

Daily Hot Shee

Volume XII, No 1

Monday, March 30, 2009

Today's Forecast



51

Cloudy, chance of showers, winds SSW, 10-15 MPH

Today's Highlights

- Breakfast buffet, 7:30-9:00am, Grand Three
- Opening keynote, "The Google Chrome Comic & Visual Communication," Scott McCloud, 9:15-10:15am, Grand Two
- Networking lunch, provided by WritersUA, 12:00pm-1:15pm, Grand Three
- Vendor Exhibition, 17 tool, technology, and service vendors, 7:30am-4:45pm, Grand Foyer
- Afternoon break, 2:45-3:30pm, sponsored by JustSystems
- Networking Mixer, meet, greet, and appetizers, 4:45-6:00pm, Grand Foyer
- Conference session time slots:
 - 10:45am-12:00pm
 - 1:15-2:45pm
 - 3:30-4:45pm

WritersUA Conference Returns To Rainy Seattle Amid Economic Storms

by Chuck Martin

Welcome to the 17th annual WritersUA Conference for Software User Assistance, bringing together more than 300 folks in these difficult times to improve skills, learn technologies, and enhance their value.

Perhaps now more than ever in memory, being armed with the most up-to-date skillset is a value-added proposition even the most jaded bean counter can appreciate. And the WritersUA conference brings together some of the top minds in the field to share their knowledge and skills.

The economic downturn has not missed the conference, nor its attendees, yet the conference opens with a sense of optimism: a speaker from

Google talking about a new web browser, introduced into an already saturated market, with the belief that they can do something better. And that spirit infuses everyone who is attending, the hope for a future that will bring good things and good times.

The many vendors that are part of the Vendor Exhibition today and tomorrow also have that belief,

showing off their latest and greatest.

ComponentOne offered some in-depth insight yesterday afternoon at the first ever Doc-To-Help Day, which saw some spirited discussion and Q&A from folks who attended.

All of the vendors will be ready to answer your toughest questions at their booths in the Grand Foyer all day today.



Jo Frances Byrd, Dave Gash, and Rhonda Bracey (along with Sue Heim's BlackBerry), enjoy a toast at Sunday's meet-up.

"Users have to drive the car to learn"

Matthew Ellison

Credits

Writing, photography, layout, production: Chuck Martin
Editing: Sue Heim

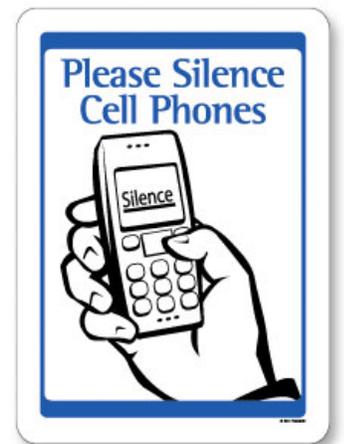
Speaker/Session Changes

Two sessions are swapping times (and locations).

"Breaking Help Loose: From Frames and Tables to CSS," by David Locke, is moving **FROM 10:45am in Va-shon TO 3:30pm in Fifth Avenue.**

Double Scoop Case Studies: "DITA and ISO Standards" is moving **FROM 3:30pm in Fifth Avenue TO 10:45am in Blakely.**

In addition, Witold Suryn was not able to make it to Seattle. However, his slides are in the Proceedings and on the CD. And Tony Self will do a presentation of Witold's materials as the second half of the DITA/ISO Standards session.



Session Summaries

A few highlights from Sunday's all-afternoon special seminars.

Introduction to DITA

Tony Self

XML apps for books, manuals and procedures come in two common types: DocBook & DITA. DITA is a platform for structured authoring. XML apps store data in structures. DITA takes a modular, topic-based approach.

DITA saves money (efficient, reuse, automation), improves usability (consistent output, sound design principles), team synergy (style guide validation, efficient teamwork). It's a source format, not a presentational format.

Introduction to Captivate

Matthew Ellison

Matthew talked a lot about best practices, including keeping movies short, don't rely on demonstrations for training purposes ("users have to drive the car to learn"), and interaction is really the key (to learning).

Five Ways to Test User Assistance Usability

Mary Deaton

Mary spoke of some ways to test users. Make sure people you test represent the users of your product.

Upon concluding a test, write a report with a conclusion. Critical report content includes what percent of the participants were successful, what percentage were not successful, and what were the reasons for failure or success. Make recommendations based on results.

Mary also had some hands on testing to demonstrate.



Travis Martin, of Taylor Technologies, and Steven Thomas, of Microsoft, listen to Mary Deaton speak about testing user assistance.

Vendor/Sponsor Appreciation

WritersUA and the Conference for Software User Assistance would like to take this opportunity to thank the many vendors and sponsors whose support helped make this year's conference happen.

Please remember to stop by a vendor booth today or tomorrow.

Vendors/Exhibitors

- Adobe Systems
- Aquent
- Author-it
- Bluestream Database Software
- ComponentOne
- eLearningZoom.com
- Flypaper
- HelpServer
- ITR

- JustSystems
- LavaCon 2009
- Lingo Systems
- MadCap Software
- Tedopres
- Microsoft Office Visio 2007
- Volt Technical & Creative Communication
- WindJack Solutions

Sponsors

- Axure Software Solutions
- EC Software
- Extreme Ease Software
- HAT-Matrix.com
- OASIS
- WebWorks.com
- Writing Assistance

Notes

Evaluation Prizes

Fill out session evaluations and win valuable prizes!

Prizewinners are selected at random from session evaluation forms. Winners can pick up their prizes at the registration desk.

- eLearningZoom.com stimulus package:
- Scot Marvin, Amazon.com

- Andrea Frazier, Thomson Reuters
- Ted Seastrom, Software Documentation, Inc.
- 3 month free basic membership at pdfscripting.com
- Susan Jaeger, Advent

Free Internet

There are free Internet stations (notebooks) on the 3rd floor for you use. (Please be respectful if

others are waiting.) Free wireless (username: writersua, password: writersua2009) is also available on the conference floors.

Early Tuesday

Tuesday's sessions start early, at 8:30am. Set your alarm!

Message/Job Board

To the right of the registration desk for anyone to post jobs or messages.



Mary Deaton illustrates a point about testing user assistance.