WritersUA WinWriters, Inc.

Conference for Software User Assistance

Wednesday Daily Hot Sheet

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WritersUA Wraps Another Successful Software User Assistance Conference

by Chuck Martin

"Raise your hand if you're not getting old!" That wake-up call got the attention of attendees at the Tuesday afternoon keynote session on accessibility.

The point was that accessibility isn't about access for disabled people only. As we age, we lose many of our abilities, our eyesight, our fine motor skills, and more.

When you design for accessibility, you make things better not only for aging people, speaker Shawn Henry asserted, you make things better for a wide variety of people.

Shawn Henry talks about accessibility.

The keynote session capped a full day at the 2011 conference, a day that featured topics as wide-ranging as on-the-job Twittering, user assistance for mobile applications, a double-dip of HTML5, wikis for documentation, and video editing.

Tuesday was the last day of the Vendor Exhibition, and many vendors raffled off more of their product. (See sidebar for details.)

The day ended with the Geek Trivia Quiz Show, where several spirited teams vied for the Geek Trivia title by answering the most questions in five rounds of 10 questions each. Much hilarity ensued. Team Sans Serif came from behind to take the win!

Today's featured event: the Peer Showcase in the Regency Foyer, where more than a dozen your peers show off their projects. You can vote for the most innovative project, and the winner gets a distinctive award.

The conference wraps up this afternoon with an intriguingly titled keynote: "Tickling the Brain," by Groupon's Adam Rubin.

And as we wrap up, we also look forward. While we don't (yet) know where next year's conference will be, we know it will be the 20th WritersUA (aka WinWriters), and surely something special. So thanks from all of us for coming this year, and wherever it may be, see you at the conference in 2012!

Today's Weather

71

Some morning sun, increasing afternoon clouds. Winds SW, 5-10 mph.

Credits

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

Updated Session Schedule

Some minor changes have occurred in the conference session schedule. Not all the changes have been reflected in the conference materials (which are printed in advance), specifically the at-a-glance card. Please note these changes:

"Leveraging Social: User-Generated Support," by Doug Bolin:
- Originally scheduled for Monday at 12:45pm in Regency B
- Moved to today at 8:30am in Regency A.

"Interaction Design for DOOH (Digital Out Of Home)," by Doug Bolin:
- Moved from 2:25pm today in Regency A to 9:50am today in Regency B

"Designing First-Time User Experiences." by Cathy Moya:
- Moved from 9:50am today in Regency B to 2:25pm today in Regency A

"A Style Guide for DITA Authoring," by Tony Self:
- Originally scheduled for today at 8:30am in Regency A and was moved to Monday

Session Evaluation Prizes

The following names were randomly drawn by conference organizers from the attendees who filled out session evaluations and dropped them in the white boxes in the session rooms or at the registration desk. Today's winners, from Tuesday's sessions:

- Carmen Gonzales, gift card for a surprise amount at Bertucci's Restaurant
- Linda Stimson, Painter 11, from Corel
- Mary Madden, Painter 11, from Corel
- Caleb Dougherty, Corel Draw Graphics Suite X5, from Corel
- Emily Mixin, Adobe Technical Suite 3, from Adobe
- Tammy DeVries, book "The Compass," from Scriptorium
- Suzi Magill, book "HTML5 to the Point," from Scriptorium
- Lisa Zinzow, book "HTML5 to the Point," from Scriptorium
- Fernando Lupparni, book "HTML5 to the Point," from Scriptorium
- Rhonda Bengiovanni, book "Kindle Formatting," from Scriptorium
- Jennifer Rodgers, book "Kindle Formatting," from Scriptorium
- Jerry Franklin, book "Kindle Formatting," from Scriptorium
- Mary Bartels, book "Technical Writing 101," from Scriptorium
- Ed Marshall, book "Technical Writing 101," from Scriptorium
- Jo Byrd, book "Technical Writing 101," from Scriptorium
- Elizabeth Aranoff, box of chocolates, from ITR

Also, Cinde Phillips, January Ford, Cathy Ewaschuck, and Chris McGruire won the book "HTML5 to the Point" as early registration gifts.

Winners can pick up prizes at the conference registration desk.

Session Summaries

Following are notes from selected Tuesday sessions.

HTML5 to the Point

Scot DeLoach

The HTML5 specification has eliminated many tags and attributes. One of the biggest is framesets, which a lot of tools use to display web-based help systems. You can use iFrames or the float property.

Some software makers say they "support" HTML5, but only a few features. If you say you support it, support it all.

New elements include support for audio and video, and the canvas tag, which is an alternative to having a graphic, a way to draw in code.

The Value of UX

Kyle Soucy

Why care about usability? It's survival of the easiest. If you're not creating usable products, your competitors are. And if you think you'll get it right the second time around, sometimes you don't have time for a relaunch.

User research is NOT market research. Market research is quantitative. You need qualitative research, which is direct observation where you can ask follow up and probing questions.

An Introduction to Video Editing

Joe Welinske

Video should be part of UA deliverables. It's attractive to growing number of consumers, especially younger demographic.

No tool does it all. Tools have libraries that contain media elements. In a project, you bring the elements in from other sources, them put them together in a timeline.

There are many different video formats, and they are supported at different levels in different places, and learning which ones work best takes some research time.

Making Your UA Acessible to All

Shawn Henry

Accessibility is not primarily about website code, evaluation tool results, or conforming to local standards. It's important to start with basics of how real people with real disabilities in real situations use your products. Accessibility is about people.

There are many types of disabilities: auditory, cognitive, and more. Disabilities can be congenital, or occur from disease, illness, accidents, or aging. We're all aging. So accessibility isn't about "them," it's about us. When you design for accessibility, you make things not only better for aging or disabled people, you make things better for a wide variety of people.

Enjoying the Geek Trivia Quiz Show.

Notes, Events, Reminders

Peer Showcase

Don't forget the Peer Showcase today from 10:50am to 1:05pm in the Regency Foyer.

Conference Evaluation Forms

You've been filling out the little session evaluation forms all week. (You have, haven't you?) Now please remember to fill out the pink full-sheet overall conference evaluation form. We want to know what you think!

LaunchPad/ProBooster

Don't forget to turn in your LaunchPad and ProBooster forms to get your certificates.

Computer Labs

The computer lab in Shoreline has 24 laptops filled with software tools. Feel free to drop into the lab in the morning, on breaks, and at lunch to experiment. If you are planning to attend one of the computer Labs, feel free to bring your own project files. The lab experts will be happy to help you with your individual questions. You can also get hands-on help from the experts in the themed lab sessions throughout the conference. Check your schedule for details.

Conference Bookstore

Our conference bookstore will be open in Regency F from 10:50am-1:05pm. Check out the user assistance-related titles.

Twitter!

The hashtag for tweets is #writersua. Feel free to add to the conference stream. A large monitor is streaming tweets in the Regency Foyer.

Lunch on Your Own

Lunch is on your own today. Check out the many fine restaurants nearby the hotel. (And don't forget to also check out the Peer Showcase.)

Attendees watching in a session.

Vendor Prizes

Vendors gave away more prizes yesterday on the last day of the Vendor Exhibition, and the winners are:

- Ian Naftzger, iPod Shuffle, from JustSystems
- Cesar Torrealba, HelpServer Basic License, from HelpServer
- Suzi Magill, Doc-To-Help Enterprise, from ComponentOne
- Matso Limtiaco, iPad 2, from ITC
- Carla Schwartz, LavaCon registration, from ProSpring
- Matt Arney, book "Understanding, Leveraging, and Maximizing LinkedIn," from ProSpring
- David Sherton, book "Understanding, Leveraging, and Maximizing LinkedIn," from ProSpring
- Myles Pflum, book "Understanding, Leveraging, and Maximizing LinkedIn," from ProSpring
- Jan Hasback, book "Understanding, Leveraging, and Maximizing LinkedIn," from ProSpring
- Nicoletta Bleiel, book "DITA Style Guide," from Scriptorium
- Matthew Stern, book "DITA Style Guide," from Scriptorium
- Marlena Hovorka, book "Technical Writing 101," from Scriptorium