

Daily Hot Sheet

Volume XII, No 3

Wednesday, April 1, 2009

Today's Forecast



44/42

Showers early, steady light rain late, winds S, 5-10 MPH, chance of rain: 70%

Today's Highlights

- Breakfast buffet, 7:30-8:30am, Grand Three
- Morning break, 9:45-10:00am, short!
- Peer showcase, 11:00am-1:30pm, Grand Foyer
- Lunch break, 12:00-1:30pm
- Afternoon break, 2:45-3:00pm, short!
- Closing keynote, 3:15-4:15pm, Grand Two
- Conference session time slots:
 - 8:30-9:45am
 - 10:00-11:15am
 - 1:30-2:45pm
 - 3:00-4:15pm

2009 Conference Ends With Magic

by Chuck Martin

We come to it at last, the final day of this year's WritersUA conference. By now, you're probably a happy combination of tired and information-filled. And that, as Martha Stewart is wont to say, is A Good Thing.

Two big events highlight this last day. First is the Peer Exhibition, where you can see some of the best and most interesting user assistance systems, from 11:00am to 1:30pm in

the Grand Foyer.

And then the conference closes with a keynote by the always interesting and energetic Jared Spool, speaking this year about "Magic and Mental Models" in Grand Two from 3:15 to 4:15pm.

Mary-Jo Foley, from ZDnet, was interviewed by Matthew Ellison to open Tuesday's sessions, where she answered questions on many Microsoft subjects and told some interesting stories, includ-



Mary-Jo Foley

ing one about when she first met Bill Gates.

Today starts right in with six sessions at 8:30.

And as things wrap up, we're already looking forward to next year, wondering which hot new technology will take the conference by storm, as Twitter did this year.

So thank you for attending. We hope you learned much that will be valuable to your work. And we look forward to seeing you back next year.

Looks for announcements on the WritersUA website for next year's dates and location.



Watching Mary-Jo Foley talk about Microsoft.

*"Large blocks of help text usually are red flags of poor interaction design."
Luke Wroblewski*

Speaker/Session Change

Doug Bolin's 10:00-11:15am session is being replaced by (note the room change):

Tips and Tricks for Captivate

Joe Ganci

Fifth Avenue (not Grand Two)

Captivate is easy-to-use, but it often is not used to its full potential. Its many features are not always well-known and, as a result, that leads to underpowered e-Learning.

In this session you will learn the tips and tricks the experts use for creating

superb e-Learning using Adobe Captivate 3. You will learn how to maximize the investment you've made in Captivate, and use all its features to create the best e-Learning possible. Take your productivity to the next level, and make the results shine!

The session "Lessons Learned in Corporate Blogging" will be in **Grand One**, not Grand Two as listed in the program and on the At-a-Glance card.

Tony Self's 10:00-11:15am session, "What If The Reader Can't Read," is moving from Fifth Avenue to **Grand Two**.

Credits

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

Session Summaries

Microsoft 2.0: What to Expect in the Post-Gates Era

Mary-Jo Foley

Interviewed by Matthew Ellison, she opened with a story about her first meeting with Bill Gates at a trade show and not recognizing Steve Jobs. She says he changed over time, that he was rough around the edges early on. "He liked to insult journalists," she said. "He was a tough guy to interview. But that's what made Microsoft what it is. He was an incredibly tough competitor."

Microsoft brings their competitors in and asks them where they are weak. "Tell us where we suck." It's how they get better. But some of the old-line folks there are also very "arrogant," they believe they are the best. A lot of dichotomies in the company keep it from being one big monolith.

Docs to Wiki: Redesigning and Restructuring Content

Paul Mueller

Paul began by explaining some whys: content is expensive to develop, difficult to document all

use cases, learn what's missing after release. He also broached the idea of content community.

Our goal isn't to document, but to help users achieve their goals. Wikis are a way to deliver just-in-time content. Wikis are "part" of the solution: users may not be online, may prefer help and print. Community-enhanced content can be confusing, may need verification.

Is wiki right? Look at your user base. We're jaded: we're more likely to look in help.

User Assistance in Web Forms

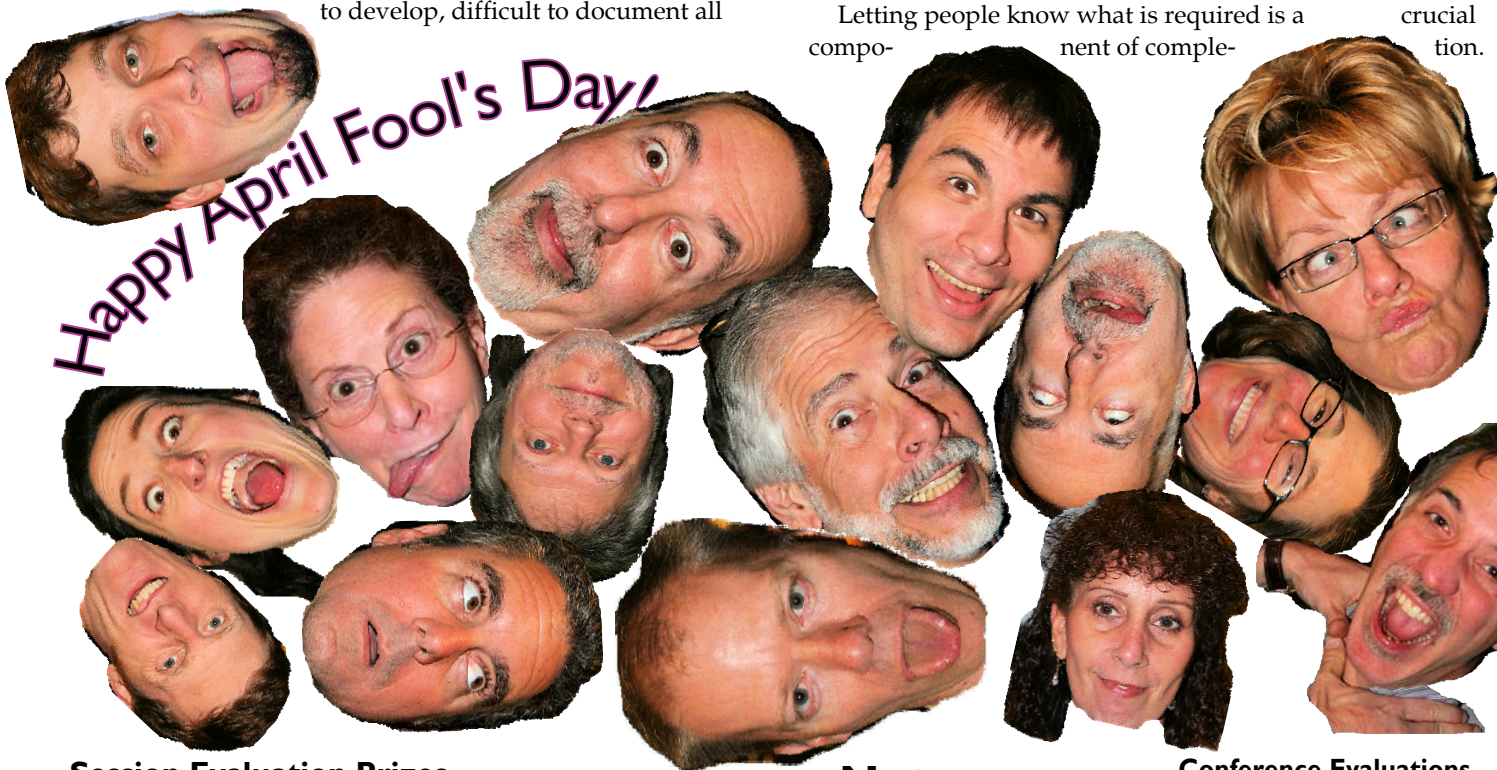
Luke Wroblewski

Luke began by asserting that "Forms suck." Yet they are everywhere, for commerce, for engagement, for access.

Large blocks of help text usually are red flags of poor interaction design.

Forms generally stand in the way of what we actually want, so the first question people have is, how do I get it out of my way, how do I get rid of it. Never throw a web form in front of someone who doesn't have to complete it.

Letting people know what is required is a crucial component of completion.



Session Evaluation Prizes

Session evaluations were drawn at random and the following attendees have won prizes. More will be awarded tomorrow, so please keep filling them out after every session. Pick up prizes at the registration desk.

- MadCap FLARE v.4: Richard Walsh
- License for HelpServer from 4.ST: Jeanne Gonnason
- MP3 player from WritersUA: Matthew Edwards
- Captivate 4 by Adobe: Karen Nichols
- Notebook light (WritersUA): Britteny Link
- \$10 Starbucks Cards (WritersUA): Faith Bicknese, Don Lammers, Susan Strand, Frank Kelly, Corinna Lougheed
- Hand-dipped Zanzibar Chocolates (WritersUA): Lori O'Malley
- Bernard Aschwanden's book *XMetal Author*: Robert Reynolds

In addition, Marge MacKinnon from Intuit won the free entrance to LavaCon in New Orleans, October 25-27, 2009.

Notes

Peer Showcase

In the Grand Foyer, 11:00am to 1:30pm.

No Lunch

The conference is not providing lunch today. But the peer showcase will be open during the lunch period.

Silence Cell Phones

Please, turn your cell phones off or set them to vibrate during sessions.

Conference Evaluations

Please remember to fill out your overall conference evaluations before you leave.

Additional Conference Materials

Additional materials provided by some of the speakers will be available for download beginning April 6 from the WritersUA web site at: www.writersua.com/ohc/suppmat/