SafeTOC at SoCG 2022

Advocates: Erin Chambers and Anne Driemel

SafeTOC initiative

- As you are probably aware by now, SafeTOC is a volunteer initiative to help prevent and combat harassment in the Theory of Computing community.

- We also provide guidelines for organizers to help ensure that conferences are safe and welcoming for all participants. This includes:

  - Codes of conduct
  - Conflicts of interest for reviews
  - Trained advocates for support and advice

SafeTOC resources

- Our website, https://safetoc.org/, has both recommendations and a list of active advocates.

- Advocates can offer advice and support to community members who experience or witness harassment. As much as our other responsibilities allow, any communication with advocates will be held confidential.

- We cannot handle official complaints, perform investigations, or issue disciplinary action, but we can provide information about available processes for such actions.

How you can help

- If you see someone being harassed, one action is to simply ensure that the target is safe. For example:

  - Join the conversation between the offender and their target.

  - Cause a distraction; for example, ask the offender a question.

  - Separate the people; for example, find a reason to call the target away.

- If there is an opportunity, you can also ask the target if they are OK and just listen. If they wish, you can take them to an organizer or SafeToC advocate who you trust for support.

How you can help

- If you witness harassing behavior, such as sexist or racist jokes, even if there is no obvious victim present, it often helps to speak up. Offenders need to hear from their peers that this is not okay.

- If you are not comfortable confronting them directly, you can take other actions to defuse the situation and/or ask an organizer or SafeTOC advocate for help.

- Address effects, not intentions. Much harassment is simple thoughtlessness, or can even be unintentional, due to language or cultural differences. Respectfully calling out unacceptable behavior in the moment can be an important part of changing culture.

How you can help

- SafeTOC is still relatively new, but since our work has begun it has become clear that harassment is in fact a persistent issue in our community.

  - Unfortunately, it is one we don't often talk about. This is something we can all work together to change.

- If you're interested in serving as an advocate, please get in touch! We could use more people serving in this role across many conferences.

- But, you don't have to be an advocate, and we all have a part to play.

More information

- SoCG code of conduct: https://computational-geometry.org/codeofconduct.html

- The SafeTOC website: https://safetoc.org/

- The advocates for SoCG: Ben Burton (bab@maths.uq.edu.au), Erin Chambers (erin.chambers@gmail.com), Anne Driemel, (driemel@cs.uni-bonn.de), and Jeff Erickson (jeffe@illinois.edu)