

## The Durango Declaration

(June 14, 1995, revised July 31)

[ [Post-Conference Summary](#) | [The Students' Declaration](#) | [The Durango Imperatives](#) ]

As computing professionals, we face challenges to improve the quality of life in our nation and the world. Information technology has enabled many positive changes, but it can be a powerful two-edged sword with substantial societal impacts. In this age of rapid change, broad public discussion and coordinated action should be able to:

- help create new industries and jobs, while reducing the impact of loss of existing jobs and the deterioration in the quality of work for many people,
- increase the equality of access to technology and slow the increasing economic disparity between the rich and poor, and
- develop new methods for expressing opinions and disseminating information while preventing loss of privacy and freedom of speech crucial to our democracy.

We can more effectively respond to these challenges and other societal problems, if computer scientists, information technologists, and colleagues including librarians, social scientists, educators, community workers, and others join forces to:

- acknowledge our shared responsibility for the impact of information technologies;
- encourage professional societies, industrial leaders, policy makers, and educators to promote discussion of these issues;
- support development of educational curricula and learning materials;
- prepare societal impact statements for major projects at an early stage;
- participate in policy formation through expert testimony, voluntary standardization committees, conferences, and publications.

We see new opportunities for basic and applied research in interdisciplinary computing efforts that:

- seek high levels of user and worker participation in design, implementation, and maintenance;
- create powerful tools that support collaborative problem-solving;
- enhance business decisionmaking and entrepreneurial initiatives;
- facilitate universal availability of information, publication, and communications technology by reducing costs, improving training, and shaping effective user interfaces;
- accommodate diverse users with varying skill levels, economic strata, disabilities, ages, cultures, languages, genders, races, and ethnic communities;
- provide well-designed user interfaces to access government and community information and services;

- develop effective information technology to permit broad participation in local, state, and national democratic processes;
- accelerate the development of new learning tools for all ages;
- support medical record keeping, community networking, commercial and social service provision, and other humane uses of information technology.

### **The Student Fellows' Durango Declaration**

[ [Post-Conference Summary](#) | [The Durango Declaration](#) | [The Durango Imperatives](#) ]

We, the attendees of the first conference on Society and the Future of Computing recognize that advances in technology as we enter the information age are introducing new and intensifying old problems for society. In our recognition of these problems and our role in the development, building, use, and evaluation of technology, we acknowledge the importance of socially responsible technology.

We thereby resolve to adopt the following principles into our professional and civil lives:

We will promote the use of technology to enhance the education of all members of society.

We will work to make technology support human creativity.

We will be mindful of the social, political, and economic consequences of technology.

We will promote public, open discussion and responsible action regarding the uses and consequences of technology.

We will encourage design principles which involve participation from individuals affected directly and/or indirectly by the technology.

We will not use technology that discriminates against any portion of society, and recognize the diversity of society in technological design and innovation.

We will promote access to technology in an equitable manner.

We will encourage the use of technology to promote participatory democracy.

We will use these principle to guide entrepreneurial development.

We will respect privacy and encourage the preservation of free speech.

We will educate ourselves and others about the consequences of technology in society.

We will be civically responsible in our use of technology.

### **The Durango Imperatives**

By [Phil Agre, University of California, San Diego](#)

[ [Post-Conference Summary](#) | [The Durango Declaration](#) | [The Students' Declaration](#) ]

Designers must rethink the physical forms of interaction with computers

Systems must fit into users' diverse ways of life.

Workplace computing must provide tools for people, not automation that replaces people.

Interface design must move beyond a focus on users to a focus on learning communities.

The new technologies of privacy protection must replace system designers' habit of tracking human activities in ever-greater detail.

Technologists must respect and support the extensive expertise of information management professionals.

As distributed information technology is used to reduce transactions and coordination costs, it must not undermine workers and their families.

Technical standard-setting processes must be opened to a broader range of stakeholders --- long before the standards become irreversibly entrenched in the market.

Citizens and professionals alike must become aware of the ways that information infrastructure architectures either support or inhibit democratic participation.

Information technologists must recognize that the success of democracy depends most crucially on citizens' experience of empowerment and skills of organizing.