Supporting At-Risk Users Through Responsible Computing

CCC Visioning Workshop

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Catalyst

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About the Computing Community Consortium (CCC)

A programmatic committee of the Computing Research Association (CRA), CCC enables the pursuit of innovative, high-impact computing research that aligns with pressing national and global challenges. Of, by, and for the computing research community, CCC is a responsive, respected, and visionary organization that brings together thought leaders from industry, academia, and government to articulate and advance compelling research visions and communicate them to stakeholders, policymakers, the public, and the broad computing research community.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The 2024 Supporting At-Risk Users Through Responsible Computing (SARU) Visioning Workshop — hosted by the NSF-funded Computing Community Consortium (CCC) — convened 49 experts[1] from academia, industry, and civil society to address challenges faced by people at heightened risk of technology-facilitated harm. During the workshop and in this report, we use this working definition of "at-risk users": individuals who experience disproportionate technology-facilitated threats such as online harassment, cyberstalking, and digital exploitation. The workshop sought to establish a sociotechnical research agenda to develop ethical, human-centered computing approaches that protect, empower, and meaningfully support such people. Attendees shared resources, including frameworks and methodologies, for conducting responsible research, ensuring participant and researcher safety, and designing technologies that aim to serve *all* people.

Key outcomes included the development of a [resource repository](#), a proposal for an advisory board, and strategies for incentivizing stakeholder engagement across academia, industry, and policymaking. The workshop also emphasized the need for structural changes in research funding, institutional incentives, and policy impact to ensure that computing research actively contributes to the broader landscape of digital safety for all. Moving forward, this initiative aims to build a sustainable, interdisciplinary research community dedicated to mitigating technology-facilitated harm and fostering ethical research and computing practices that center the needs of at-risk users.

1. INTRODUCTION

Researchers from industry, academia, and civil society are dedicated to studying and developing potential approaches to support people — often referred to as *at-risk users* (Warford et al., 2022) — who face temporary or ongoing circumstances that put them at high risk of experiencing technology-facilitated harm. People may be "at risk" due to their individual characteristics or minoritized status (e.g., gender, age, race, disability, socioeconomic status), intersectional identities, or unique situations (e.g., survivors of intimate partner abuse, people recovering from substance abuse, people with rare diseases), and/or their social stature (e.g., politicians, celebrities, creators, activists, refugees). At-risk users often face increased susceptibility to harm, exploitation, or discrimination that can be exacerbated by technology, whether intentional or not. As such, it is imperative to develop evidence-based, sociotechnical approaches to understanding and mitigating harm, as well as when and when *not* to intervene

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[1] See the Appendix for the Workshop Participants/Report Contributors List

(e.g., in contexts where an at-risk user could endure more harm through an intervention). This requires careful consideration of how to conduct safe and ethical research involving at-risk users. It also involves the design, development, and evaluation of responsible human-centered approaches that not only protect and empower at-risk users, but also create meaningful improvements in their lives.

The workshop organizers, with support from CCC staff, organized a two-day workshop held on December 9-10, 2024—the 2024 *Supporting At-Risk Users Through Responsible Computing (SARU) Visioning Workshop*—that brought together 49 experts from academia (N=29), industry (N=13), and civil society (N=7) who actively study or develop solutions for at-risk users. The SARU workshop was built on a prior effort of the CCC—the 2023 *Community-Driven Approaches to Research in Technology & Society (CDARTS) Visioning Workshop* (Venkatasubramanian et al., 2024)—where researchers connected with community partners to define a shared language and mutually beneficial projects.

On day 1, workshop attendees discussed useful frameworks, methods, and theories for conducting research involving at-risk users. During day 2's "unconference" activities, attendees identified short- and long-term needs to develop a robust research community that can serve the broader computing community and a wide range of at-risk users. In this report, we provide a brief overview of the workshop and the resources shared by attendees, and invite the broader computing community to engage with this research community. Recognizing the importance of open dialogue, we adopted the Chatham House Rule[2], allowing attendees to share ideas freely without attribution. This helped to foster a candid and collaborative environment to explore innovative approaches.

2. WORKSHOP OVERVIEW

2.1. Background

The SARU workshop addressed technology-facilitated challenges faced by at-risk users. The risks these users face are often exacerbated by organizational structures, technological barriers, or unintended consequences of digital systems, creating an urgent need for action. To combat these issues, we emphasized the importance of evidence-based sociotechnical approaches, ethical research approaches, and human-centered designs that help to empower and protect at-risk users. However, to do this, we first needed to align our understanding of who we mean by at-risk users[3] and why it is important to prioritize computing research to

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[2] https://www.chathamhouse.org/about-us/chatham-house-rule (retrieved on Oct 20, 2025)
[3] Not all workshop attendees used the term "at-risk users" to describe the groups that were the focus of their research.

address their needs.

For the purposes of this workshop, we defined **at-risk users** as people who experience heightened risk of experiencing technology-facilitated harm (adapted from Warford et al.'s definition of at-risk users (Warford et al., 2022)). At-risk users are more likely to face exacerbated harms such as exploitation, exclusion, or privacy violations that can lead to greater harm than "typical" users, underscoring the necessity of designing, building, testing, and evaluating sociotechnical systems to address their needs. Such technological interventions should proactively consider risks and mitigate harm through responsible and inclusive design. We also acknowledged that individuals may be at-risk on a temporary or ongoing basis.

The workshop then focused on advancing the principles of **responsible computing**, which involves designing and deploying technology ethically to minimize harm and foster user safety. Central to this effort was addressing **technology-facilitated harm** as a broad category encompassing several adverse outcomes. The overarching objective of SARU was to develop a roadmap for addressing grand challenges related to the digital safety of at-risk users over the next 5–10 years. This roadmap can be used to guide efforts to help users prevent, mitigate, and recover from technology-facilitated harm and ensure that future technologies are both empowering and protective for *all* users, particularly those at heightened risk.

By tackling these issues, we aimed to lay the foundation for a future where technology serves as a force for engagement, empowerment, and protection for all users.

2.2. Tools: Methods, Frameworks, and Theories

Currently, researchers use a variety of tools (i.e., methods, frameworks, and theories) to plan research, assess risks, recruit and engage with study participants, analyze findings, and share what they learn when it comes to conducting responsible and ethical research that involves at-risk users. Attendees shared resources such as implementation science frameworks, including the Consolidated Framework for Implementation Research (CFIR; Damschroder et al., 2009; Damschroder et al., 2022) and the RE-AIM framework (Reach, Effectiveness, Adoption, Implementation, Maintenance; Glasgow et al., 2001). These tools help attendees consider the systemic and structural factors that affect at-risk users and the proposed research. Researchers have developed glossaries (e.g., user-centered design for implementation experts in Dopp et al. 2019 and Digital Safety Terminology in Matthews et al., 2025) to help communicate a shared vocabulary across disciplines. Organizations like the Clinic to End Tech

Abuse (CETA)[4] and the Center for Social Research[5] further support this type of research by directly engaging with at-risk users, ensuring that research is both informed by and beneficial to them. Additionally, taxonomies (e.g., for online hate and harassment in Thomas et al., 2021; and sociotechnical harms from algorithmic systems in Shelby et al., 2023) help assess the severity of online harms and provide structured ways to evaluate risks and mitigate potential negative impacts. Some valuable industry frameworks exist, yet many remain unpublished, limiting their use to the broader research community. However, researchers at Google recently published a framework that they have been using and developing for nearly 10 years (the User States Framework in Matthews et al., 2025).

Attendees often use and adapt theories, such as intersectionality and interdependence (e.g., from disability justice (Berne et al. 2018)); however, attendees noted that special care needs to be considered when translating such theories into practice. When attendees need to understand the individual within their broader ecosystems and context, theories such as Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory (Bronfenbrenner, 2000) help provide a conceptualization of what to investigate. Attendees discussed the importance of addressing real-world needs that can be identified through foundational research, particularly by using qualitative, ethnographic or community-based participatory methods (Unertl et al., 2016). Additionally, attendees discussed how asynchronous remote engagement with communities (MacLeod et al., 2017) can be important to increase ways to collaborate with at-risk users in an adaptable way. However, challenges persist in adapting and combining tools to meet the needs of the research, while ensuring research practices are rigorous and trauma-informed (Chen et al., 2022). For example, attendees discussed limitations brought about by lack of training and experience with various tools being adapted from other fields, a lack of information about when *not* to use a tool, and leaning upon best practices to a point that prevents the publication of useful information (e.g., *perfect is the enemy of the good*). By responsibly leveraging and refining such methods, frameworks, and theories, researchers can help enhance the inclusivity, ethical integrity, and practical impact of their work involving at-risk users.

3. SHORT- / MID-TERM GOALS

The below goals are reasonable to attempt through community action and more constrained resources.

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[4] https://ceta.tech.cornell.edu/advocacy (retrieved on Aug 7, 2025)
[5] https://www.csrindia.org/ (retrieved on Oct 20, 2025)

3.1. Provide a Resource Repository

During conversations about tools, attendees asked that we create a resource repository where this research community could share best (or more realistically, "good") practices, exemplar case studies, research gaps, and more.

Key Themes

To fill this gap the workshop organizers, with input from workshop attendees, assembled a static resource repository that includes the tools that attendees shared, along with their related citations, and examples of how they are used. The repository has (1) theoretical approaches and (2) frameworks and taxonomies.

Vision: A Dynamic Resource Repository

Though the current repository is static, attendees suggested that it would be useful to make it dynamic in the future, such that it could be updated over time, as well as develop an archival reference that not only includes pointers to the resources, but also provides case studies that demonstrate the applications of the tools as they have been used in research involving at-risk users.

Action Items

Attendees noted that this research community currently lacks tools that help them determine when *not* to intervene, deploy systems, or conduct research (i.e., when the potential harm to study participants, the at-risk users they represent, and/or the researchers themselves outweighs the likely benefits). Attendees also expressed a need for tools that help researchers stay safe: both their data (e.g., conducting research on topics that may be controversial) and their personal security. They suggested that a dynamic repository could be developed that includes recommendations and/or resources on how to responsibly:

- Protect and compensate study participants
- Protect researcher safety and wellness
- Protect data and stakeholders from unforeseen risks

They also requested that a dynamic repository includes elements such as:

- Heuristics to support and guide technology development
- Pre-deployment evaluation criteria
- Glossary of terms

Overall, a dynamic repository was seen as an immensely important training tool to develop a shared language and standards that could also mitigate gatekeeping (e.g., grant or publication reviewer bias due to limited exposure to approaches to support at-risk users).

3.2. Create an Advisory Board

Attendees focused on finding ways to mitigate some of the challenges in better supporting the digital safety of at-risk users. They noted that outside of a relatively small set of communities — like the one represented in the SARU workshop — the focus tends to be on supporting "general," "typical," or "the majority of" users, which does not adequately uncover, prioritize, or sometimes even acknowledge the needs of at-risk users. Attendees also discussed seeing a growing interest from other communities in supporting the digital safety of at-risk users through research, technology design and development, and regulation. They found this encouraging, but noted that they have observed practices that are unlikely to scale responsibly (i.e., in a way that does not result in preventable harm to study participants, the at-risk users they represent, and/or the researchers, designers, developers, and regulators themselves). To help address this challenge of responsibly scaling support for at-risk users, they suggested creating something like an advisory board.

Key Themes

When discussing how the growing interest in supporting the digital safety of at-risk users could result in harm, attendees shared some of the potential (and even likely) harm that can come from engaging with at-risk users or their data when "best" practices — like those suggested by Bellini et al. (Bellini et al. 2024) — are not followed. These include:

- The potential retraumatization of participants,
- Vicarious/secondary trauma experienced by those who engage with at-risk users and/or their data,
- Overburdening people (i.e., at-risk users) who are already struggling,
- Misrepresenting the experiences/needs of groups of at-risk users,
- And more.

Attendees also discussed how some technologies, including research prototypes, can have unintended consequences, and that the term "at-risk users" covers a very broad range of people with different experiences and needs; what works for one at-risk group might not work for another.

Attendees noted that **the challenges are rapidly growing** as people from academia, industry, the regulatory environment, and more recognize the importance of supporting at-risk users

and are taking steps to do so (often well-intentioned, but not always responsibly or effectively). This rapid growth **suggests a need** to take steps now to mitigate the challenges.

Vision: An Advisory Board

One step that has already been taken to help mitigate some of the challenges in better supporting the digital safety of at-risk users is a set of six strategies recommended by Bellini et al. (Bellini et al., 2024). Bellini et al. analyze 196 peer-reviewed papers combined with oral histories from 12 domain experts to propose a set of pragmatic strategies that can be used to plan, execute, and share safer research that involves at-risk users. Among the strategies are to engage experts early and select the lowest-risk method that addresses the research goals. The proposed advisory board intends to be a practical and scalable way to help enact those strategies.

To start, the idea is that something like an advisory board of experts representing a range of disciplines (e.g., research, design, software engineering, cybersecurity, and more) and experience with different groups of at-risk users would be available to consult with academia, industry, regulators, NGOs, and more on issues related to the research, design, or development of technologies or technology policies intended to support the digital safety of at-risk users. If successful, this could develop over time into multiple advisory boards, each with a more narrow focus.

Action Items

To get started on creating an initial version of an advisory board, attendees suggested establishing a working group—including some attendees from the SARU workshop—who would determine:

- The short- and long-term missions of the advisory board. These missions should make it clear that the board will provide non-binding advice and not be held accountable for the advice they provide.

- Logistics of how the board will function, including

    - What are the different roles needed to effectively run the board? (e.g., board members, a program manager, etc.)

    - How long are members expected to serve?

    - To what will members be expected to commit?

    - Can/should funding be sought for a program manager to run the board?

Will board members or the organizations they represent be compensated in some way?

- How will consultation requests be submitted, routed, and addressed? Who will have access to requests? Where and for how long will requests be retained? Will requests be reviewed on a set schedule? As needed? What turnaround time can a requester expect?

- What format should consultations take? (e.g., will the board hold "office hours" over video conference? Should requests and responses be handled via documents? etc.)

- What expertise needs to be represented on the board? How will potential members be proposed for consideration? How will they be approached (and by whom)?

- How will the success of the board be determined? When and how will changes be made as the board and requesters learn what does and does not work?

- What is a reasonable timeline to launch the initial version of the board? How and where should it be advertised?

3.3. Engage with Stakeholders

Supporting at-risk users involves many stakeholders. These include members of at-risk communities and leadership or advocates within them, non-profit organizations, researchers interfacing with these populations (including from academia, industry, and others), designers of computing technologies, and government officials (i.e., staff and elected officials) and entities (i.e., regulatory agencies). As different stakeholders have different goals, priorities, resources, and strategies, it is important that interests across stakeholders are aligned to avoid working at cross purposes. Workshop attendees discussed the potential to provide necessary support to stakeholders, build bridges, and provide help to navigate challenging research areas, and to ensure that stakeholders see value in these processes, and that their interests are met in order to ensure engagement.

Key Themes

The critical first step to support at-risk users is to identify and engage with stakeholders. Education can play a critical role in this outreach, as people empowered through education about technologies as they relate to at-risk populations (including emerging tech) can become stakeholders who are able to take a critical perspective on technologies, reduce risks associated with technology use, and engage in informed advocacy. Such educational

empowerment can be built into school curricula or after-school activities. Community outreach and education are also critical, as raising a community's digital capability can lead to similar empowerment to advocate for outcomes that improve benefits and mitigate harms. The development and use of media appropriate for these communities (e.g., books, podcasts, community events) should be considered along with a recognition of the key stakeholders within individual communities.

Beyond at-risk users and the academic community, other identified stakeholders include industry, non-profit agencies, and government. Creating awareness of issues facing at-risk users is an important step in allowing for engagement. The development of white papers that succinctly describe an issue, its challenges, and potential solutions can be a means of fostering engagement and aid in incentivizing action, and can be particularly valuable to other researchers and policymakers. Media outlets that disseminate op-eds such as The Conversation[6] can also engage not only these audiences but the larger public as well.

For researchers seeking to identify organizations to engage with who are active in influencing policy, academic resources — such as university government relations offices — can help researchers identify organizations involved in policy advocacy. However, the burden often falls on individual researchers to identify and make these connections. A list of relevant organizations or government resources could help other researchers seeking to establish these connections. Some organizations — such as the Future of Privacy Forum[7] or the Center for Democracy and Technology[8] — can aid with the preparation of white papers and positioning their narratives to make them understandable to policymakers. Attendees noted that publications from groups like these are more likely to reach and be better cited among policymakers compared to the traditional academic papers this research community tends to publish.

For academics — especially early-career researchers (ECRs) — there may be challenges in engagement due to time limitations and a lack of institutional recognition of wider stakeholder engagement. The incentive structure is complicated. However, engagement with other stakeholders could provide necessary support, especially to ECRs, who are navigating their career and the challenges of socio-technical research with at-risk users. From a professional perspective, the outputs of peer-reviewed research, such as journal articles and conference papers, provide professional recognition and are used as metrics for tenure and promotion, there are no similar structures in place for the policy impact of academic research, nor recognition of the significant effort required to create this impact. While more senior researchers can use invitations to advisory boards or steering committees to demonstrate

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[6] https://theconversation.com/ (retrieved on Oct 20, 2025)
[7] https://fpf.org (retrieved on Oct 20, 2025)
[8] https://cdt.org (retrieved on Oct 20, 2025)

impact, these avenues are often less available to ECRs. In fields such as law, there are avenues for highlighting and valuing engagement with policymakers; such mechanisms could be explored to aid researchers in getting appropriate credit for this work and the unseen labor it entails. Such efforts could be recognized by funding agencies when grant applications are evaluated, as the development of engagement structures increases the likelihood that the research will have impact.

Vision: Facilitating Collaboration and Providing Incentive Models

A successful outcome for stakeholder engagement and incentivization would be providing resources and mechanisms that facilitate communication and collaboration between stakeholders, from educators to policymakers, industry, government, at-risk users, and the general public. Providing incentive models to allow researchers to perform important outreach activities that engage communities and influence policy, and making these incentives and community-building efforts more visible, could also allow for the continuation of this work in a sustainable manner, particularly for ECRs.

Action Items

Workshop attendees proposed several next steps to facilitate stakeholder engagement and incentivization, from immediately actionable suggestions to longer-term initiatives. These could be broadly categorized into community building and resource development, as discussed further below:

Community Building:

- Organize a workshop to understand incentives for all stakeholders — especially community partners — to get involved. The workshop report from the CCC Community Driven Approaches to Research in Technology & Society workshop (Venkatasubramanian et al., 2024) can provide connections to these activities, particularly with regard to understanding stakeholder incentives.

- Write a white paper in collaboration with key stakeholders on computational empowerment for communities, focusing on understanding technologies and how to identify potential tech-facilitated harms, to provide individual empowerment.

- Encourage collaborations between academics beyond HCI, including, for example, within criminology, psychology, and sociology. Outside of academia, encourage collaborations with community members, advocates and leaders, and with journalists to share stories of tech-facilitated harms and best practices for digital

safety. Engage in public outreach through mechanisms such as podcasts to organizations like the AARP.

- Encourage academic journals and conferences to consider having submissions discuss research impact where applicable, in terms of policy and effects on populations.

Resource Development:

- Create a repository of potential resources that could enable and highlight policymaker-researcher engagement, which can act as a hub for material, such as case studies, where researchers can see how to engage with policymakers and other stakeholders.

- Develop guidance for academic institutions on how to credit work that affects policy, including responses to Requests For Information (RFIs), congressional testimony, policymaker outreach, white papers, op-eds, and other metrics that are not captured by traditional measures of academic output.

- Create a 1-2 page report on threat modeling to help researchers responsibly consider and prioritize tech-facilitated abuse faced by at-risk users.

- Provide recommendations to the National Science Foundation (NSF) and other funding agencies that allow for generating artifacts, resources, and infrastructures that don't fit into traditional buckets, in a similar manner to the NSF Mid-scale Resource Infrastructure (MRI)[9] solicitation, with a focus on supporting research that involves at-risk users.

3.4. Support Researchers

Attendees addressed challenges related to risks in research and digital contexts, focusing on practical approaches, structural support, and community collaboration. They discussed vulnerabilities faced by researchers and study participants, emphasizing strategies to minimize harm, promote ethical practices, and support well-being.

Key Themes

A key focus was on **assessing risk at multiple levels**, from individuals to institutions and broader communities. Discussions covered risks affecting researchers' and study participants'

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[9] https://new.nsf.gov/funding/opportunities/mid-scale-ri-1-mid-scale-research-infrastructure-1 (retrieved on Mar 10, 2025)

safety and privacy, as well as the integrity of research. These risks often arise from technological barriers or the unintended consequences of research. Attendees highlighted the importance of educational guidelines, frameworks for assessing and mitigating risks (e.g., the threat modeling also mentioned [here](#)), and actionable tools to address these issues, drawing on insights from both computing and other disciplines.

Another theme was the **challenges of engaging with sensitive research topics** while managing the potential impact on researchers and their careers. Attendees emphasized the need for thoughtful communication about sensitive research topics, balancing research visibility with the protection of individual researchers. Recognizing that risks are not evenly distributed across researchers, attendees stressed the importance of solidarity and frank dialogue to address these disparities and mitigate harm.

Researcher well-being was also a central topic of discussion. Participants advocated for integrating well-being considerations into research ethics and protocols, sharing practices that support resilience, and drawing on expertise from other fields — such as psychology — to inform guidelines. Such measures aim to ensure researchers have the necessary support to maintain their safety and professional integrity.

Vision: Resources for Researchers

Success was defined as the creation and maintenance of resources that enable researchers to work safely, ethically, and with adequate support. This includes providing practical tools, comprehensive guidance, and systems that address risk while promoting researcher well-being. Long-term success involves building structural support to sustain mentorship, capacity building, and community collaboration, ensuring that researchers can engage safely and effectively with sensitive topics.

Action Items

To realize this vision, participants outlined several artifacts and action items:

- **Resource Development**
    - Draft a two-pager in collaboration with the CCC to provide guidance on risk assessments and threat modeling specific to conducting research on sensitive topics (going beyond threat modeling for at-risk users themselves) to address how researchers can mitigate risks to themselves and their study participants when researching sensitive topics.

- ○ Create digital-safety training materials and resources, leveraging existing tools from organizations like the *Electronic Frontier Foundation*[10] and *Scholars at Risk.*[11]

- **Mentorship and Community Building**

  - ○ Draft a two-pager focused on the importance of mentorship and strategies for fostering community support for ECRs and Ph.D. students. This should include an acknowledgement of the additional emotional labor that mentors who work in these spaces have to devote to training junior scholars.

  - ○ Establish cross-institutional venues for mentorship and collaboration, providing opportunities for researchers to present their work and access guidance in a supportive environment.

- **Capacity Building**

  - ○ Develop programs such as office hours, mentorship initiatives, and co-located events — such as workshops — at major conferences to support researchers working in high-risk areas. This could potentially be something taken up by the advisory board discussed in Section 3.2.

  - ○ Compile and share "best" (or at least "good") practices for addressing researcher well-being, including strategies for managing exposure to sensitive topics and building resilience.

  - ○ Support and inform students who are learning how to conduct human subjects' research regarding these practices and strategies for managing risk to prepare the next generation of researchers in tackling these important issues.

- **Collaboration and Communication**

  - ○ Coordinate roles and responsibilities for drafting initial documents, circulating them for feedback, and engaging external stakeholders for input and refinement.

Broader Implications and External Resource Needs

We encourage external stakeholders to contribute (e.g., researchers outside of the research team, advisory boards, subject matter experts, advocacy organizations, think tanks) were encouraged to contribute to these efforts by reviewing drafts, sharing expertise, and participating in capacity-building efforts. Creating safe spaces for researchers to share

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[10] https://www.eff.org/ (retrieved on Mar 10, 2025)

[11] https://www.scholarsatrisk.org/ (retrieved on Mar 10, 2025)

experiences, seek guidance, and access support tailored to their needs was also emphasized as a critical priority. Attendees also highlighted the need for resources beyond funding — including coordination and input from diverse stakeholders — to ensure guidance is actionable and broadly applicable. Organizations — such as non-profits that engage in advocacy efforts on such issues — were identified as potential collaborators. Existing resources — including non-profit and institutional toolkits (e.g., May First, Researcher Support Toolkits, National Lawyers Guild, Knight Foundation) and digital-safety guidelines — were acknowledged as valuable starting points.

By combining immediate actions with long-term structural goals, the workshop established a foundation for fostering safer, more inclusive, ethical, and well-supported research environments. These efforts aim to empower researchers, mitigate risks, and promote ethical and sustainable practices across disciplines.

4. LONGER-TERM GOALS

The below goals complement the short-and-mid term goals but require systemic, structural, and resource-intensive investment. The research community that works with at-risk communities or sensitive topics requires clear pathways for translating research into policy impact, training future researchers, and ensuring that findings contribute to meaningful societal change while prioritizing ethical considerations and interdisciplinary collaboration.

Funding agencies should encourage collaboration between computing and community-focused researchers, with an emphasis on *grant distribution with community partners and seed grants*. Prioritizing projects led by or in partnership with community organizations ensures that research benefits the populations being studied. Offering *micro-credential programs* — short, skill-based certifications—can help *researchers and community members gain expertise in responsible, ethical research methods* with vulnerable populations. Although organizations have their own human subjects training (e.g., CITI Human Research), the emphasis here is on a short, accessible curriculum that trains and empowers people to ethically engage in research. Universities, professional organizations, and funding bodies should work together to develop and recognize these credentials to strengthen ethical research practices.

Effectively translating research into policy requires accessible resources, structured incentives, and interdisciplinary collaboration. Sharing case studies and best practices on how research has influenced policy can help bridge the gap between academic findings and real-world change. *Establishing a centralized repository of policy-relevant research* would further ensure that evidence-based insights are readily available to both researchers and

policymakers.

Grant and publication review processes should include structured assessments of potential harms to promote ethical research practices. Research involving at-risk users or sensitive topics can have unintended consequences; thus, ***publishing venues and funding agencies should require risk assessment sections*** where researchers outline ethical concerns, privacy risks, and mitigation strategies. Review panels should also be trained to evaluate these considerations to ensure that projects include appropriate safeguards to protect participants and researchers alike.

Institutional incentive structures should also evolve to ***encourage researchers to consider policy impact.*** Currently, academic systems tend to prioritize publications and product development over engagement with public policy. ***Recognizing policy contributions in tenure, promotion, and annual review processes*** would provide stronger incentives for researchers to engage with policymakers. Expanding funding for policy fellowships, grants for policy-oriented research, and awards for public policy contributions would further reinforce this shift. Additionally, interdisciplinary workshops that bring together computing researchers, social scientists, and policymakers can foster collaboration and create clearer pathways for translating research into actionable policy changes at a global scale.

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Reviewer

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- Alan Mislove, Northeastern University, United States

U.S. National Science Foundation

APPENDIX

Workshop Participants/Report Contributors List

Below is a list of the workshop participants that consented to having their names shared publicly here. Their intellectual contributions and feedback made this report possible.

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