ACM Technology Policy Council TechBriefs Committee

FY 2021 Annual Report

Stuart Shapiro, Chair (July 1, 2020 - June 30, 2021)

1. BASIC INFORMATION

1.1 Committee members (all terms indeterminate)

- Stuart Shapiro, Chair
- Michel Beaudouin-Lafon
- Sandra Braman
- Juan Miguel de Joya
- Lorraine Kisselburgh
- Bran Knowles
- Larry Medsker
- John Murray
- Kashyap Tumkur
- Moshe Vardi
- Adam Eisgrau (ex officio)
- Bruce Shriver (ex officio)

1.2 Purpose

The ACM Technology Policy Council TechBriefs Committee is charged with establishing a series of short technical bulletins that present a balanced perspective on the impact of specific developments or applications of technology. The primary goal is to inform, rather than to necessarily sway opinion. Its primary audience is policymakers, with secondary audiences of the media, computing professionals and the general public.

1.3 Subcommittees

N/A

1.4 Committee meetings (held as needed):

- January 11, 2021
- March 22, 2021
- May 20, 2021
- June 8, 2021
- June 15, 2021
- June 16, 2021

2. **PROJECT SUMMARY**

This is a project-specific Committee, albeit intended to be ongoing. However, that project does break down into individual TechBriefs. Those currently planned are listed in Section 3. Because of when the Committee was initially established and because it has been in start-up mode since it began actively working in January, no Committee-specific funds were budgeted or expended in FY21. The Committee aims to launch bi-monthly publication in September 2021. Toward this end, the Committee worked to develop a design template and to identify technical platforms to support the editorial process. As the Committee's production pipeline begins running, it expects to assign a specific POC ("shepherd") to each TechBrief under development. Due to the exigencies of start-up, though, this responsibility has been carried out in a more informal and distributed manner to date.

3. **PLANS**

3.1 **Current Projects -** TechBriefs currently under development will address:
- Computing and Climate Change
- Facial Recognition
- Election Auditing
- Encryption Security
- Quantum Simulation
- Smart Cities (privacy and security focus)
- Quantum Sensing

A subset of these (TBD) will be completed in FY22.

3.2 **Prospective Changes or Milestones**
- Publication of inaugural TechBrief on *Computing and Climate Change* in the ACM Digital Library, September 2021;
- Bi-monthly publication of subsequent TechBriefs (topics TBD) in November 2021 and January, March, and May 2022; and
- Formal reassessment of desirable TechBrief subjects to put in production (Fall 2021).

3.3 **New Projects or Programs**
The subjects and scope of future TechBriefs will be determined in a formal topic ranking exercise to be conducted Fall 2021.

4. **DIVERSITY, EQUITY, & INCLUSION**

The Committee operates by consensus and therefore places a premium on active engagement from its members. Efforts are consistently made in meetings and other interactions to actively elicit the views of all participants and exchanges have been invariably civil and respectful. The Committee's composition is, however, currently skewed. It trends: older, American, academic, male, and white, though it is not monolithic in any of these respects. Going forward, the Committee will aim to leverage the opportunity for ad hoc participation in its work to improve its level of diversity through active recruitment.

5. **COMMENTS**

TechBriefs are intended primarily to inform policymakers, the media (on which policymakers and their staffs rely), ACM professional and student members (through media and ACM channels), other computing professionals, and the public at large (likely through media). They also are intended to establish ACM, its policy units, and the organization's member experts as authoritative, objective, trustworthy, and reliable apolitical sources for technical information in accessible forms on critical technology policy issues.

Specifically, each TechBrief will aim to illuminate key current issues related to the impacts, trade-offs, or risks associated with computing technology. TechBriefs topics thus might include both issues under present consideration by policymakers (e.g., facial recognition), as well as foreseeable issues raised by new technologies with significant anticipated social, political, economic, and environmental impacts. They also may well address, in whole or in part, themes related to professional responsibility.

ACM TECHNOLOGY POLICY COUNCIL
TECHBRIEFS COMMITTEE
FY 2021 MEMBER ROLES AND CONTACT INFORMATION

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