We thought we were the Rebel Alliance. It turns out we are the Empire.

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A Decade of ACM Events

- 2012: Turing Centenary - a celebration of computing

- 2017: Turing Award at 50: a celebration of computing

- 6/10/2022: ACM@75 - “Panelists will imagine what might be next for technology and society in the years to come.”

- Participant: “I found the whole thing a little ... depressing.”
Concurrent Event, I

- 6/9/2022: Public congressional hearing on Jan. 6, 2021 insurrection
Concurrent Event, II

- 5/24/2022: 21 people killed by a gunman in Uvalde, TX
Deep Polarization

- Trump (7/13/2022, NYT poll):
  - 92% of Democrats think he threatened US democracy.
  - 76% of Republicans think he was exercising his right to contest the election.

- Support for banning the sale of AR-15-style semi-automatic rifles (NPR survey, June 2022):
  - Democratic gun owners: 84%
  - Republican gun owners: 25%

- “The Disunited States of America”
  - Political paralysis, democracy in danger

- Important question: What went wrong?
What Happened in 1981?

- Sept. 6, 1981: V. arrives at Stanford
- Aug. 12, 1981: IBM Personal Computer -- Model 5150 (“IBM PC”)
A Tsunami of Technology

- Mid-80s: a computer on every knowledge-worker’s desk
- Late 80s: a computer in every knowledge worker’s home
- 1989: WWW
- 1995: Internet goes commercial
- 1998: Google launched
- 2004: Facebook launched
- 2007: iPhone introduced
Neoliberalism is free-market capitalism generally associated with policies of:
- economic liberalization ("lessez faire")
- reductions in government spending
- privatization
- deregulation
- monetarism
- tax reduction
- globalization
- free trade

Warren Buffet, Nov. 2006: “There’s class warfare, all right, but it’s my class, the rich class, that’s making war, and we’re winning.”
Economic Polarization

Cumulative Change in Real Log Weekly Earnings 1963 - 2017
Working Age Adults, Ages 18 - 64

Men

Women

- High School Dropout
- High School Graduate
- Bachelor's Degree
- Graduate Degree
- Some College
**Fairness Doctrine**

- **Fairness Doctrine**: required holders of broadcast licenses both to present controversial issues of public importance and to do so in a manner that fairly reflected differing viewpoints.

- **1987**: Doctrine abolished by the US Federal Communications Commission
  - **Rationale**: proliferation of cable-TV channels
  - **Earlier**: ABC, CBS, NBC

- **Outcome**: cognitive polarization!
April 2022, J. Haidt, The Atlantic: “The story of Babel is the best metaphor I have found for what happened to America in the 2010s, and for the fractured country we now inhabit. Something went terribly wrong, very suddenly. We are disoriented, unable to speak the same language or recognize the same truth. We are cut off from one another and from the past.”
Our “Ender’s Game” Moment!

**Ender’s Game**, Orson Scott Card, 1985:

- Ender's team engages in a series of computer-simulated battles, eventually destroying the enemy's planet, only to learn then that the battles were very real and a real planet has been destroyed.

- We thought we were the Rebel Alliance. It turns out that we are the Empire.
ACM Code of Ethics: “Computing professionals’ actions change the world. To act responsibly, they should reflect upon the wider impacts of their work, consistently supporting the public good.”

Our primary social responsibility: Consistently support the public good!
- “CS skills are in high demand; it is easy to be ethical!” - Rice student
- How does ACM live up to this principle?
Social Responsible Students

- **Claim**: Educating socially irresponsible students does not support the public good!

- **Corollary**: It is the social responsibility of CS educators to educate socially responsible students!
  - Social responsibility must be part of the CS curriculum.