



ACM US Public
Policy Council

Fiscal Year 2010 Annual Report of the US Public Policy Council of the ACM

For the Period July 1, 2009 – June 30, 2010



USACM OVERVIEW

USACM is the U.S. Public Policy Council of the Association for Computing Machinery (ACM). USACM members include leading computer scientists, engineers, and other professionals from industry, academia, and government.

USACM OPERATIONS AND GOVERNANCE

USACM operates through a transparent and democratic process to reach consensus on policy activities. Draft policy statements, position papers, and letters are usually posted to one of its committees or to USACM Council for review, comment, and approval. In some cases positions are forwarded to the Executive Committee of the USACM Council (USACM-EC) for quick review and approval. The USACM Council typically meets in person once a year to review policy activities and determine priorities.

ACM's Office of Public Policy in Washington, D.C., and ACM headquarters staff in New York support the work of USACM. The USACM Council conducts periodic calls with the ACM Policy Office staff to update and coordinate activities. The calls are also an opportunity to bring issues and events to the attention of USACM staff as well as other USACM Council members. Through items discussed on these calls USACM staff can conduct policy research on issues identified by USACM Council and initiate contacts and meetings with relevant policymakers on a timely basis.

USACM has six established committees – Voting, Security and Privacy, Computing and the Law, Intellectual Property, Accessibility and Digital Government – to provide specialized focus on particular issues.

At the close of FY2010, the USACM-EC consisted of the following members:

- Eugene H. Spafford (USACM Chair, Purdue University);
- Annie Antón (USACM Vice-Chair, North Carolina State University);
- Edward Felten (USACM Vice-Chair, Princeton);
- Harry Hochheiser (Accessibility Committee Chair, University of Pittsburgh);
- Jim Horning (SPARTA, Inc.);
- Barbara Simons (retired, former USACM Chair);
- Ollie Smoot (retired);
- Emil Volcheck (National Security Agency, SIG Representative);



- Stuart Feldman (ACM Past President/President's Designee, Google), *ex officio*;
- John White (ACM CEO), *ex officio*; and,
- Cameron Wilson (ACM Director of Public Policy), *ex officio*

The USACM Council consisted of the following members:

- Eugene H. Spafford;
- Annie Antón;
- Edward Felten;
- Charles Brownstein (Former USACM Chair);
- Lorrie Cranor (Carnegie Mellon University) At Large, term expires 12/31/10;
- Jeremy Epstein (Voting Committee Chair);
- Stuart Feldman (ACM Past President/President's Designee), *ex officio*;
- Thomas Gideon (At Large), term expires 12/31/11;
- Sarah Granger (At Large), term expires 12/31/11;
- Andrew Grosso (Law Committee Chair);
- Harry Hochheiser (Accessibility Committee Chair);
- Jim Horning (At Large), term expires 12/31/10;
- Paul Hyland (Intellectual Property Committee Chair);
- Jeanna Matthews (SIG Representative);
- Alan Rea (At Large), term expires 12/31/11;
- Bobby Schnabel (Chair, Education Policy Committee), *ex officio*;
- Stuart S. Shapiro (Security and Privacy Committee Chair);
- Barbara Simons (Former USACM Chair);
- Ollie Smoot (At Large), term expires 12/31/10;
- Emil Volcheck (SIG Representative);
- John White, (ACM CEO) *ex officio*; and,
- Cameron Wilson (ACM Director of Public Policy), *ex officio*

Complete information about current USACM members is available at <http://www.acm.org/usacm/members.html>.

FY2010 OVERVIEW AND HIGHLIGHTS

This past fiscal year saw USACM make significant changes to its structure and how it develops policy positions. In May and June of 2009 USACM was changed from a committee within ACM to a Council within ACM. This marks the first full fiscal year that USACM has operated



under a Council structure. There are now three different bodies that comprise USACM: the general membership, the Council, and the Executive Committee. The change in structure pushed the drafting of policy documents from the full membership of USACM to a relevant committee. Once the committee has drafted a policy document that reflects a consensus within the committee, that document is forwarded to the full Council for approval. In cases where there is a limited time for responding, the document is be forwarded to the Executive Committee for approval.

Besides interacting with policymakers in our typical areas of electronic voting, privacy, and security, USACM members testified before Congressional committees and helped develop principles on increasing the usability of government information online. Both volunteers and Policy Office staff continue to be approached for comment and participation on computing related policy concerns. As USACM moves forward under the Council structure, we expect to better leverage the experience and expertise of our members in contributing to policy discussions.

ACM's Policy Office and USACM work closely with numerous other organizations to expand the reach and impact of its activities. These include trade groups, non-profits (including think tanks and other scientific societies) coalitions, and companies engaged in technology policy. The Center for Democracy and Technology, TechAmerica, The Task Force for American Innovation, the Information Technology & Innovation Foundation, EDUCAUSE, IEEE-USA, the American Chemical Society, Public Knowledge, the Electronic Privacy Information Center, Google, Intel, Microsoft, and Cisco, are just a sampling of the organizations that both the policy office and the Members of USACM engage with on the issues. In addition, USACM and ACM staff have a close relationship with the Computing Research Association (CRA). We work together on numerous issue that affect the computing field. USACM and CRA have joined together on multiple occasions to represent the computing community's view to policy makers.

USACM has reorganized its policy agenda around its new committee structure. As mentioned in the previous section there are five main policy committees -- Accessibility, Security and Privacy, Voting, Digital Government and Intellectual Property. (The Law Committee cuts across all of these areas providing legal support.) USACM also has a general priority for innovation policy (that is supporting policies that bolster the innovation ecosystem such as basic research funding) even though it does not have a committee on this priority. USACM's agenda, however, is not limited to these areas. The Council can and has taken positions on other issues outside of the committee structure.



Each of the policy committees have developed a statement of principals for engagement and priorities for its policy agenda. Out of these documents, USACM has engaged in a wide variety of technology policy issues for the past year. Below are a sampling of the activities organized by the five major committees and other issues that the Council

The sections that follow have more detail on USACM's FY2010 activities, achievements, and events:

Advancing Innovation

USACM Joins with Task Force in a Letter to Speaker Pelosi

USACM joined with the Task Force for the Future of American Innovation in a letter to Speaker Pelosi, urging that increased funding be provided to the accounts that support basic research and STEM education at the Department of Defense and the National Aeronautics and Space Administration within a timely manner.

USACM Joins Taskforce on COMPETES Reauthorization

USACM signed onto a letter with the Task Force on American Innovation to support the reauthorization of the America COMPETES Act legislation. The letter applauded Congressional efforts to reauthorize a bipartisan bill that continues to build on the recommendations and policy goals of the National Academies' Rising above the Gathering Storm report, and various pieces of legislation advanced last year by Congressional committees.

Security and Privacy

USACM Comments on Government Web-Tracking Policies

USACM submitted comments on using web-tracking technologies as part of government websites. USACM acknowledged that web-tracking technologies are beneficial for both consumers and website operators; however, challenges arise when personal, sensitive information are used. USACM recommended minimizing the collection of personally-identifiable information and provided recommendations on web tracking technologies.



These comments appear to have had an impact on subsequent rule-making.

USACM Sends Letters in Response to Cybersecurity Act of 2009

USACM and the Computing Research Association (CRA) sent letters expressing concerns with the Cybersecurity Act of 2009. The major concerns were addressed to the provisions about certification of cybersecurity professionals, narrow emphasis on training in specific systems and principles, and the provision for a real-time cybersecurity dashboard does not account for the increased exposure to threats and vulnerabilities that would be required for real-time assessment.

USACM comments on Internet Privacy Bill Discussion Draft

USACM submitted comments on a draft internet privacy bill in a letter sent to the subcommittee on Communications, Technology and the Internet. The council expressed its appreciation for developing the draft, which could go a long way toward ensuring Fair Information Practices are used by entities that collect personal information. USACM provided constructive comments on the bill, including how the legislation could be more technology neutral.

Electronic Voting

USACM Comments on E-Voting Legislation

USACM sent a letter to Representative Rush Holt supporting on his electronic voting legislation, H.R. 2894. USACM's comments supported the bill's efforts to ensure that voter intent is captured if there is problems with electronic voting machines through the use of voter-verified paper records. The letter also called for the legislation to create a "Innovation Class" for future voting technology to be assessed and certified.

USACM Releases Issue Brief on Military and Overseas Internet Voting

The USACM has developed an issue brief on internet voting as it relates to military and overseas voters. This issue brief is part of a series, which includes briefs on REAL ID and Electronic Employment Verification System. The brief focuses on the challenges of voting faced by military and overseas voters (UOCAVA voters). The recently passed MOVE Act goes a long way in addressing those challenges, making it easier for UOCAVA voters to register and vote.



ACTIVITIES (CHRONOLOGICAL)

The following is a more comprehensive and chronological listing of USACM activities for the year.

July 2009

USACM Comments on E-Voting Legislation

USACM sent a letter to Representative Rush Holt supporting on his electronic voting legislation, H.R. 2894. USACM's comments supported the bill's efforts to ensure that voter intent is captured by voter-verified paper records for use if there are problems with electronic voting machines. The letter also called for the legislation to create a "Innovation Class" of voting machines, similar to what the proposed Voluntary Voting System Guidelines Version 2.0 proposed.

The letter can be read at:

http://usacm.acm.org/usacm/PDF/09_holt_bill_Final3.pdf

August 2009

USACM Comments on Government Web-Tracking Policies

USACM submitted comments on using web-tracking technologies as part of government websites in response to the government's reexamination of their present policies. USACM acknowledged that web-tracking technologies are beneficial for both consumers and website operators by "improv(ing) citizens' interactions with government websites and promot(ing) civic engagement"; however, it also noted the challenges that arise when personally identifiable information (PII) or other sensitive information are used during web tracking. USACM recommended minimizing the collection of PII. In addition, USACM provided numerous other recommendations on web tracking technologies, some of which addressed limiting tracking to HTTP cookies, the use of a Privacy Impact Assessment for privacy risks, and usage of government information by third parties.



The comments can be read in full at:

http://usacm.acm.org/usacm/PDF/USACM_Web_Tracking_Comments_Final.pdf

September 2009

USACM Member Presents on Human-Computing Interaction Research and Policy

Dr. Jonathan Lazar, professor in the Department of Computer and Information Sciences at Towson University and a USACM member, spoke at a DC ACM chapter meeting on the Current issues in Human-Computer Interaction and Public Policy.” He discussed how government policy affects the work done in human-computer interaction and the current status of policy initiatives in a number of areas. Topics addressed included voting machine usability, web accessibility, ergonomic rules, privacy, and identification systems.

To watch the lecture online see:

<http://www.ustream.tv/recorded/2205131> and <http://www.ustream.tv/recorded/2205478>

USACM Joins with Task Force in a Letter to Speaker Pelosi

USACM joined with the Task Force for the Future of American Innovation in a letter to Speaker Pelosi, urging that increased funding be provided to the accounts that support basic research and STEM education at the Department of Defense and the National Aeronautics and Space Administration within a timely manner.

USACM Nominates Members for Positions on the Technical Guidance Development Committee

The Technical Guidance Development Committee needed to fill all four technical expert positions. USACM recommended members Steven Bellovin, Jeremy Epstein, Juan Gilbert, Douglas W. Jones, Barbara Simons, and Alec Yasinsac for these positions. All the members recommended are experts in a number of computing and computing-related fields, including voting systems, election technology, and election processes. All were excellent candidates for representing the computing field as well as the interests of the voting public. Steven Bellovin and Doug Jones were named to the Committee.



USACM Annual Report Released

The ACM's Policy Office staff and USACM's leadership compiled USACM's annual report for the 2009 fiscal year. The report contained descriptions of USACM's work on advancing computer science education and innovation, electronic voting, privacy, and security. The report detailed testimonies given by members as well as significant activities to educate Congress about different technology policy issues.

The full report can be read here: [FY2009 Annual Report](#).

December 2009

USACM Chair Meets with Government Chief Information Officer

USACM Chair, Eugene Spafford and Director of ACM's Public Policy Office, Cameron Wilson, met with the Vivek Kundra, the Federal Government's Chief Information Office regarding cybersecurity issues. The meeting addressed the Administration's interest in developing a real-time dashboard for monitoring threats on federal networks. USACM had expressed concerns about the security and practicality of a similar proposal in cybersecurity legislation that the U.S. Senate was considering. The meeting also covered ACM and USACM's long-standing concern about licensing and/or mandatory certification of software professionals.

USACM Chair Meets with Cyber Security Office

Eugene Spafford and Cameron Wilson met with the acting White House Cyber Security Office staff. They briefly discussed issues of identification and authentication, national ID cards, cyber security, privacy, and international relations.

USACM Chair Attends Policy Event

USACM Chair, Eugene Spafford, was invited to attend a special dinner event sponsored by The Atlantic Magazine and Booz Allen Hamilton on Cybersecurity Policy and Cyberwar. Other attendees included OSTP personnel, a Senator two US Representatives, former DNI Mike McConnell, Jim Harper of CATO, Marc Rotenberg of EPIC, and about 20 others from industry and government. Spafford represented some of USACM's positions as regard privacy and security.



January 2010

USACM Sends Letter in Response to Cybersecurity Act of 2009

USACM and the Computing Research Association (CRA), expressed concerns with certain parts of the Cybersecurity Act of 2009, S. 773, particularly the provisions about certification of cybersecurity professionals. This bill affects several areas of cybersecurity, including the Federal Scholarship for Service Program and adjustments to federal research and development in cybersecurity. The bill also proposes several new coordinating mechanisms intended to improve sharing of information to support better cybersecurity practices.

USACM Supports Expanded FCC Technical Advice

USACM sent a letter to Senator Olympia Snowe (R-Maine) in support the FCC Commissioners Technical Resource Enhancement Act, which would allow each commissioner at the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) to add one staff assistant position who has technical expertise to the existing three. USACM made two recommendations to improve the bill: the new staff assistant should have 'recognized expertise' in computer science, electrical engineering or a related field; and should not have been previously employed by a regulated firm, an industry lobbying group, or a law firm representing either such entity, for at least three years prior to the appointment.

To read the USACM letter:

http://usacm.acm.org/usacm/PDF/USACM_FCC_Technical_Adv_final.pdf

USACM Council Holds Annual Meeting

Members of USACM's Executive Council met in Washington, D.C., the week of January 24th for their annual policy summit. The group meets annually in D.C. to set goals for the coming year, review USACM accomplishments during the past year, and discuss the current and future technology policy climate. A number of speakers participated in updating the Council on current policy actions and initiatives. They included Marc Groman, a House Energy and Commerce staffer, Andrew McLaughlin, Deputy Chief Technology Officer for the U.S., Ari Schwartz from the Center for Democracy and Technology and Jim Harper of the CATO Institute.



March 2010

USACM Web-briefing on Voting Risk Assessment

USACM held an online web-briefing on the risk assessment work conducted for the Elections Assistance Commission. The meeting was conducted by Alec Yasinsac and Jeremy Epstein. Alec Yasinsac, Dean of the School for Computer and Information Sciences at the University of South Alabama (and USACM member), is the lead researcher on the Voting System Risk Assessment (VSRA) project, which is developing a qualitative threat assessment tool for the Election Assistance Commission to use in voting system certification decisions. Jeremy Epstein, USACM Voting Committee Chair, assisted in the project, and organized the briefing for USACM members.

USACM Follows-up on Cybersecurity Legislation

The Senate Commerce, Science and Transportation Committee approved a draft cybersecurity bill in early 2010. Revisions to the bill did not effectively address the concerns both USACM and CRA expressed in its January letter (included with the April letter), thus they reemphasized their concerns in a follow-up letter in late March. The major concerns with the bill included:

- The legislation would require a complex, untested, and mandatory certification regime for employers and employees almost immediately after a National Academies study on certification is completed.
- The bill emphasizes narrow training in specific systems and principles.
- The provision for a real-time cybersecurity dashboard does not account for the increased exposure to threats and vulnerabilities that would be required for real-time assessment.

The follow-up letter can be read at:

http://www.acm.org/usacm/PDF/S773_followup_covervfinal.pdf

USACM Reaches out to Oracle on Cybersecurity Certification

As part of USACM's on-going dialog about cybersecurity issues with groups in Washington DC, USACM Member Jeremy Epstein set up a conference call between ACM Policy Office staff (Cameron Wilson and David Bruggeman) and Oracle's CSO, Mary Ann Davidson. The discussion revolved around proposed Senate cybersecurity legislation, which would have



required certification of software engineers working on safety critical system. USACM opposed this provision. Oracle's CSO was working with Tech America on the legislation and the call was to see if USACM and Tech America could find common ground on the issues.

April 2010

USACM Joins Taskforce on COMPETES Reauthorization

USACM signed on in a letter with the Task Force on American Innovation to support the reauthorization of the America COMPETES Act legislation. The letter recognized that the reauthorization would renew a broad blueprint to strengthen the pillars of American innovation and competitiveness. In addition, the letter applauded Congressional efforts to reauthorize a bipartisan bill that continues to build on the recommendations and policy goals of the National Academies' Rising above the Gathering Storm report, and various pieces of legislation advanced last year by Congressional committees.

USACM and the Computing Research Association Send Comments to Congress on Cybersecurity R&D

In response to changes made to H.R. 4061, the Cybersecurity Enhancement Act of 2010, as the bill was voted on in the House of Representatives, USACM members spoke with House staff responsible for the bill. In that conversation, House staff presented USACM with a few questions concerning education and training in cybersecurity. With the help of the Computing Research Association, USACM submitted a letter in response to the House Science and Technology Committee. While some of the questions related to very specific provisions and programs in cybersecurity research and development, the letter emphasized the need for avoiding broad solutions when effective answers often vary depending on the particular systems, programs, or technologies involved.

USACM Joins a New Coalition and Signs-on a letter

USACM joined a new coalition, Alliance for High Performance Digital Manufacturing, a group focused on realizing the goal of bringing the benefits of high-performance computing (HPC) to American manufacturing. The coalition sent a letter to the House Science and Technology Committee expressing the need to mount a coordinated and purposeful strategy to develop HPC platforms and tools for manufacturing and business entities that provide support to major government and private sector R&D entities. The letter supported the inclusion of language in the America COMPETES Act reauthorization that would establish an inter-agency



working group focused on identifying and refining policies and programs within key research agencies that can be beneficially directed toward the removal of the barriers to HPC.

May 2010

ACM Education Policy Committee and USACM Offer Support for COMPETES Reauthorization Bill

The House Science and Technology Committee marked up a bill to reauthorize the America COMPETES Act. The ACM Education Policy Committee and the U.S. Public Policy Council of ACM sent the Committee a letter expressing its support for the reauthorization. The letter focused on the provisions of the bill that cover science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) education. The letter also expressed some concerns about ensuring CS education is a part of both STEM education and STEM programs.

The letter can be read at:

http://usacm.acm.org/usacm/PDF/COMPETE_support_letter.pdf

USACM Meets with Congressional Staff on Proposed Internet Privacy Legislation

Before preparing the formal letter USACM submitted on a draft Internet privacy bill, House Energy and Commerce committee staff reached out to the Council for informal comments on the bill. As part of this comments process, staff met by conference call with Policy Office Staff and Security and Privacy Committee Chair Stuart Shapiro.

June 2010

USACM Comments on Internet Privacy Bill Discussion Draft

USACM submitted comments on the bill in a letter sent to the subcommittee on Communications, Technology and the Internet. The council expressed its appreciation for developing the draft, which could go a long way toward ensuring Fair Information Practices are used by entities that collect personal information. USACM provided constructive comments on the bill including:

- **The legislation could be more technology neutral** - A focus on collection by websites unnecessarily narrows the focus of the bill.
- **Notice language** - The bill could make sure that standards are established to make notices more readable, understandable and usable.



- **Reliance on Anonymization** - De-identification (what the bill calls anonymization) should not remove all obligations to protect data.

The letter can be read at:

http://usacm.acm.org/PDF/Boucher_Privacy_Letter.pdf

USACM Releases Issue Brief on Military and Overseas Internet Voting

The U.S. Public Policy Council of the Association for Computing Machinery (USACM) has developed an issue brief on internet voting as it relates to military and overseas voters. This issue brief is part of a series, which includes briefs on REAL ID and Electronic Employment Verification System. The brief focuses on the challenges of voting faced by military and overseas voters (UOCAVA voters). The recently passed MOVE Act goes a long way in addressing those challenges, making it easier for UOCAVA voters to register and vote.

The brief can be read at:

http://usacm.acm.org/usacm/PDF/IB_Internet_Voting_UOCAVA.pdf

USACM Members Meet With Congressional Staff in Support of Military and Overseas Internet Voting Issue Brief

Shortly before the release of the USACM Issue Brief on Military and Overseas Internet Voting, USACM members Barbara Simons and Jeremy Epstein (Chair of the Voting Committee), met with Congressional staff from the Senate Rules Committee and the Committee on House Administration. The conversations hit the major points emphasized in the Issue Brief, and staff received copies of the brief once it was released.