



# Call for Speakers

## The 16<sup>th</sup> Annual LavaCon Conference on Content Strategy and Technical Communication Management

October 21–24, 2018    New Orleans, Louisiana

Speaker Proposal Deadline: 15 March 2018

### Contents

- Call for Speakers ..... 1**
- Introduction..... 2
- Dates and Location..... 2
- Conference Theme ..... 3
- Program Tracks ..... 4
- Workshops, Sessions, and Case Studies ..... 6
- Social and Networking Events ..... 6
- Want to Ride in a Mardi Gras Parade? ..... 7
- Promoting Your Session ..... 7
- Selection Criteria ..... 8
- Filtering the Program by Keyword ..... 8
- How to Propose ..... 9

## Introduction

LavaCon started in Hawaii (hence our name) to give senior content professionals a chance to get away from the office and tend to their professional development.

Our mission:

- To help organizations stay ahead of rapidly changing technology and customer demographics
- To connect organizations experiencing content challenges with the consulting, translation, and tool vendors who can help
- To create a community where content professionals can collaborate and advance the field as a whole

Please watch this [short video](#) from LavaCon's Executive Director before submitting your speaker proposal:



## Dates and Location

LavaCon 2018 will be held from October 21–24 at the Astor Crowne Plaza Hotel in New Orleans, LA, on the corner of historic Bourbon and Canal streets:



## Conference Theme

LavaCon 2017 focused on spanning silos and building bridges (across content silos, people silos, technology silos, etc.). A pattern emerged from speaker sessions and attendee feedback that we (as a profession) must be more proactive in helping organizations create a total content experience (as opposed to just “delivering content.”)



So rather than just *spanning* silos, our 2018 program will focus on how organizations can take a patchwork of content, people, and technology silos and create a content development ecosystem that reduces authoring costs and improves the customer experience.

## Program Tracks

Sessions in our 2018 program will be organized into the following tracks:

**PLAN:** The **Content Strategy and User Experience Track** addresses how to plan content initiatives that maximize the user experience (UX) and information experience (IX). Topics include how to span content silos, achieve content development efficiencies, maximize the user experience across multiple channels (mobile, web, print), gamification, accessibility, customer experience management (CXM), and more.

This track also includes sessions about choosing development platforms, creating documentation and project plans, estimating project scope and cost, estimating the ROI of content strategy initiatives, using content to generate revenue, etc.

**DEVELOP:** The **Content Development Track** addresses how to develop, test, deploy, and maintain content development projects. When and how should you move to structured content and content management? How do you create content for multichannel publishing, prepare your content for “Content 4.0” and beyond, author for content translation and localization, and implement controlled language? What are the good, the bad, and the ugly truths about XML and DITA, content governance, etc.?

**MANAGE:** The **Management and Personal Development Track** addresses how to manage people and projects, such as “soft skills” you need to succeed as a senior strategist or manager. It also includes information on finding and hiring the right people, managing teams (in the same building, remote, or virtual) using metrics and key performance indicators (KPIs), building business cases for resources, managing outsourced projects and tool vendors, recovering troubled projects (or knowing when to let them go), overcoming resistance to change, overcoming office politics, handling poor performers, etc.

**SUCCESS:** We are continuing the **Customer Success Track** where attendees share case studies on how they effected positive organizational change (either internally or for customers) using skills they learned at LavaCon. This is a chance to show off your accomplishments and possibly earn an award! More information about this track will be published later in 2018.

**GLOBALIZE:** This track addresses the challenges and opportunities found in managing distributed teams and multinational audiences.

In the words of one LavaCon attendee who manages a global content development team:

“I like the idea of focusing on worldwide delivery. The issues I've faced are:

- How do we write internationalized English as a source without bastardizing the English publication? Meaning, in order to do great translations, are people making the source content better for the English audience or worse? And how do we understand/measure/think about this?
- How do we measure the quality of translation reviews outside of the Linguistic Quality Assurance (LQA) scores vendors provide? How and when do we measure this? Meaning, do we extend the content development process to account for selecting exactly the right words worldwide before publishing? Or do we ship least viewed pages/least used languages using machine translation only and then audit the content post-publishing in some way? If the latter, what is the audit mechanism?
- What Agile approaches work for translation/translation review, knowing that language skills are not fungible?
- What kind of conveyance is required to ensure hand-offs happen quickly (or eliminates them through automation)? How do we assess our process? How do we assess our tools? How do we assess our editors' work when it's in another language? How do all these things impact time?
- Most important, how can we best ensure helpfulness, findability, and engagement of our content in English/source as well as in translated content?

Finally, I've seen a lot of 'blame game' in a world-wide development process:

- Translation reviewers blame the source content with no measurable evidence of actual defects.
- Translation vendors blame the lack of terms in a terms database.
- Source content developers blame the translators and global reviewers for taking up too much time in their process.
- Lather, rinse, repeat.

What they *should* be doing is looking at the customer first and determining what the customer needs instead of thinking you already know...”

Sessions addressing writing for a global audience are welcome!

## Workshops, Sessions, and Case Studies

It is one thing for attendees to hear they should implement a robust content strategy, but it's quite another to learn from peers who have actually done it. Our 2018 program will include real-world case studies from practicing professionals who have "been there, done that" and survived to tell the tale.

Note: Vendors may present case studies if the case study shows what the challenge was and how the customer overcame those challenges, and if the case study contains useful how-to information that attendees can take back to their offices and apply. (In other words, case studies can't be just product demonstrations.) Customer co-presenters are encouraged, but not required.

Pre-conference workshops are 3.5 hours. Breakout sessions are 60 minutes. Case Studies are 30 or 60 minutes.

## Social and Networking Events

LavaCon is known for its fun networking and social events. (Attendees often report building significant business relationships at the networking events.)

Please watch the recap video from the last time we were in New Orleans for an idea of what to expect in 2018: <https://vimeo.com/143499318>



## Want to Ride in a Mardi Gras Parade?

New Orleans offers a Mardi Gras like parade each October called the “Krewe of Boo.” For more information, see the video: <https://vimeo.com/146723402>



In 2018, the parade rolls the day before LavaCon (Saturday, October 20), so we are currently negotiating with the parade producer for LavaCon to have its own float in the parade. This is your chance to ride in a New Orleans parade!

Lunch will be served before the parade for people riding on the float. There is also a concert with national talent available after the parade. There will be a special VIP section at the concert for LavaCon attendees.

The cost to ride in the parade is \$750 per person. At the time of publication there are 28 spots left on the float. Spots are open to attendees, speakers, sponsors, and staff on a first come, first served basis until the float sells out. I am checking if LavaCon participants can walk behind the float and still be part of the parade after we sell out.

Sponsors: Please see the Sponsor section for more information.

## Promoting Your Session

“From a friend or colleague” is the top way attendees learn about LavaCon, so social media plays an important role in conference marketing. To be considered, speakers are required to participate in LavaCon content marketing:

- All proposals will be posted to List.ly so potential attendees can vote on which sessions they most want in the 2018 program. You are required to share your proposal on social media once it is posted, and to ask your followers to vote for your session(s).
- Speakers who have been accepted to present at LavaCon New Orleans are required to share conference social media posts with their followers or in related groups at least once a month until the conference.
- Accepted speakers will also be interviewed about their session for sharing on social media.

## Selection Criteria

LavaCon is known for helping organizations stay up-to-date with the latest advances in publishing technologies (IoT, chatbots, AI, etc.). However, we also consider the “big picture” when examining new technologies: Will a new technology become a lasting publishing paradigm, or will it seem popular for a while (a fad) but then fall out of favor over time?

We are looking for speakers with critical thinking skills who can evaluate what’s hot, what’s not, and how things fit in the big picture.

Finally, we are looking for practicing content professionals who are willing to share their best practices and lessons learned (both what worked and what didn’t), across all stages in the content development lifecycle.

The following will be used when judging speaker proposals (in decreasing order of importance):

- Would *senior* content professionals find the topic useful?
- Does the session show how to solve content-related business problems? Decrease production costs? Generate revenue?
- Does the session teach content professionals skills they need to succeed as a senior strategist or senior manager?
- Is the presentation new? That is, have you not already given this presentation as a webinar or at another conference?
- Does the session include specific examples with before-and-after metrics?
- Did the session score high with potential attendee votes on List.ly?  
(Note: Scoring high on List.ly does not guarantee acceptance as this is only one of the selection criteria.)

## Filtering the Program by Keyword

This year we are posting an interactive version of the program where attendees can filter the program by keyword(s).

When submitting your proposal, please indicate which of the following keywords apply to your submission:

Session Type:

- Breakout Session
- Workshop
- Case Study

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Session Subject (check as many as apply):

- Research (needs analysis, personas, use cases, etc.)
- Content Strategy
- Content Engineering
- Content Management
- UX/Content Experience
  
- Tools and Technology
- Emerging Tools and Technology (IoT, AI, Chatbots, etc.)
- Authoring, Publishing (including API manuals)
- Structured Authoring, Multichannel Publishing
- DITA
- Agile
  
- Translation, Localization, Writing for a Global Audience
- Management and Professional Development (stakeholder management, handling poor performers, overcoming office politics, etc.)
- TechComm and MarComm Convergence, Creating Enterprise-wide Ecosystems, etc.
- Outside the box! (i.e. "Other")

## How to Propose

Submit your proposal at: <https://tinyurl.com/LavaCon2018Proposals>

Deadline: 15 March 2018

Questions? Contact me at 1+ 562-726-1800 x201 or [jack@lavacon.org](mailto:jack@lavacon.org)

See you in New Orleans!

Jack Molisani  
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The LavaCon Conference