CHARLOTTE, NC

LAVACON L/P PRESENTS

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 27, 2026

ISSUE NO. 2

# LavaConnection

The Daily Newsletter of the LavaCon Content Strategy Conference



*Therapy dogs bring smiles to LavaCon attendees.*

## It was a Magical Start to LavaCon

By Chuck Martin

As Executive Director Jack Molisani welcomed more than 400 in-person attendees to the 24th LavaCon on Monday morning, he pointed out that as the topic of AI certainly surrounds us, but that sessions just two of the five breakout tracks tend to focus on the topic. And then what was infused into all three of the morning's opening talks? AI.

But first, magic. The entire crowd was treated to a card trick that wowed and amazed everyone in the Carolina Ballroom.

And then Jess Reed told us that everyone in the room is a creator and that as content scales, authentic human connection becomes more valuable, Alesia Harwood noted that we're asking the question "Do I still matter?" and asserted that the answer is that we are the first generation to teach the machines how to tell the truth, and then Erik Bremer said that content is still in the middle of the AI revolution and that AI distributed complexity, it didn't remove it, and we don't compete with automation, but we make automation trustworthy.

Thusly energized, the crowd headed for the breakout rooms for a morning of talks on transformation journeys, self-healing docs, rethinking technical communication, undocumented processes, and more. Lunchtime brought therapy dogs and many, many smiles. Afternoon sessions took on topics such as building enterprise content engines, structured content as a good investment, getting content right at the source, and Ada Lovelace.

The closing session of the day was back to TED-type talks. First Dawn Stevens used Lego to explain why using AI for content creation requires organization maturity, and explains the steps to get to that maturity, then Sarah O'Keefe told us that authors used to be gatekeepers, but no more, and then Stefan Gentz talked about how trust in content is required for people to get understanding from that content.

The day ended with convivial sharing at the annual Storytelling Event in CJs Lounge.



*LavaCon Director of Operations Kevin Meglic shares a story at Monday evening's Storytelling Event.*

### *Therapy Llamas*

11:30–1:15, Comfort lamas in the Symphony Ballroom foyer, sponsored by Promptless

### *Karaoke Night*

7:00–11:00, CJs Lounge, sponsored by Heretto

## Notes & Tips

**Conference WiFi**

LavaCon offers complimentary WiFi to all attendees.

SSID: LavaCon26

Password: lava-nc256

**We're on Slack!**

LavaCon has it's own workspace on Slack. The URL is lavacon.slack.com. Be sure to join #announcements, #general, and #random. There is also a #job_board and many more channels.

**Chocolate Exchange**

The chocolate exchange table—y'all brought some to share, right?—is table #30, along the back wall of the Symphony Ballroom.

**Speaker Feedback**

Feedback on speakers and session content helps LavaCon improve. Scan the QR code on the last slide of each presentation to send immediate feedback to Jack and the staff.

**Exhibitor Bingo**

Don't forget to fill out the Exhibitor Bingo card in your conference bag. Get it initialed by all of the sponsors here—and don't forget your name!—and turn it in to the registration desk by 5:00pm for a chance to win a Kindle Scribe, sponsored by Localize.

### *Schedule Changes: Tuesday*

The following change occurred to today's schedule:

- 10:45, Mecklenburg 1: Mathias Saint-Jean is replacing Benoit Benatar as co-presenter from Otto.

# Tuesday At-a-Glance

A view of today's breakout schedule, with late changes in **bold.**

| Room | Mecklenburg 1 | Meckenburg 2 | Carolina Ballroom | Mecklenburg 3 | Governors 1, 2, 3, 4 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Track | **Strategy and Ops** | **Content Authoring** | **Main Stage** | **Case Studies** | **Tools and Technology** |
| 9:45 | AI Translation in the Real World: Lessons from Building Scalable Global Content Workflows | From Long Topics to Microcontent: The Strategic Shift that Makes Your DITA AI-Ready | Maintaining Trust in the AI Era: The Enduring Value of Human Expertise in Content | Live. Learn. Repeat. How We Iterated Our Way Through Citrix's CCMS Transformatio | AI is Your New Top Reader Are You Ready? |
| 10:45 | Stop Reviewing Everything: A Smarter Model for Multilingual Content | Oh, the Content Professionals and Information Architects Should Be Friends! | Content Development: Stop Building Sheds, Start Building Skyscrapers | How We Turned Award-Winning Content into AI-Powered Customer Experiences | You Can't Prompt Your Way to Trust — Why Trusted AI Answers Start with Structured, Governed Knowledge |
| 1:15 | Stop Building Bots, Start Tech Stack Lift-and-Shift: A Tag-Team Approach to Success with Limited Resources | Content Design for AI: How Collaboration Makes AI Happen | Before You Fund AI: What If You're Solving the Wrong Problem? | How ServiceNow Used Agentic AI to Reduce Costs and Improve Customer Experience | Creating Content AI Agents That Actually Work |
| 2:15 | How to Best Leverage Your Most Challenging Employee | From Chaos to Clarity: Streamlining Regulated Global Content | Biggest Bang For Your Buck: What We Learned From 99 AI Experiments | How a Golden Question Set Helped Us Build Trust in Our AI Agent | Terminology: The Clever Cure for Hallucinations |
| 3:45 | How to Establish a Governed Vocabulary and Ontology with the Tools You Already Have | Delightful Documentation? Improving Documentation Quality with the Kano Model | Inclusive Content in the AI Era: Bias, Culture, And Who Gets Left Behind | From Style Guides to Smart Assistants: How AI Supports In-House Content Experts at Red Hat | Agentic AI for Technical Documentation: Challenges and Solutions for Enterprise-Class Workflows |

# Session Summaries

Brief summaries from some of yesterday's sessions.

### Who Are We Writing For? Rethinking Technical Communication for an AI-First Future

Is structured, accurate, consistent, and trustworthy source content essential for AI-powered experiences? Stefan Gentz, as a big believer in structured content, says that this is essential.

Who is responsible for the content we deliver to customers? It comes down to trust. And what can help with that is structured content.

### From 2 AM Failure to 8 AM Fix: Self-Healing Docs, Agent Instructions Included

A self-healing systems is a system that responds to damage or change. There are 5 steps in the loop: detect, diagnose, repair, verify, and report.

Self-healing does not belong in regulated content, where someone has to sign off on every change.

A confident wrong agent can take days to track down a single line of prose. An agent doesn't have the judgment of a human.

### Ada Lovelace the Tech Writer: Her 183-Year-Old Principles for Content in the Age of AI

Ada Lovelace created the first computer algorithm, a woman really forward thinking, and her job looks similar to ours. Her interpretation of reports of Charles Babbage's lectures was the genesis of information theory because she not only translated it, but she considered how it could be generalized.

In the time of generated stuff, it's important to put your name on the work you do.

There are two jobs now: run the docs factory and write what the machine can't. The latter is the why, the connections, where it's heading, and what you're observing.

### Building an Enterprise Content Engine that Delivers Results

Kara Hughes, from ASUG, talked about a strategy to centralize their content planning.

The problem was a siloed operating model. The problem wasn't the amount of content. It was connecting the content together. Customers needed to find content.

The solution was Centralized Content Planning (CCP). It is top-down, inside-out planning. This creates one member journey through all our content. CCP is kind of like air traffic control: We can see where content is going

## Poetry Corner

*HOW TO GET TO LAVACON*

**This is not about Kevin,**
**who plays hopscotch barefoot**
**on the firepit, and leaps**

**across heads of stampeding**
**panthers.**
**No, this is about Tinglelips**
**running amok at the Halloween**

**airport. The plane swims**
**through a river of lava.**
**I take spicy directions**

**from Tinglelips. My manager**
**approved my per diem proposal,**
**so now I have enough food**

**to make my own lips tingle.**
**I look up what the name means**
**but I'm just trying**

**to have a better relationship with**
**Jesus.**
**Tinglelips is still running through**
**the halls**
**with his cape flying behind him**

**but he has no legs. Why**
**do the lights flicker?**
**The llamas savor**

**warm chocolate chip cookies,**
**but Jesus doesn't approve**
**of spicy llama kisses.**

# Sponsor Spotlight

### Platinum Sponsors

**FluidTopics**, a content delivery platform, once again is a sponsor.

**Stilo** will tell you about XML tools at their booth.

**Scriptorium** has chocolate. And advice.

**Congree** helps you with language technologies.

**Precision Content** helps with enterprise-level content engineering.

**ComTech** offers expert consulting and training.

**Delta Xignia** offers enterprise-level content change management solutions.

**GitBook** helps you build intelligent documentation systems.

**Intuitive Stack** offers professional services for content teams.

**Codal** offers consulting and brings strategists, technologists, designers, and architects.

**Sanity** is a content operations platform.

**DITA Strategies** is an information architecture development company.

### Sponsor Events

Promptless sponsors the therapy llamas at lunchtime.

Heretto sponsors this evening's karaoke.

### Vendor Change

Trupeer was not able to attend LavaCon this year. At their table, #21, is now Zaon Labs.