

# The Sunday LavaConnect10n

## TOP O' THE MORNING

Here's what you can look forward to at LavaCon today:

- 7:30–8:15am: Continental breakfast, Grand Ballroom
- 8:15–9:15am: Jack Molisani & Scott Abel keynote, Grand Ballroom
- 9:30–11:45am: 5 tracks of breakout sessions
- 11:45am–1:00pm: Lunch, Noz Urbina talk
- 1:00–4:30pm: 5 tracks of breakout sessions
- 4:45–5:30pm, Tom Aldous keynote
- 5:30–7:30pm: Network reception & LavaCon 10th anniversary gala

## SESSION LOCATIONS

Each of the five tracks over the next three days will be held in the following rooms:

- Project Metrics and Development Team Management: Galleria North
- Content Strategy and Content Management: Galleria South
- Case Studies and Roundtable Discussions: Pavilion West
- User Experience and Multichannel Publishing: Pavilion East
- eBooks, New Media, and Mobile Devices: Grand Ballroom

The Galleria and Grand Ballroom rooms are on the Ballroom level, two floors below the lobby. The Pavilion rooms are on the Plaza/Mezzanine level, up the staircase from the main lobby.



**LavaCon 2012**  
The LavaCon Conference on Digital Media and Content Strategies

## this issue

LavaCon 10th Anniversary **P.1**

Sponsors' Corner **P.2**

Session Summaries **P.3**

## LavaCon Celebrates 10th Anniversary in Portland

by Chuck Martin

Celebrating milestones can be a wonderful thing. They reflect longevity, popularity, usefulness, and more. And The LavaCon Conference on Digital Media and Content Strategies is celebrating a milestone: its 10th anniversary.

11 years ago, Jack Molisani co-produced the STC Region 7/8 Pan-Pacific conference in Honolulu, Hawaii. At the end of the conference, everyone was saying, "I can't wait until next year!" "I can't wait until next one!"

Since there was no "next one" scheduled, Jack thought, "Maybe I'll start a conference. But what's the niche? There is already WritersUA and the STC Annual Conference." But then Jack noticed that neither of those conferences offered many sessions for managers and senior communication professionals. "Ah, THAT will be my focus!" And so was born The LavaCon Conference on Technical Communication and Project Management, held in 2003 in Maui, Hawaii.

The focus of the conference has expanded from two simultaneous tracks at the first conference to the five simultaneous tracks LavaCon has now. "The tracks in the current conference hit all the topics that are vital to content development professionals," Jack explains. "The tracks loosely follow the content development lifecycle. You have to have a content strategy, plan your projects, manage your projects, produce your projects, and then publish them when the user wants in the format the user want on the device the user wants. All while juggling multiple deadlines and limited budgets and changing project priorities."

This year's conference starts with Jack and Scott Abel, The Content Wrangler, in the opening keynote addressing the state of the industry, and how that affects which sessions you should attend. Ann Rockley ends three days of jam-packed sessions with her closing keynote on Tuesday. In-between? A wealth of information.

In addition to the regular sessions, lunchtime talks and evening mixers are scheduled today and tomorrow. Tonight's mixer is sponsored by Adobe and will be where LavaCon officially celebrates its milestone 10th anniversary.

And that anniversary could hardly be in a more beautiful place (if it weren't to be in Hawaii); it is supposed to be a beautiful—and busy—time here in Portland. In addition to all the fine restaurants and stores, the Portland Marathon got underway earlier this morning, and an Occupy Portland march brought political drama to the city yesterday afternoon.

But there's plenty happening within the Hilton's walls as well. Monday closes with SDL's Globalization Challenge at 5:30 and Ann Rockley hosts a content strategy MeetUp at 6:30.

### Notes

The conference Twitter hashtag is #lavacon.

Please make sure your cell phones and smart phones are silenced during sessions.

*Jack Molisani welcomes attendees to the free Adobe Day pre-conference event, which included speakers talking about structured authoring, content strategy, globalization, and metrics, followed by a panel discussion led by Scott Abel.*



## LAVACon MOBILE APP

The LavaCon conference has a mobile app, where you can view the conference schedule, rate speaker evaluations, and more! It's available on multiple platforms.

To access the our new Conference App on your smartphone:

1. From your app store, download EventBoard.
2. Look for "LavaCon" under the "Current" button.
3. View session details by date, location, speaker, track, etc...
4. Tap the [<3] icon to add/drop sessions on your agenda.
5. After attending each session, please rate each speaker using the survey.

## Sponsors' Corner

LavaCon could not happen without the support of its sponsors. This section highlights their conference-related news and events.

### Diamond Sponsor

As the conference Diamond sponsor and a well-known vendor in the technical communication world, Adobe is highly visible on this opening day. Fresh off "Adobe Day," a free pre-conference morning of industry thought leaders, they are also sponsoring tonight's networking mixer, which includes celebrating LavaCon's 10th anniversary.

Adobe's Technical Communication Suite 4 includes FrameMaker 11, RoboHelp 10, Adobe Illustrator CS6, Adobe Captivate 6, and Adobe Presenter 8.



SDL's capabilities include marketing analytics, language management and services, web content management, and dynamic technical documentation.

oxygen is a leading highly extensible and configurable authoring solution that supports frameworks such as DocBook and DITA.

Gold sponsors include Doc-to-Help, Merrill Brink International, RocketSled, Mekon, MadCap Software, Data Conversion Laboratory, MindTouch, Stilo International, WebWorks ePublisher, IXIASOFT, and TechWhirl.

Other sponsors include Vasont, Acrolinx, UC San Diego Extension, Bluestream, the Globalization and Localization Association, The Content Wrangler, ProSpring Technical Staffing, and Scriptorium.

Meet our sponsors in the Exhibit Hall on Monday and Tuesday.



### Platinum Sponsors

Four Platinum sponsors will also highlight their products and services here. Innodata offers consulting, technology, editorial, and production

Componize is software that optimizes the production, management, and publishing of high-volume content, taking advantage of the latest innovations in DITA.



# Session Summaries

## A recap of selected sessions from yesterday's LavaCon.

Saturday morning, Adobe offered a thought leadership event, and then LavaCon presented three afternoon pre-conference sessions, all of which are summarized below.

### Now, More Than Ever, Why We Need to Create Structure



Scott Abel talked about, what else, structure. Structure, he asserted, is the foundation for everything we do.

For example, structure allows you to publish to different channels. It makes content reuse easier. It makes it possible to adapt content to responsive design.

Going back to the topic of reuse, he opined that structure also allows "innovative" reuse. This allows customers to fulfill unknown future needs.

### Developing a Technical Communication Content Strategy



Sarah O'Keefe focused on business cases for our needs.

The myth of cheap documentation is just that: a myth. The

biggest issue is "anyone can do that," a lack of respect for what it takes to do decent documentation.

To prove that this is a terrible idea, cheap docs are not cheap. Content is available only in a single format, useless, hard to understand, out of date, or not available in customer languages. People give up on using docs or any kind of content to find information.

So the cost is more tech support volume, product returns & lost sales, regulatory submissions delayed or rejected, content that contradicts marketing, increases globalization costs, and is duplicated.

A good strategy can deflect a lot of tech support calls, calls that can cost between \$6 and \$36. The biggest obstacle in tech support is massive PDFs. Need to move toward collaboration. Integrate tech comm with all the groups, support, product design & dev, training, software.

### Multi-screen Help Authoring: How to Deal with the Expansion of Screen Sizes



Joe Welinske notes that many organizations aren't grasping how users are trying to consume informa-

tion on many different devices. Used to be desktop computers, which were pretty static, other than monitor size. Didn't have to worry about scaling information.

Not only talking about phones and tablets, but mobile is growing to include TVs and automobile dashboard displays.

People now want to consume information on their own devices. But the challenge comes in because development cycles are shorter and the number of different devices gets larger and larger.

A big part is figuring out how you adjust amount and type of content to a device, and doing so without crafting content for specific devices. Instead of creating device-specific use cases, break down into categories. The core is using responsive design to create adaptive content.

Being mobile is more than just shrinking things down in size.

Having a mobile device changes how you want to consume information.

### Are You Global Ready?



Val Swisher addressed global strategy and localization. She presented 8 rules to improve your content to make it localization-ready.

The number one issue in translation is sentence length. Ideally, stick to sentences of 24 words or fewer.

It's really important to say the same thing the same way, every time you say it. This is where structured authoring comes in. It goes hand in hand with cost control for localization and translation. If you have only one trunk of content, you translate it only one time.

Nobody talks about terminology. Terminology has to be consistent. Otherwise, users are confused. Structure, topic patterns, and many other concepts lose meaning when you don't use the same words to describe the same thing. But nobody uses style guides. We need to have a tool that does not require "pull."

Translation terms need to be in a database, and you need to own your own database. Translation memory is important.

### DITA Metrics



Mark Lewis delved into the DITA side of structured authoring, focusing on measurement.

Traditional metrics look at cost per page of documents, and for different types of content, such as conceptual pages or page descriptions. Or project costs, which includes both research and development

Traditionally, the measure of an authoring team was pages per month, pages per publication, and publications per month. But "more is better" is old and going away.

XML-based metrics allow us to talk about the "cost of a topic" by looking at what components comprise a topic. Look at the time it takes to write components, then calculate the cost per topic. This helps you look at what components can be re-used, or how components can be changed to be re-used. A "writing for reuse" factor of about 50% is reasonable for estimates.

### Streamlining Digital media Development Using Business Process Modeling



Dr. Jackie Damrau defined the process route she would take by describing modeling as a set of processes and skills

that creates a product or service that is requested or purchased. The purpose is not only to document existing processes, but to understand performance and take advantage of opportunities.

There are 4 stages to business process management. Start with strategy. If you don't have that, and corporate buy in, the rest may not matter. Next is designing the process, followed by implementation, and finally production. At that point, you can evaluate if the process gives you the results you intended.

The 4 C's of good modeling are similar to that of good writing: correct, clear, complete, and consistent.

You can use software to document all the steps that go into a process—

*Continued on page 4*

## GOING SOCIAL AT LAVA CON

Not only does LavaCon have it's own Twitter hashtag, each of the five tracks has its own hashtag as well. Other hashtags will help you track your activities as well.

General conference hashtag: #lavacon

Other relevant hashtags: #contentstrategy #PDX #Portland

Hotel: #HiltonPortland

### TRACK SESSION HASHTAGS

Project Metrics and Development Team Management - #lavaMetrics

Content Strategy and Content Management - #lavaContent

User Experience and Multichannel Publishing - #lavaUX

eBooks, New Media and Mobile - #lavaMedia

Case Studies and Roundtable Discussions - #lavaStudies

## WHERE ARE THE SLIDES?

Session slides will be online at SlideShare ([www.slideshare.net](http://www.slideshare.net)) once sessions are completed. Include the tag "LavaCon" in your search to find this conference's slides.

## SPEAKER FEEDBACK

Speaker feedback is online at LavaCon. Go to <http://tinyurl.com/lavacon2012>, select the session you attended and want to evaluate—they are ordered by speaker name—enter your rating and add your comments, and click Done.

## FOLLOW LAVACon

TechWhirl is reporting from this year's LavaCon. Read their updates at <http://techwhirl.com/focus/lavacon/>.

And I'll be live blogging from many sessions on <http://lavacon2012.blogspot.com/>.



Scenes from the Saturday afternoon pre-conference sessions.



and that process can be many more steps than you might think. The software she demonstrated is called FreeFlow.

When you're creating a process, never use people's names. Use a position or role instead.

For many steps in a process, decisions have to be made. Process models define these parts of the flow as well.

When you're modeling processes, it's not necessarily something you want to print on paper because the process can be very large. You can print smaller chunks. If you want to see detail, metadata, contextual information can be available for each object in the model.

Best practice: Limit a process to 15 steps. If a process is larger, chunk it.

### eBook Bootcamp



Among the things Tom McClusky talked about was how to set eBook prices. Different

markets, from Apple to Amazon, define their pricing structures differently. The most profit is often made when book prices are set between \$2.99 and \$9.99.

On Amazon, if you choose a high royalty rate, you get charged a download fee that depends on the size of the eBook file.

One of the best resources you can use to set a price for your eBook is to look at comparable titles. Author, publisher, reputation, and other factors can affect prices.

Content length is harder to judge now that we're out of the world of pages.

You can adjust the pricing on eBooks pretty easily.

You can sell books also through your own website. You get all the money, but not as many people will likely go to your website as, say, Amazon. No reason not to do both: on your website and through stores. On your website, you don't get the

stores' DRM though. You have to set up infrastructure on your website to take credit cards and provide secure downloads.



### Much Ado About Change

Chris Hester introduced the idea of managing change while managing

projects. The need came up when companies found that movement to different tools such as content management systems threw people out of their comfort zones.

This hands-on session introduced the idea of ADKAR: awareness, desire, knowledge, ability, and reinforcement. This matrix allows managers to identify how strong each team member is in each of these areas, then use that knowledge to rekindle interest and provide areas of support.



## Credits

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