

# Transnational lgbTq+ SIG

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## Abstract

This Special Interest Group (SIG) serves to support the needs of the LGBTQ+ communities within CHI. Following tradition, the primary focus is on community-building and support, with research as a secondary interest. This year's event builds on the Queer-in-HCI SIGs of previous years, but adopts a new name to emphasize two points of focus this year. First, it is *transnational*: we place special emphasis on enabling connections among LGBTQ+ people from different nations. Second, it is *lgbTq+*: we welcome attendance from all members of the LGBTQ+ community and allies, but place special emphasis on the needs of the transgender community, which are significantly impacted by global political events at the time of this writing.

## CCS Concepts

- **Social and professional topics** → Gender; Sexual orientation;
- **Human-centered computing** → *Human computer interaction (HCI)*.

## Keywords

LGBTQ+, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, nonbinary

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CHI EA '25, Yokohama, Japan

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ACM ISBN 979-8-4007-1395-8/25/04

<https://doi.org/10.1145/3706599.3716287>

## ACM Reference Format:

Rose Bohrer, Shano Liang, Michelle V Cormier, Takao Fujii, Phoebe O. Touns Dugas, Rua Mae Williams, Amy J Ko, Katie Seaborn, and Oliver L. Haimson. 2025. Transnational lgbTq+ SIG. In *Extended Abstracts of the CHI Conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems (CHI EA '25)*, April 26–May 01, 2025, Yokohama, Japan. ACM, New York, NY, USA, 5 pages. <https://doi.org/10.1145/3706599.3716287>

## 1 Introduction

Human-computer interaction (HCI) research on LGBTQ+ issues continues to grow. A recent survey found 181 HCI papers that exclusively or significantly involved matters of LGBTQ+ identity [44]. See the survey for a deep review; here we provide only highlights. Queer HCI [7, 29, 41] is HCI built on queer perspectives (e.g., a Butlerian focus on social construction [6]), but LGBTQ+ HCI research often embraces specifics of each identity. Trans(gender) HCI has a robust literature [2, 9, 13, 17, 20–22, 24, 26, 28, 34, 35, 39, 42] that often engages in trans-specific issues like vocal and visual passing or bathroom access. Some of this work highlights trans theory as distinct from queer theory [19, 28]. Gender minorities outside the Western notion of *transgender* are beginning to receive attention, such as Hijra communities [30, 31], Indigenous identities [32, 38, 45] including “Two-Spirit” but not necessarily used or reflecting concepts translatable to the West [12], and X-gender [8, 18], a pluralistic complement to English terms like nonbinary, transgender, and genderqueer [11]. Scholars have also studied gender inclusivity in interfaces and research procedures [5, 23, 36, 40]. LGB research topics include HIV disclosure [46], dating [10, 17], and marriage [1]; we are aware of no publications focusing on intersex, asexual, and aromantic identities. Across LGBTQ+ identities, social media gets significant attention [4, 7, 13, 15, 20, 21].

LGBTQ+ HCI issues are often researched by LGBTQ+ researchers. Our positionality informs our theoretical basis, research questions,

and methodologies [27]. Lived experience often lends unique perspectives on, e.g., identity management, online interactions, language, law, and medicine. Research targeting LGBTQ+ issues often benefits broader communities, as well. This proposal focuses not on HCI *research* about LGBTQ+ topics, but on *HCI researchers within LGBTQ+ communities*, without whom this rich research literature could not exist. In past years' SIGs, the term “unconference” has been used to describe this community-building-first model [16].

We advocate for a *Transnational lgbTq+ SIG* because HCI researchers doing the work, who encounter unique struggles, benefit from support and community-building spaces within CHI [3, 25]. Struggles range from academic pressures for and against researching LGBTQ+ topics, to overarching social issues like growing governmental and institutional discrimination, to desires for disciplinary formalization across the diversity of identities, value systems, methodological traditions, and technologies of focus. Our unconventional capitalization in *lgbTq+* represents a special frame: we center *transgender and nonbinary (TGNB) topics*, in recognition of TGNB people currently being the primary targets of anti-LGBTQ+ political oppression in many countries, notably the home base of CHI publisher ACM. The *transnational* framing highlights that lgbTq+ people exist across all countries and cultural frames, that the details of our experiences can vary greatly, and that not all of us have been given equal voice in dominant English-language lgbTq+ discourses. Our explicit goal is to create a space where lgbTq+ people from different countries, cultures, and language backgrounds feel comfortable coming together in community. Since CHI 2025 is located in Japan, particular attention will be given to welcoming local attendees and enabling cross-language and hybrid access. We recognize that people with LGBTQ+ identities, especially transgender, intersex, and X-gender folks, are socially and legally marginalized in Japan [43]. We will offer equitable participation options, such as virtual access despite physical proximity to the event, and, to ensure safety for the most marginalized, anonymity in support of local inclusion.

While this SIG centers TGNB identities and issues, attendees need not be TGNB or identify as LGBTQ+ to join. **Everyone may attend**, for several reasons. First, the full range of LGBTQ+ communities deserve to be present and active in community-building spaces and initiatives. Second, many lgbTq+ people are not open about their identities in all areas of life. Third, some folks may be actively questioning or exploring their identities. An open policy allows all of these people to attend while maintaining their privacy and forcing no commitment about community identification or participation. Fourth, attendance by those who do not identify as LGBTQ+ or similar can be mutually beneficial when done respectfully. Our goal is to help TGNB scholars in HCI feel connected to a supportive community and allow allies and the uninitiated ways to engage with their marginalized peers productively and joyfully.

Those of us who are gender and/or sex minorities use a wide range of terms to describe ourselves [33]. We use the term TGNB (*transgender and nonbinary*) as a useful umbrella term, but emphasize that those who use different labels are equally, even especially, welcome. We also acknowledge that not all people will agree with our use of this term.

## 2 Continuity

This SIG aims to provide continuity with the Queer HCI SIGs from previous years, such as 2019 [41], 2020 [16], and 2021 [14], and future trans and queer SIGs. The new name, Transnational lgbTq+ SIG, is not meant to create distance from these previous SIGs, only to highlight themes that receive special focus this year.

The organizers overlap with previous SIGs, providing continuity of communication infrastructure like the existing Queer HCI Slack. This allows us to continue organizing around related issues before, during, and after the conference. Taking the time to build community will contribute to the health and maintenance of longer-term HCI community resources, such as the HCI Gender Guidelines [37], as well as invigorate the research space at CHI and beyond. We plan to disseminate invitations, announcements, and results widely through our social media (SNS) channels to maximize reach. This year, we will specifically promote engagement among local researchers and establish connections between local and international TGNB communities. Strategies include distributing announcements via Japanese HCI scholars' social networks and providing material in both English and Japanese.

## 3 Aims

Our goal is to promote community-building, peer support, and resiliency among lgbTq+ communities working within CHI and HCI spaces. While we expect to discuss research on trans issues in HCI, the focus is on supporting lgbTq+ researchers regardless of our research topics. Questions include, but are not limited, to:

- How can our community cope with the ongoing loss of legal rights and increase in hate crimes in many countries? How do we organize to support each other's work, careers, and lives in anti-lgbTq+ political climates?
- How can we navigate social pressures that shape our research agendas? Some may feel unsupported in researching LGBTQ+ topics, while others may feel their work outside LGBTQ+ topics receives less attention.
- How do we support various intersections of identity within the TGNB community?
- How do we address the diversity in TGNB priorities? How they are in tension with each other or interrelate, such as in terms of safety, mental and physical health, privacy, social connections, gender expression, self-determination, and representation?
- What perspectives and theories are missing from current trans HCI research that could move the field forward?
- How can we best combine the applied research focus of HCI, which may drive tangible change through technological means, with the commitment of Trans Studies to social justice and its emphasis on critical theory to achieve new insights and innovations that neither could accomplish alone?
- What do TGNB scholars want to say to cisgender scholars in the HCI community, including any in attendance at the SIG? How can cisgender scholars best support TGNB HCI scholars?
- How do we navigate the return to in-person conferencing and events, given the social and legal mechanisms in place that increase the risk to or directly harm TGNB scholars?

## 4 Logistics

The logistics will be based on the SIGs of previous years. We will mix synchronous and asynchronous activities, supplemented with virtual and hybrid interactions, to broaden participation and ensure safe access. About two weeks before the synchronous event, we will launch an online space for discussion, using a channel in the Queer HCI Slack. Participants will be able to introduce themselves, meet attendees and organizers, socialize based on professional and recreational affinities, and make plans for connecting during and beyond the conference. About a week before the event, we will use this space to collect discussion topics and update the Queer HCI Slack accordingly with an event description. We will use Padlet, which was effective in previous iterations of the SIG.

The synchronous event starts with organizer introductions, ground-rule setting, and an icebreaker activity using sli.do, where attendees get to know each other. Next, organizers present discussion topics collected from attendees.

We will uphold ground rules designed to promote the safety of attendees whose LGBTQ+ status may put them at greatly different levels of personal risk, depending on where they live and what other social identities they may have. All attendees will be instructed that they have the right not to disclose their identity and are likewise expected to respect each other's right to privacy. All attendees will be instructed not to photograph or otherwise record other attendees. During introductions, sharing pronouns will be welcomed but not required. Attendees will be asked not to disclose each other's attendance at the SIG without the specific attendee's explicit permission. All attendees will be reminded to be patient with one another if language barriers interfere with communication. We will consider the use of realtime translation and accessibility tools, such as Ava and allow personal use of machine learning tools like DeepL and ChatGPT, while warning of the risks of giving these tools personally identifying information. During this reminder, we will announce what languages the organizers know (which include English, Japanese, and Mandarin Chinese) in case assistance with language barriers is needed.

We wish to foreground the self-chosen interests of attendees over the assumed interests of the organizers, thus the attendee-sourced topics will be given priority. We will use the event time to traverse small group and large group discussion cycles, providing opportunities for anonymous contributions using online audience polling platforms such as padlet and sli.do. Organizers will lead virtual breakout rooms mapped to each small table discussion, supporting contributions from synchronous virtual participants. We are familiar with the possible limitations of the AV setup at the venue, and will bring our own technologies to ensure access, including personal devices with cameras and microphones. In the event of audio interference, organizers will wear headphones and re-voice virtual participants to the small table groups. After each small discussion cycle, groups will report summaries and major questions to all attendees, which the organizers will track in notes for future discussions, collaborations, and organizing. If these topics are exhausted, the example topics proposed in Section 3 will be used as supplemental discussion points.

Discussions are summarized and continued in the Queer HCI to promote hybrid participation.

## 5 Organizers

**Rose Bohrer (she/彼女)** is transitioning from an Assistant Professor role at Worcester Polytechnic Institute (USA) to the National Institute of Advanced Industrial Science and Technology (AIST), Tokyo. Her interests range from gender and games HCI to formal verification of software. Though her Japanese language skills are basic, she hopes to connect with Japanese HCI researchers at CHI 2025.

**Shano Liang (she/her)** is a doctoral student at Worcester Polytechnic Institute in the USA. She is a trans woman and transdisciplinary researcher who studies human and cultural factors in HCI, critical cultural game and media studies, queer/trans game studies, and game design. She uses games and interactive media as research lenses to explore the intersections of culture, marginalized identities, user experiences, and queerness. She is also a proficient 2D/3D game artist, multi-skill game developer, and gameplay designer.

**Dr. Rua M. Williams** is an Assistant Professor in the User Experience Design program at Purdue University and PI of the CoLiberation Lab. Rua M. Williams is an Assistant Professor in User Experience Design at Purdue University and PI of the CoLiberation Lab. As a former SSRC Just Tech Fellow (2022-2024), Dr. Williams's work explores how disabled people imagine and build their own sociotechnical worlds, often in spite of and orthogonal to existing structures of bias, stigma, and exclusion. Dr. Williams collaborates on projects exploring the intersection of disability and queerness in relation to technological autonomy and grassroots sociotechnical networks.

**A/Prof. Phoebe O. Toups Dugas (she/her)** is a queer trans woman and an Associate Professor of Human-Centred Computing in the Faculty of Information Technology at Monash University (Melbourne, Victoria, Australia), affiliated to the Exertion Games Lab. She is also a Science & Technology Australia Superstar of STEM. Her research focuses on trans inclusivity in video game design, while exploring game player interfaces more broadly; she continues work on designing information technology for crisis response.

**Michelle Cormier (she/they)** is a doctoral student at Monash University (Melbourne, Victoria, Australia), affiliated to the Exertion Games Lab. Michelle is a nonbinary trans woman and researcher in how individuals form their identity in digital environments such as social virtual reality. Her focus is on how our technology dictates acceptable forms of identity, and how this process can and must be challenged to meet the needs of marginalized identities. She is an active game designer, writer and artist.

**Oliver L. Haimson (he/him)** is an Assistant Professor at University of Michigan School of Information and author of *Trans Technologies* (MIT Press, 2025). His research focuses on envisioning and designing trans technologies, and transgender people's experiences with social technologies.

**Amy J. Ko (she/her)** is a queer trans multiracial woman and a Professor at the University of Washington. She examines the many intersections between computing, learning, equity, and justice, including accessibility, neurodiversity, race, gender, pedagogy, and teacher learning, and the many ways programming languages and tools pretend none of these things exist. She speaks Japanese at a

toddler level, and previously knew more than 2,000 kanji. She looks forward to networking with Japanese CHI scholars.

**Katie Seaborn (she/they/無)** is an Associate Professor at Institute of Science Tokyo (formerly Tokyo Institute of Technology). Dr. Seaborn carries out HCI research at the crossroads of critical computing, psychology, and intersectional design. Topically, they explore how gender and sundry social identities are represented in artificial agents and interactive technologies within and beyond the context of Japan.

**Takao Fujii (they/them/彼)** is a Master's student at Institute of Science Tokyo, studying Intersectional Design. Fujii's identity is queer and they have solidarity with and strongly support opposing all forms of discrimination towards LGBTQ+ people. They are a "baby" researcher, but will contribute to this Japan-based SIG as a Japanese student

## Acknowledgments

We acknowledge the contribution of an anonymous American colleague who requested removal from the author list as protection against rising persecution in the USA, and request readers acknowledge the collective contributions of all lgbTq+ people who have been made invisible through hostile circumstances.

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