

# Daily Hot Sheet

Vol XI, No 1

WritersUA Conference on Software User Assistance

## 16th Annual WritersUA Conference Opens Today in Portland

by Chuck Martin

And the beat rolls on... Last minute registration hit 500 user assistance professionals who descended on downtown Portland from across the country and around the world for the 16<sup>th</sup> WritersUA Conference on Software User Assistance.

This year, folks have come from as far away as South Africa and Australia, as well as most US states.

The bookend sessions have flip-flopped this year. The conference keynote, "Searching for the Origins of Language," presented by Christine Kenneally, kicks everything off this morning, while the ever-popular panel "User Assistance Trends" wraps things up on Wednesday afternoon.

These three days are, as usual, packed not only with informative sessions, but events sponsored by both WritersUA and vendors that offer you a chance to meet, learn, and interact. The biggest of these is the Vendor Exhibition, which runs all day today and tomorrow in the Plaza Foyer.

This year at the Portland

Hilton, conference sessions and events are split between two levels.

All of today's sessions are on the Ballroom Level (B in the elevator, two floors down from the lobby). Registration, breakfast, lunch, and the Vendor Exhibition are in the Pavilion and Foyer on the Plaza level (PL in the elevator, one floor up from the lobby).

Tuesday and Wednesday, sessions are on both the Ballroom and the Plaza level.

This evening, Adobe is sponsoring a networking mixer in the Plaza Pavilion from 4:45-6:00pm with plenty of food & drink. Adobe is providing a drink ticket for your first drink.

Enjoy a busy three days, and don't forget to fill out your evaluation forms.



### Today's Highlights

- Vendor exhibition, Plaza Foyer, all day
- Networking lunch, provided by WritersUA, Plaza Pavilion, noon-1:15pm
- Networking Mixer, sponsored by Adobe, Plaza Pavilion, 4:45-6:00pm
- MadCap ping pong social, Council Suite, 6:00-9:00pm

### At-a-Glance Schedule

7:30am-5:00pm, vendor exhibition, Plaza Foyer

7:-30-9:00am, breakfast, Plaza Foyer

9:00-10:15am, opening session

10:15-10:45am, break sponsored by welocalize

10:45am-12:00pm, conference sessions

12:00-1:15pm, networking lunch, Plaza Pavilion

1:15-2:45pm, conference sessions

2:45-3:30pm, exhibition break sponsored by HAT-Matrix.com

3:30-4:45pm, conference sessions

4:45-6:00pm, Networking Mixer sponsored by Adobe, Plaza Pavilion

### Today's Forecast



Showers, chance of rain, 90%  
High: 51°, Low: 47°  
Winds SSW 10-15 MPH



Checking in Sunday afternoon.

## Events, reminders, and other useful stuff

### Product Demonstrations Tuesday, not "Today"

The blue sheet in your conference bag states that the vendor product demonstrations are "today." They are, in fact, Tuesday.

### Vendor Exhibition

The vendor exhibition is today and tomorrow only in the Plaza Foyer.

### Internet access

A row of Internet access stations is on the Ballroom level. Free for all conference attendees; please be mindful if folks are waiting.

### Early start tomorrow

Tuesday's sessions begin early at 8:30am. Breakfast begins at 7:30am. Don't forget to set your alarm!

### Cell phones

Please turn them off or put them on mute when you are in a conference session.

### Long afternoon break

This afternoon's break is 45 minutes to allow you extra time to view the vendor exhibition.

### Evaluations

Remember to fill out session evaluations and drop them in the green boxes.





*Saul Carliner making a point about e-learning issues Sunday afternoon.*

## Reminders

### ProBooster

You can choose to follow “tracks” at the conference. Check the ProBooster sheet in your conference bag and check off the sessions that you attend. Turn your form into the registration desk before you leave if you’ve completed a track and you will be sent a certificate.

### Networking Lunch

Lunch today is free, provided by the conference, in the Plaza Pavilion.

Most tables have topics, so come and join your fellow attendees to feast and to chat about subjects you’ll be hearing about at the conference.

### Prizes!

Don’t forget session evaluations. Several will be drawn at random each day to win valuable and fun prizes.

### Daily Hot Sheet

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## Session Summaries

Notes from Sunday’s special extended afternoon seminars

### Writing User Assistance That Improves Performance

*Rob Houser*

In talking about improving performance, Rob emphasized the importance of conceptual information and motivation.

Conceptual information can go in the online help and the documentation, and also in the UI.

Users frequently are motivated by necessity, but not by coercion. Show users what

will be possible, what can be undone, and other features.

You can’t do everything at once. Develop a vision of where you want to be and a plan to get there.

### 18 Tips for Designing E-learning

*Saul Carliner*

When you’re training and when you’re applying learning, you have to understand user’s motivation. You also have to notice how performance is measured, and whether or not those measurements truly apply to useful goals.

Performance is also more than usability. Usability is about “easy,” where performance defines if a task was worth doing. E-learning needs to focus on tasks that are worth performing, and identifying those that are important.

### Introduction to DITA

*Tony Self*

You cannot talk about DITA without talking about XML, and part of the session was explaining the “rules” of XML, including how it is different from HTML. But the “rules” of XML means that XML documents, at least “well-formed” XML documents, are predictable.

XML documents are also structured, and so are good for storing information.



## Vendor Events

### MadCap Software

MadCap Software is hosting a ping pong social tonight from 6 -9pm in the Council Suite on the 3rd floor. Snacks, soda, and water will be provided. Prizes will be given away, and whoever can beat their CTO will get a special prize.

MadCap also has a schedule of demos for their various products. Stop by their booth to pick up a schedule.

### ComponentOne

ComponentOne is releasing Doc-To-Help 2008. Ask a ComponentOne team member how to save 10% on Doc-To-Help 2008.



*Attendees at Tony Self’s Sunday seminar listen to him talk about DITA.*

## MadCap announces new products

MadCap Software today announced several new products to be released in the next few months.

MadCap Blaze is a tool designed specifically for print production. The public beta begins today.

MadCap Press is for more high-end glossy work, with printer integration and color calibration.

X-Edit lets content contributors of all kinds provide varying amounts of information for inclusion in

large projects. Due out in public beta in two weeks.

X-Edit Express will be a free reviewer’s tool.

Team Server will be a stand-alone workflow management system.



*Several attendees watch and take notes at a Sunday supplemental session.*