

EXCEPTION ERROR: Fatal, Illegal, Unknown

Milan, Italy | October 27, 2019

The Special Interest Group in Computing, Information, and Society [SIGCIS]
welcomes submissions to their annual conference

Proposal Due Date: June 15, 2019

KEYNOTE SPEAKER

Safiya U. Noble

Associate Professor, Departments of Information Studies and African American Studies
University of California, Los Angeles

THEME

Our experience of contemporary computing systems can feel unobtrusive and seamless—until it's not. In the simplest sense, an exception error occurs when a computational operation fails to resolve, revealing something that was not anticipated or cannot be computed, a breakdown in the norms of standardization that govern modern computing systems. These errors force us to recognize the profound frictions inherent in computing, frictions made legible in web page request denials, fatal system error dialogue boxes, unhappy Macs and blue screens, safe modes and red rings of death. Negotiating these errors is a material, programmatic, aesthetic, and above all, human activity.

Beyond the technical, material, and social dimensions of the “exception error,” we might also see this concept as a provocation for history itself. Who and what are typically regarded as “exceptions” in the history of computing and information technologies? What uses and misuses have been anticipated? How can we productively make our conception of history slow down, jam, or stop working altogether? What are the limits of our historiographic situation? And as we investigate these questions, might we discover that the people, objects, knowledges, and disciplines so often treated as “exceptions” in the status quo of computing history are actually that history's most revealing actors, its most central artifacts?

The 2019 SIGCIS Conference invites scholars, museum and archive professionals, IT practitioners, artists, and independent researchers across the disciplinary spectrum to submit abstracts related to the historical conditions of computing. We are especially interested in (but not limited to) work that relates to the theme of exception and error, broadly and imaginatively construed. Areas of engagement may include:

- errors, viruses, crashes, hacks, breakdowns, failures, risks
- bodies, subjectivities, and personhoods unaccounted for in computing systems
- theories of uncomputability
- unanticipated uses and misuses

- the creation of “users”
- standards and workflows
- breakdowns in policies, regulations, norms, expectations
- decline, obsolescence, maintenance, repair, recycling, afterlives
- the limits of historical representation
- centering the peripheries of computing history
- archival gaps and silences

SIGCIS is especially welcoming of new directions in scholarship. We maintain an inclusive atmosphere for scholarly inquiry, supporting disciplinary interventions from beyond the traditional history of technology and promoting diversity in STEM. We welcome submissions from: the histories of technology, computing, information, and science; science and technology studies; oral history and archival studies; critical studies of big data and machine learning; studies of women, gender, and sexuality; studies of race, ethnicity, and postcoloniality; film, media, and game studies; software and code studies; network and internet histories; music, sound studies, and art history; and all other applicable domains.

The annual SIGCIS Conference begins immediately after the regular annual meeting of our parent organization, the Society for the History of Technology [SHOT]. Information about the annual SHOT conference can be found at: <https://bit.ly/2rG75Ks>

SUBMISSION FORMATS

SIGCIS welcomes proposals for individual 15-20 minute papers, 3-4 paper panel proposals, works-in-progress (see below), and non-traditional proposals such as roundtables, software demonstrations, hands-on workshops, etc.

WORKS-IN-PROGRESS

The Works-in-Progress (WiP) session will be a workshop wherein participants will discuss their work in small group sessions. We invite works in progress—articles, chapters, dissertation prospectuses—of 10,000 words or less (longer works must be selectively edited to meet this length). We especially encourage submissions from graduate students, early career scholars, and scholars who are new to SIGCIS. Authors who submit a WiP will also commit to reading (in advance) two other WiPs, discussing them in a small group setting, and providing written feedback on one of those WiPs. Scholars who would like to participate in this session without submitting their own WiP may also apply; we ask that they commit to reading (in advance) at least two of the WiPs.

Submissions for WiP only require a 350-400 word abstract, but applicants should plan to circulate their max-10,000-word WiPs no later than September 30, 2019. Scholars who would like to be a reader of WiPs, please email a brief bio or 1-page CV, along with your areas of interest and expertise, to Gerardo Con Diaz [condiaz@ucdavis.edu].

SUBMISSION PROCEDURE

Submissions are due June 15, 2019. Applicants should download, fill out and follow the instructions on the application cover sheet at <http://meetings.sigcis.org/call-for-papers.html>. All submissions will require:

- 350-400 word abstract (full panel proposals should additionally include a 200-250 word panel abstract in addition to 3-4 paper abstracts)
- 1-page CV or resume

Please Note: Individuals already scheduled to participate on the main SHOT program are welcome to submit an additional proposal to our workshop, but should make sure that there is no overlap between the two presentations. However, SIGCIS may choose to give higher priority to submissions from those not already presenting at SHOT. Questions regarding submission procedure should be sent to Kera Allen [kera.jones@gmail.com].

TRAVEL AWARD

The top financial priority of SIGCIS is the support of travel expenses for graduate students, visiting faculty without institutional travel support, and others who would be unable to attend the meeting without travel assistance. The submission cover sheet includes a box to check if you fall into one of these categories and would like to be considered for an award. There is no separate application form, though depending on the volume of requests and available resources we may need to contact you for further information before making a decision.

Any award offered is contingent on registering for and attending the SIGCIS Conference. Please note that SHOT does not classify the SIGCIS Conference as participation in the SHOT annual meeting, so acceptance by SIGCIS does not imply eligibility for the SHOT travel grant program.

Details of available awards are at <http://www.sigcis.org/travelaward>.

SIGCIS CONFERENCE ORGANIZING COMMITTEE

[Laine Nooney](#), New York University (SIGCIS Vice-Chair of Meetings)

[Andrew Russell](#), SUNY Polytechnic Institute (SIGCIS Chair)

[Stephanie Dick](#), University of Pennsylvania

[Gerardo Con Diaz](#), University of California, Davis

[Kera Allen](#), Georgia Institute of Technology (Conference Assistant)