethics.
 4. Presentation of a Special Session at SIGCSE 2022.
 5. Development of Code Support Documents.
 6. Restructure COPE to more effectively meet its expanding responsibilities, succession planning responsibilities, and to expand its diversity.
 7. Produce videos on the ACM Code of Ethics.
 8. Work with SIGSOFT to develop an Ethics Toolkit to help industry incorporate the ACM Code in their practice.
 9. Do a comparative study of frameworks for ethical decision-making.
 10. Support and Comment on International Standard for AI ethics.
 11. Investigate and settle Code and Anti-harassment complaints as they arise.
- 3.2 List important changes or milestones in active projects during the coming year.

Presentation at UNESCO of the launch of adoption of the ACM Code of Ethics by IFIP's 44 national computing societies.
- 3.3 List new projects or programs which are proposed or contemplated.
 1. Work with the ACM Professional Development Committee to develop an Ethical Toolkit for industry to promote an ethical culture that provides ways to help their workers identify and address ethical issues in computing
 2. Identify ad hoc opportunities to promote the Code (and thus the ACM) to new groups in potentially new ways and venues.
 3. Identify ways to make the Code relevant to practitioners.
 4. Discuss and develop guidelines for membership on COPE. Identify expectations of members, ways for contributing to advancing COPE's mission.
 5. Establish working meetings to develop additional case studies.
 6. Establish working meetings to develop Code Support Documents.
- 3.4 Indicate how well the committee composition reflects diversity with respect to younger members, geographic representation, a balance with respect to industry/academia, gender, and other under-represented groups. If there are areas that need improvement, list the details of a plan to increase the diversity of the committee membership.

The committee has twenty members. Four are from outside the USA and nine are women. COPE's mission is to support professional conduct rather than to develop advanced philosophical concepts about ethics; so accordingly, we are also concerned to have representation of computer scientists, IT practitioners, and those with philosophy backgrounds. This year we will continue to address the membership on the committee. We would find guidance and training on increasing diversity extremely beneficial. There is reason to suspect that many ACM committees and SIGs would benefit from making this a key priority for this fiscal year (perhaps longer) and investing in such a way so as to make this happen throughout the organization.

4. COMMENTS

List any comments you wish brought to your Board's or Council's attention. Please provide a brief (paragraph) summary of one or two of your activities that would be of interest to the broad ACM community (or provide a link to a write-up of such information).

COPE is interested in reaching out to practitioners and bringing the Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct to them as a mechanism to support their professionalism. COPE is working on ways to help modify corporate cultures by incorporating attention to ethical practice into the working environment of computing professionals.

Wolf and Gotterbarn's TechTalk received a very high response rating for practitioner relevance. Other members of COPE are willing to participate in such events as well. COPE members have been successful in reaching out to wide audiences. See https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1_AdD-rERGA cubF1zOJ2oRNbha6Xk2GCHfZ30p6zJoQ/edit?usp=sharing for a comprehensive list.

APPENDIX

List of all committee members, subcommittee or subunit chairs and members, and other persons responsible for projects.

Note that members of the committee are called upon to serve on subcommittees to investigate complaints that allege violations of the Code when the complaint warrants.

Name: Florence Appel

Email: appel@sxu.edu

Responsibility within the Committee: contributes ideas to teaching of computing ethics

Name: Sally Applin

Email: sally@sally.com

Responsibility within the Committee: contributes to promoting the Code

Name: Richard Blumenthal

Email: rblument@regis.edu

Responsibility within the Committee: crosswalk the Code with curricula

Name: Bo Brinkman

Email: Brinkman (dr.bo.brinkman@gmail.com).

Responsibility within the Committee: Technical Coordinator: Web, Twitter, and YouTube Channel

Name: Emanuelle Burton

Email: emanuelle.burton@gmail.com

Responsibility within the Committee: contributes to guiding COPE direction, complaint resolution committees, Code Support Document contributor

Name: Karla Carter

Email: karla.carter@bellevue.edu

Responsibility within the Committee: social media, especially Twitter, complaint resolution committees

Name: Ken Christensen

Email: christen@cse.usf.edu

Responsibility within the Committee: contributes to guiding COPE direction, Code Support Document sub-committee

Name: Catherine Flick

Email: cflick@dmu.ac.uk

Responsibility within the Committee: Code outreach, especially to practitioners, complaint resolution committees

Name: Donald Gotterbarn

Email: don@gotterbarn.com, chair@ethics.acm.org

Responsibility within the Committee: co-chair, chief computing professionalism evangelist

Name: Frances Grodzinsky

Email: grodzinskyf@yahoo.com

Responsibility within the Committee: contributes to the teaching of computing ethics.

Name: Jesmin Jahan

Email: shraban03@gmail.com

Responsibility within the Committee: Proactive CARE sub-committee

Name: Kai Kimppa

Email: Kai Kimppa Finnish Information Processing <kakimppa@utu.fi>

Responsibility within the Committee: contributes to guiding COPE direction

Name: Michael Kirkpatrick

Email: kirkpams@jmu.edu

Responsibility within the Committee: Website assistance, responsible for managing Case Studies, Code Support Document sub-committee, Proactive CARE sub-committee

Name: Evelyn Lulis

Email: ealulis@aol.com

Responsibility within the Committee: contributes to guiding COPE direction

Name: Keith Miller, Orthwein Endowed Professor for Lifelong Learning in the Sciences

Email: millerkei@umsl.edu

Responsibility within the Committee: Case study/Ask an Ethicist content development, Proactive CARE sub-committee

Name: Denise Oram

Email: d.oram@glyndwr.ac.uk

Responsibility within the Committee: contributes to case studies, guiding COPE direction

Name: Thomas J Owens

Email: thomas.j.owens@gmail.com

Responsibility within the Committee: industry representative, contributes to guiding COPE direction, Code Support Document sub-committee

Name: Norberto Patrignani

Email: Norberto Patrignani (norberto.patrignani@polito.it)

Responsibility within the Committee: contributes to case studies, guiding COPE direction

Name: Tom Yeh

Email: tom.yeh@Colorado.edu

Responsibility within the Committee: align the Code with curricula, especially K-12

Name: Marty J. Wolf

Email: mwolf@bemidjistate.edu, ethics@acm.org

Responsibility within the Committee: co-Chair, manages documents for COPE.