



LavaConnection

LavaCon's Daily Newsletter



TUESDAY AT-A-GLANCE SCHEDULE

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| 8:30-9:30am: | Keynotes, Grand Ballroom |
| 9:45-11:30am: | Conference sessions |
| 12:00-12:30pm: | Lunch and Learn, Pavilion East |
| 12:30-1:30pm: | Vendor demos & coffee in Exhibit Hall, therapy llamas in Grand Ballroom foyer |
| 1:30-3:15pm: | Conference sessions |
| 3:15-4:00pm: | Snack break, Exhibit Hall |
| 4:00-4:45pm: | Conference sessions |
| 5:00-5:20pm: | Keynote, Grand Ballroom |
| 5:25-6:00pm: | Vendor reception, Exhibit Hall |
| 6:15pm-11:00pm: | Chinese Dragon Parade, beginning in hotel lobby, followed by annual karaoke night at Kelly's Olympian |

FILL YOUR BINGO CARDS!

In your conference bag is an Exhibitor Bingo card. Add your name and then get a staffer from each exhibitor to initial your card in the appropriate space. Once you have every space filled, drop it off at the Registration/Information desk. One filled-out card will be selected at random after the conference ends and the winner will receive a \$200 Amazon gift card.

Also note that the incorrect card was sent to the printer accidentally. We Are Very is very much here and should have been included on the card. STC, however, could not make it. So to fix two situations with one stroke of a pen, please see We Are Very to sign the STC spot on your BINGO card, thanks!



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Diwali Dance Puts Charge in LavaCon Open

by Chuck Martin

Conference organizer Jack Molisani has a penchant for bringing the energy and the style to the opening of LavaCon each year, and this year in Portland was no different. With the opening day of LavaCon coinciding with Diwali, the Hindu Festival of Lights, DJ Prashant took the stage in the morning to get the nearly 400 attendees in the Portland Hilton Grand Ballroom on their feet, learning dance moves, and moving to his Happy Diwali beats.

More than 500 people, both in-person and virtual, from 19 countries, as Jack announced, danced to those early morning beats. The jolt of energy was followed by three rapid-fire keynotes.

First was Melinda Belcher on building influence, followed by Fawn Damitio and Peggy Sanchez on empowering our craft in the age of AI, capped with Rely Annett-Baker talking about designing for failure.

Then the conference started in earnest, five different tracks all morning and afternoon, lunch highlighted by freshly snipped lettuces and planked salmon, therapy dogs, storytelling, and lots and lots of networking.

And let's not forget all the exhibitors showing their latest wares. One even had some big news: Zoomin,

which offers a leading data management provider for unstructured data, was just purchased by Salesforce. According to the press release, "Salesforce Data Cloud, with Zoomin's capabilities, will accelerate the unlocking of unstructured data to power AI agents, making them more personalized and context-aware in every customer interaction."

The Exhibit Hall, lined with the booths of conference sponsors, was stuffed with people at every break. It didn't hurt that foodstuffs made themselves available at coincidentally the same times. And the community chocolate table, nearly full with velvety treats from faraway places, was ravaged by cacao connoisseurs.

The day ended with three more keynotes. First, Sarah O'Keefe made the case for content operations. Then Eric Kuhnen disputes suggestions that people are reading less. And Stefan Gentz told the tale of Cathy Content and how CCMSSs solve so many content problems.



LavaCon provides a ton of information over 3-plus days, but the conference also provides time and opportunity to relax and unwind among the hustle-and-bustle of long days. Monday it was therapy dogs.

PROGRAM UPDATES

- Jared Bhatti's 1:30pm session in Pavilion West is titled "2000 to 1: Surviving and Thriving as the First Writer" and is about building the process for internal documentation for autonomous vehicles at Waymo as the first writer serving 2000 engineers.
- Eeshita Grover, who is speaking at 9:45am today on "Content and Context and AI, Oh My!" in Pavilion East, has been promoted to "Senior Director, Content Design and Strategy" at Cisco Systems.
- The LavaCon Slack has a #takeaways channel for attendees to share aha moments and action items to apply what we've learned!

Session Summaries

A few highlights from some of yesterday's talks and sessions.

Melinda Belcher began the morning keynotes talking about tactical strategies to establish yourself.

What is influence? It is not authority. Influence is about inspiration. It's about bringing people along with you. Often you will have influence on people and not realize it.

Also, invest in yourself.



Registering on Monday morning.

LAVACON POETRY

Students of Carol Hattrup's post conference workshop wrote some LavaCon-related poetry.

Sending her off to LavaCon

—for Ray

Here she goes
off to LavaCon again.
I make her coffee.

First, I crunch the beans—
three, four, five, stop.
The grind, the whirl of it.

If only I could still drink it.
It is enough to make
the perfect cup for her.

Here you go, I say.
Here's all the content
and strategy you need.

The Hilton swallows her.
Am I old?
I am content.

Another morning. Another LavaCon.
The grind, the whirl of it.
A sleepy cup fills with blinding stars.

They pour themselves, no more
need for beans. This day. This new day.
This bright, new day. It swallows me.

- Marcia Riefer Johnston

Fawn Damitio and Peggy Sanchez told us that as content developers, we have to learn from the past. Technical writers were some of the first usability testers.

We're already experts at researching and finding information. We have to learn to recognize AI use cases and to develop prompt expertise. These are critical for career development.

We have to get into the AI race. Find a way to use it and get better at it.

Relly Annett-Baker noted that the idiom "good vibes only" sounds like it comes across as a threat. "You're bringing problems not solutions" makes it sound like failure is not acceptable. But you have to plan for failure.

Failures aren't inherently opportunities. It's a neutral situation. It's what you do with that situation.

In one morning session, Pam Noreault of Ellucian said that most organizations think that content costs money. The goal is to show the value of content.

They identified key areas to make changes. Once implemented, they used data to show \$57K savings in case deflection, but also \$13.4M in implicit case deflection savings.

After adding AI, those numbers went to \$181K and \$25M, respectively.

Joe Gollner asserted that we don't have a firm defi-

nition of the word "content." From Latin: "that which is contained." It is "potential information."

Content is an "asset." Something of potential future value.

Content is also an organizational expression. It is collaboratively developed by teams.

Bernard Aschwanden began by defining corporate assets as resources that hold value. Historically, content was seen as a cost, necessary for business operations, not something that built revenue.

Centralized content streamlines collaboration across organizations. Content informs prospects. Content plays a pivotal role in the financial success of a business.

Information Architecture (IA) supports findability, usability, and efficiency. A well-structured IA ensures a seamless user experience.

There's solid ROI numbers for structured content.



Sponsor Corner

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

Platinum Sponsors

Platinum sponsors in 2024 include:

- **Ingeniux:** The Ingeniux CMS provides the tools you need to deliver modern websites and technical publications. The Ingeniux Agile Experience Cloud connects all of your customer touchpoints, from innovative websites, secure portals, web and mobile apps, and technical content.
- **Stilo:** Providing exceptional tools to help organizations implement structured content solutions using XML, Stilo develops tools to help organizations automate the conversion of content to XML and build XML content processing components integral to enterprise-level publishing solutions.
- **Scriptorium:** Delivers content solutions that ensure scalability, globalization, and efficient content operations for your organization.
- **Fluid Topics:** A SaaS platform that reinvents usability and accessibility by unifying all forms of technical documentation that exist for your products.
- **Precision Content:** The leading solution provider for optimizing technical content for AI and content management tools.
- **Acrolinx:** Whether your company has written 100,000 words or billions (like our customer Microsoft), Acrolinx makes sure each one reflects your style guide.
- **Smartling:** AI-powered translations with a human touch; Smartling's LanguageAI™ platform provides the highest quality translations, faster, and at 70% lower costs so you can make your budget do more.

Gold Sponsors

Gold sponsors in 2024 include:

- **ProSpring Technical Staffing:** A mission is to connect thriving, expanding organizations with highly qualified candidates so both are happy with the match.
- **DITA Strategies:** Amber Swope helps teams design, develop, and optimize their Information Architecture (IA) and implement the Darwin Information Typing Architecture (DITA) to improve efficiency, reduce costs, and create dynamic, reusable content.
- **Enterprise Knowledge:** Enterprise Knowledge (EK) develops content strategies that deliver scalable, dynamic, and intelligent content, content technologies, and content operations.
- **LanguageLine Solutions:** Our expert linguists handle 75+ million interactions annually—more than one every second. Let us be your total language solutions partner.

Sponsor Events

- **MadCap Software** is having a daily raffle to give away some luxury Lego sets. To enter the raffle, attendees can visit MadCap Software at booth 15 to sign up. Multiple sign ups are allowed.
- **Fluid Topics** is hosting a GenAI and Wine Reception at 5:00pm during this evening's Networking Reception at booth 35 in the Exhibit Hall.
- **Stop by the Heretto booth** on Tuesday, October 29 for your chance to win an AirPods Max headphone or an ergonomic keyboard. The drawing will take place at 6:00pm sharp, must be registered and present to win. Register for the raffle at the Heretto booth or at: go.heretto.com/lavacon24-raffle