



Statement on US Travel Ban and NetSci 2017 Conference

The organizers of NetSci 2017 in Indianapolis and the members of the Network Science Society Board are deeply concerned about the United States' suspension of travel visas to nationals of seven countries last week. This travel ban imperils the ability for the scientific community to engage in the free flow of ideas and hampers scientific progress. As scientists who study connections, we understand that the effects of decisions in one part of our globe will cascade.

We anticipate the travel ban will affect NetSci 2017 in three ways. First, it bars scholars from select nations from attending meetings and sharing their work. NetSci 2017 currently has 452 submissions under review, representing 1,575 unique authors from 37 countries. Nearly 60% of abstracts have at least one non U.S.-based author and 30% are from multinational teams. Second, the ban causes distress for some scholars who no longer feel welcome or are concerned about their safety while traveling to the U.S. Finally, it ethically compels other scholars to not attend out of opposition to the U.S. administration's policies. We appreciate the many different responses, and we are working within our power to make sure that science is not impeded and all scientists can contribute and participate.

We have considered a variety of options, including cancellation and relocation of the conference. It is our opinion that cancellation (or boycott) would not promote but would weaken science, an outcome that no doubt would be welcomed by those who support the ban. Moving the conference to another venue outside of the U.S. would disenfranchise the many scholars from affected countries who are currently in the U.S., and who therefore cannot leave.

At this time, we plan to address the impact of the travel ban on NetSci 2017 by taking the following steps:

1. If an author is unable to present an accepted paper or poster at NetSci 2017 because of government restrictions to travel, we pledge to provide a virtual platform to present their work at the conference. We will work directly with these authors to highlight their work in as prominent a fashion as they are comfortable, including a possible plenary presentation and special mention in the conference program. No registration fees will be charged for these participants.
2. We will record conference proceedings, so that the conference can be accessed in all parts of the globe, including places that are included in these travel restrictions.

We will contact all authors of abstracts submitted to the NetSci 2017 conference to determine if they have concerns or are prevented from attending. We welcome and encourage the NetSci community to provide feedback and propose ways that we can make the conference, school, and satellite events as widely available as possible to our colleagues around the world.

The Society is committed to the international pursuit of science. As announced at the NetSciX 2017 conference in Tel-Aviv two weeks ago, we will be taking the conference to Hangzhou, China for NetSciX 2018 and to Paris, France for NetSci 2018. We are also looking for ways to encourage the community to create a dialogue for how we can better use network science for the global good.

We will monitor the current situation as it evolves, and we stand ready to take additional steps, as needed, to mitigate the effects of these restrictive and punitive measures by the U.S. government that are harmful to the conduct of science in the spirit of peace and cooperation.

Signed on 3 February 2017,

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General Co-Chair, NetSci 2017

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General Co-Chair, NetSci 2017

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