LavaCon

LavaCon

All keynotes and breakout sessions in the Grand Ballroom will be recorded and broadcast live with video. All other sessions will be recorded (slides and audio) for viewing after the conference. See the conference website to view a sample virtual session.

LavaCon 2024
27–30 OCT. PORTLAND

Content as a Business Asset:
Reducing Costs, Generating Revenue, and Improving the
Customer Experience Through Better Content

Optional Pre-conference Workshops: Sunday, 27 October 2024				
7:00–	Registration in Grand Ballroom Foyer Coffee (breakfast on your own)			
8:00–Noon	**Getting a Clear Picture: Using Inventories and Audits to See and Improve your Content Structure** *Ted Wolff* *Information Architect* *Precision Content*	**Design AI Prompts and Workflows to Improve User Journeys** *Noz Urbina* *Principal* *Urbina Consulting*	**Elevating Documentation Excellence: Integrating AI for Robust Content Taxonomies** *Christopher Ward* *V.P. of Sales and Marketing* *WebWorks*	**They Already Sent a Poet, and It's You!** *Carol Hattrup* *Manager, Client Learning* *Netsmart* *(Free Workshop)*	**User Research For Content Teams: Hands-On Testing Techniques** *Bridget O'Donnell* *Senior Content Strategist* *Alibaba Group* *(AliExpress)*
Noon–1:00	Lunch on your own				
1:00–5:00	**One Size Fits No One** *Dawn Stevens* *President* *Comtech Services*	**Building and Maintaining a Prompt Library as a Business Asset** *Jason Kaufman* *Principal AI Content Strategist* *Irrevo*	**Climbing the Google Analytics Mountain (GA4) for Documentation Excellence** *Christopher Ward* *V.P. of Sales and Marketing* *WebWorks*	**Optimizing Content Operations: Calculating the ROI of your Production Pipeline** *Rahel Bailie* *Content Solutions Director* *Technically Write IT*	**Building Taxonomies to Leverage Content** *Heather Hedden* *Taxonomy Consultant* *Hedden Information Management*
5:30–6:30	**Welcome Reception**				

LavaCon

Conference Day 1: Monday, 28 October 2024

7:30–	Registration, Breakfast				
8:30–9:00 *Room*	**Welcome** *Grand Ballroom*				
9:00–9:20	**Building Influence: A Roadmap for Content Expertise and Leadership** *Melinda Belcher, Executive Director, JPMorgan Chase*				
9:20–9:40	**Metamorphosis: Empowering Our Craft's Evolution in the Dawn of GenAI's Era** *Fawn Damitio, Sr. Manager of AI Infrastructure, Meta, and Peggy Sanchez, Sr. Manager, Hewlett Packard Enterprise*				
9:40–10:00	**Are Your Canaries Still Singing? An Optimist's Guide to Designing for Failure** *Relly Annett-Baker, Head of UX Content Strategy, Google*				
Track *Room*	*Content Strategy and UX* *Broadway I,II*	*Content Strategy and UX* *Pavilion E*	*The Business of Content* *Grand Ballroom*	*AI and ML* *Pavilion W*	*Tools and Technology* *Broadway III,IV*
10:15–11:00	**Stop Imposing Your Org Chart Onto Your Customer Experience** *Sara Feldman Consortium for Service Innovation*	**Modernizing Content Strategy: Workday's Agile Transformation** *Kevin White, Workday and Stefan Gentz, Adobe*	**How We Saved $57K in Deflected Support Cases in Five Months** *Pam Noreault Principal Information Architect, Ellucian*	**Evaluating AI: Best Tools for Your Content Team** *Gavin Austin Principal Technical Writer Salesforce*	**The Trouble with DITA: A Review of the 2024 DITA Satisfaction Survey** *Rob Hanna CEO and Co-founder Precision Content*
11:15–12:00	**Creating a Truly Customer-centric Content Experience** *Laura Miles NAVEX*	**Integrating Subject Matter Experts Into Structured Authoring Ecosystems** *Dipo Ajose-Coker Product Marketing Manager MadCap Software*	**Integrating Marketing Into Your TechComm Strategy: A Key to Business Success** *Christopher Ward Vice President, WebWorks*	**The Beauty and the Beast: A Relationship with ChatGPT** *Jennifer Swallow Senior Technical Content Manager, Splunk*	**Data Models for DITA Systems** *Jim Tivy CTO Bluestream Software*
12:00–1:30	Networking Lunch, Dessert in the Exhibit Hall, Comfort Dogs in Grand Ballroom Foyer				
1:30–2:15	**Are You My Customer?** *Dawn Stevens President Comtech Services*	**Metrics Madness: From Content Chaos to Data-Driven Delight** *Kat Reierson Documentation Manager DocuSign*	**Achieving Customer Success Through Self-Service Support** *Patrick Bosek, Heretto and Barbara Green, UX Content Lead, ACS Technologies*	**The Truth about GenAI and Content Delivery: Promises vs. Real-life Use Cases** *Fabrice Lacroix CEO, Fluid Topics*	**Building Your Own Content Design System From Scratch** *Andrew Dubrov Head of CX Content Design Verizon*
2:30–3:15	**Operationalizing Generative AI** *Sean Angus Vice President of Solution Consulting Acrolinx*	**Curing Chaotic Content by Cutting to the Core** *Mark Johnson Documentation Manager Securonix*	**Content is THE Most Strategic Asset for Unparalleled Customer and Business Success** *Bernard Aschwanden CCMS Kickstart*	**Beyond the Hype: How Docs Teams are Leveraging AI to Make a Difference** *Joe Gelb and Tom DeBeauchamp, Zoomin*	**Programmatic Loves Structure: Why You Need a DITA-first Headless Strategy** *Jim Edmunds, President & CEO, Ingeniux*
3:15–4:15	Snack Break in the Exhibit Hall				
4:15–4:35	**The Business Case for Content Operations** *Sarah O'Keefe, CEO, Scriptorium*				
4:35–4:55	*TBA*				
4:55–5:15	**The Story of Cathy Content** *Stefan Gentz, Global TechComm Evangelist, Adobe*				
5:15–6:45	**Networking Reception**				
8:00–10:00	**Live Storytelling Event** Location: Kelly's Olympian				

LavaCon

All keynotes and breakout sessions in the Grand Ballroom will be recorded and broadcast live with video. All other sessions will be recorded (slides and audio) for viewing after the conference. See the conference website to view a sample virtual session.

Conference Day 2: Tuesday, 29 October 2024				
7:30	Breakfast			
8:30–8:50	**Truth Collapse: The AI Meta-Crisis** *Noz Urbina, Principal, Urbina Consulting*			
8:50–9:10	**Shining a Light on Internal Documentation's Extensive Impact** *Michelle Irvine, Technical Writer, Google*			
9:10–9:30	**The Unseen Challenges and Hidden Costs of Adopting Markdown for Technical Documentation** *Scott Abel, Content Strategy Evangelist, Heretto*			
Track	*Content Strategy and UX*	*Content Strategy and UX*	*The Business of Content*	*AI and ML*	*Tools and Technology*
9:45–10:30	**The Transformative Power of Component Content Management** *Bernard Aschwanden, CCMS Kickstart and Stefan Gentz, Adobe*	**Building a Phenomenal Content Community of Practice** *Christi Guzik Lead UX Content Strategist Rocket Companies*	**The Ultimate Practical Guide to Measuring the Impact of your Technical Content** *Rita Khait, Director of Customer Enablement, Zoomin*	**Content and Context and AI, Oh My!** *Eeshita Grover Director, Product User Content Cisco Systems*	**DITA Conversion: DIY vs Outsource? An Oxford Style Debate** *Marianne Calilhanna Christopher Hill Brian Tipper*
10:45–11:30	**Evolution of Technical Writing: Transforming to a UX Content Design Team** *Kelsey Drillen Director Content Design PointClickCare*	**The Horror of Modernizing Content** *Janet Zarecor, Director of Clinical Systems Education Mayo Clinic, and Alan Pringle, Scriptorium*	**How AI, MS Integration and Workflow Automation Is Shaping Enterprise Content Strategy in Regulated Industries** *Emerson Welch, VP Global Marketing, Quark Software*	**Combining Corporate Language with GenAI: Treat or Threat?** *Torsten Machert and Michael Mannhardt Congree*	**Bot Parenting 101: Raising the Bot Right** *Rashmi Ramaswamy Chief Information Strategist Innovatia*
11:30–12:00	*Lunch and Learn:*	**Introducing the Component Content Alliance: A Resource for Content Professionals** *Marianne Calilhanna, Data Conversion Laboratory*			
12:00–1:30	Vendor Demos and Dessert in Exhibit Hall, Therapy Llamas in the Grand Ballroom Foyer				
1:30–2:15	**The Unexpected Relationship Between Adopting a CCMS and ContentOps** *Marie Etzler, Magaya Corporation, and Alex Maycheff, Intuillion*	**Launch to the Sun: Implementing Docs like Sunshine Principles** *Jared Bhatti Sr Staff Technical Writer Alphabet (Waymo)*	**Conscious Leadership in Uncertain Times** *Kit Brown-Hoekstra Comgenesis and Andrea Ames Idyll Point Group*	**Navigating AI: Real Tales from Content Frontiers** *Amber Swope and Joe Gregory-DeBernardi DITA Strategies, Lief Erickson, Intuitive Stack*	**Out of Many, One: Building a Semantic Layer to Tear Down Silos** *Guillermo Galdamez and Nina Spoelker Enterprise Knowledge*
2:30–3:15	*TBA*	**Writing a Book on ContentOps: It Takes a Village of Experts** *Carlos Evia, Sarah O'Keefe, Rahel Baile, Patrick Bosek, Scott Abel*	**Goal-oriented Content Delivery: Beyond AI, Search, and "One Right Answer"** *Alvin Reyes, Senior Business Architect, RWS*	**Taxonomies in the Age of AI: Are They Still Relevant?** *Rebecca Schneider Executive Director AvenueCX*	**Best Practices for Implementing Your CM and Content Automation Initiatives** *Alex Maycheff, CEO Intuillion Ltd.*
3:15–4:00	Snacks, Vendor Demos in Exhibit Hall				
4:00–4:45	**Focus on Content Experience for a More Sustainable Web** *Jackie Pysarchuk Enterprise Content Strategist, American College of Cardiology*	**Effective Change Management for Content Teams** *Kevin White Director, Information Development Workday*	**The DIY Revolution: Crafting a Content Experience to Drive Revenue and Save Support Costs** *Alisa Conboy, Director, CX DocuSign*	**Unleashing the Benefits of GenAI in Content Management and User Support** *Lingxia Song and Marla Azriel Meta*	**Conquering Content Chaos: The Legendary Quest of Content Auditing and Maintenance** *Emma Pindera Content Strategist, PointClickCare*
5:00–5:20	**Phantoms of Content Strategy: The People Who Help and Hurt Content Projects and What You Can Do About It** *Michael Haggerty-Villa, Director of Content Strategy, Teradata*				
5:00–5:20	**Vendor receptions** in the exhibit hall				
6:15–	**Chinese Dragon Parade** followed by **Annual Karaoke Night** at Kelly's Olympian **Sponsored by RWS**				

LavaCon

All keynotes and breakout sessions in the Grand Ballroom will be recorded and broadcast live with video. All other sessions will be recorded (slides and audio) for viewing after the conference. See the conference website to view a sample virtual session.

Conference Day 3: Wednesday, 30 October 2024

8:00–	Breakfast				
Tracks	*Content Strategy and UX*	*Content Strategy and UX*	*The Business of Content*	*AI and ML*	*Tools and Technology*
8:30–9:15	**From Chaos to Clarity: How to Surface Strategic Insights from Content Inventories and Audits** *Vanessa Stuivenvolt Allen Director Content Strategy Resolute Digital*	**Lessons Learned in Scaling up the Login.gov Contact Center** *Rachel Houghton Login.gov User Support Lead, General Services Administration*	**Navigating The Generative AI Era: What Do You Need To Do To Keep Yourself Relevant?** *Alexander Lum and Richard Kung Ciena*	**Preparing Your Content for AI: Curation, Creation, and Cultivation** *Val Swisher CEO Content Rules, Inc.*	**How to Set Up (and Improve) a Documentation Portal** *Allie Proff and Christopher Stice Airbus Robotics*
9:30–10:15	**From Content Vision to Content Project: A True Story** *Alan Porter, CEO The Content Pool, and Mike Dickerson Content Project Lead ACIG*	**Mastering Interpersonal Dynamics: Navigating Difficult Personalities** *Jackie Damrau Product Owner Cathedral Plumbing of Texas*	**Sellsword: Life as a Successful ~~Mercenary~~ Contractor** *Jayme Perlman Senior Technical Writer GitHub*	**Transforming Technical Communication with ChatGPT: More Real-World Applications and Demonstrations** *Jason Kaufman Principal AI Content Strategist, Irrevo*	**Getting it WRONG : Lessons Learned from Building a Web Content Audit Tool** *Paulo Fernandes Co-founder Luscious Orange*
10:30–11:15	*Reserved to repeat standing room only session*	*Reserved to repeat standing room only session*	**Estimating for More Fun and Greater Profit** *John Hedtke Principal Consultant Double Tall Consulting*	*Reserved to repeat standing room only session*	*Reserved to repeat standing room only session*
11:30–12:15	**Closing Panel Discussion: The Future of Content** *Jack Molisani, The LavaCon Conference (Moderator)*				

1:00–5:00	**Optional Post-conference Workshops**	
	Beyond Design Thinking: Innovation Through Co-Creation and Questions *Andrea Ames Customer Success/ Retention Strategist Idyll Point Group*	**Accessibility in Content Strategy** *Jennifer Lee Former Content & Design Lead NIKE, Inc.*

Welcome to the 2024 LavaCon Conference

on Content Strategy and Technical Communication Management

LavaCon® is a gathering place for content strategists, user experience designers, documentation managers, and other content professionals.

Our Mission: To help organizations increase revenue and decrease costs by solving content-related business problems.

It's one thing to hear people talk about content strategy and usability; it's another to meet peers who are successfully doing it. Our speakers are practicing industry professionals who are eager to share their best practices and lessons learned—both what worked and what didn't.

Choose from more than 70 sessions and workshops on how to plan, execute, and manage enterprise content development projects.

Ready for three days of great sessions, amazing food, and plenty of opportunities to network with your peers? Welcome to Portland!

Jack Molisani
Executive Director
The LavaCon Conference

facebook.com/LavaCon

twitter.com/LavaCon

vimeo.com/LavaCon

Contents

Sponsors and Exhibitors

Many thanks to this year's sponsors and exhibitors!

Diamond

Sapphire

Platinum

Gold

ProSpring
Technical Staffing

<dita>strategies

ENTERPRISE KNOWLEDGE

LanguageLine Solutions®

Silver

congree
Unique Corporate Content

WWW.COMTECH-SERV.COM
COMTech
information design • content management

STC
Society for Technical Communication

bluestream
<content solutions>

MORNINGSIDE
A **Questel** Company

Other Sponsors

TECHWHIRL
techwhirl.com
Helping the the World Explore the Art of Content & Communications

MultiLingual
language | tech | business

Sessions and Workshops

Sunday, October 27

7:00–	**Registration in Grand Ballroom Foyer and Coffee (breakfast on your own)**

8:00–Noon	**Half-Day Morning Pre-Conference Workshops**

Getting a Clear Picture: Using Inventories and Audits to See and Improve your Content Structure
Ted Wolff, Information Architect, Precision Content

For your content to provide value as a business asset, it needs the right structure. The right structure will depend on your intended customer response. This is where content inventories and audits come into picture.

Inventories and audits help you identify the structure behind your content and whether it is helping to achieve your goals. As a result, you have the data to make better business decisions about your content's direction.

This workshop will look at how to use content inventories and audits at the structural level of your content to answer questions such as what elements, attributes or styles are you using, and how effective is your use of them?

Whereas many content inventories and audits focus on content at the page or site level, this workshop goes deeper to your content's foundation.

This workshop assumes your business content uses some existing structure or is looking to move to a structure. Examples include DITA, DocBook, HTML, and even Markdown or Word processing.

In this workshop, you will learn:

- Why it's important to consider your content's structure on the customer experience
- What content inventories and audits are, and when to use them
- How to create inventories and audits, and what tools can help, and
- How AI might help your inventory and audit practices.

Design AI Prompts and Workflows to Improve User Journeys
Noz Urbina, Principal, Urbina Consulting

Looking to leverage AI to take your content to the next level? In this dynamic workshop, dive deep into the art and science of designing AI prompts and workflows that unlock personalization, spur creative ideation, facilitate planning, maximize reuse, and streamline localization.

Through live exercises and an AI-powered persona and journey mapping methodology proven with some of the world's largest brands, you'll learn how strategies where you insert AI into the content lifecycle and craft precision prompts that generate impactful content to target specific user contexts. We'll also look at how to architect multi-prompt, multi-AI workflows that seamlessly integrate these new technologies into your content processes.

Master the skills to harness AI's power while ensuring quality and brand integrity.

In this workshop, you will learn how to:

- Leverage AI at different points in the content lifecycle.
- Accelerate customer-centric content design (especially for multiple channels).
- Easily configure Generative AI to help you jump-start content creation and personalization.

Elevating Documentation Excellence: Using AI to Create Robust Content Taxonomies
Christopher Ward, V.P. of Sales and Marketing, WebWorks

With the advent of AI, documentation designers must explore its optimal integration into document creation processes. One of the most promising applications of AI lies in the development of taxonomies. Through AI, document designers can establish robust taxonomy frameworks as foundations for expansion. Once established, designers can integrate marketing content taxonomies, thereby constructing comprehensive content taxonomies that effectively organize, manage, and optimize content assets. This optimization extends to driving engagement, fostering conversation, and enhancing customer satisfaction across various digital channels and marketing campaigns, including newly developed product documentation campaigns.

This breakout session introduces how to use AI to create robust Content Taxonomies. You will gain insights into how AI can elevate the value of documentation across all channels, thereby enhancing the overall customer experience.

In this workshop, you will learn:

- The two fundamental concepts underlying all AI.
- The key components essential for creating a taxonomy.
- Differentiating and identifying similarities between a Marketing Content Taxonomy and a Product Content Taxonomy.
- Tools available to aid in the construction and maintenance of a robust taxonomy.
- Methods for testing the effectiveness of a taxonomy.

They Already Sent a Poet, and It's You!
Carol Hattrup, Manager, Client Learning, Netsmart

In the film, *Contact*, astronomer and astronaut Ellie Arroway, awestruck by what she's witnessing as she travels among the stars, realizes the wonders of the cosmos would've been better described by poetry than science, admitting, "They should have sent a poet."

So it's fortunate that inside every technical writer a natural poet already lives. On a planet in critical need of the human connection forged through creativity, tech writers already have a unique set of skills that are perfect for composing compelling poems.

These skills are not only transferable between the two genres, but after I make you aware of them, you'll never unsee them. I'm a Gemini, but no matter what part of the Zodiac you inhabit, you've already achieved crossover; when it comes to excellent writing, you are your own twin flame.

But don't take my word for it. You're going to walk away from this session with your own poem about LavaCon 2024! You may be selected to read your poem at the Storytelling event, but, in any case, you'll have a unique conference keepsake and memory you can't buy in a In this workshop, you will learn:

- A brief and basic definition of what constitutes a good free-verse poem so we're all on the same page, pun intended.
- An understanding of the surprising similarities between poetry and tech writing, including, but not limited to, structure, brevity, word choice, iteration, attention to detail, and tone.
- The ability to leverage your tech writing skills into poem writing skills, and the confidence that accompanies this beautifully creative feat of genius.
- (If you're in a hiring role) A new appreciation of creative writers who apply for tech content roles.

In addition to your poem, you'll also take away resources for writing and editing two specific poetry structures you may not have realized you already know!

You'll take away additional resources for continuing your exploration of your new life as a poet.

User Research For Content Teams: Hands-On Testing Techniques
Bridget O'Donnell, Senior Content Strategist, Alibaba Group (AliExpress)

In the era of big data, it's never been easier to track metrics and measure your content's impact on conversion. But A/B test results alone don't paint a complete picture when measuring content's impact on the user experience. That's where user research comes in. By leveraging user research, content professionals can gather valuable insights from customers earlier in the

product lifecycle to craft content that meets audience needs. Effective research can guide stakeholders to make more informed product decisions, too.

During this workshop, you'll come up with a user research plan to gauge your content's effectiveness beyond clicks. You will walk away with templates & questions, as well as use cases. By the end of this session, you'll have a clearer understanding of when and how to apply different user research methods in your content process.

In this workshop, you will learn:

- Common user research methods
- How to gain content-related user insights that guide your production process
- How to collaborate with stakeholders in developing user research plans
- What it takes to create actionable content insights from your research"

Noon–1:00	**Lunch on your own**

1:00–5:00	**Half-Day Afternoon Pre-Conference Workshops**

One Size Fits No One
Dawn Stevens, President, Comtech Services

To improve the customer experience through our content, we must fully understand who our customer is and what it is they need and expect. Often, however, technical communicators are forced into a one-size fits all approach to content. We appeal to the unknown masses, attempting to meet the needs of any person of any experience in any context, but in reality leaving it up to the individual to find their specific needle in our haystack of information. We must face the fact that one size fits no one.

With that acceptance, however, comes the question of how then do we adapt to the customer, rather than making the customer adapt to us? What parts of audience profiling really affect our approach? How do we gather that information? How can we accommodate different audience profiles without breaking the bank? What is the impact of leaving someone out of the equation?

This workshop explores these questions through a variety of interactive exercises using Legos and the other participants to identify user analysis techniques that get to the critical, and addressable, audience differentiators and subsequent approaches to structure our content accordingly.

In this workshop,, you will learn:

- The critical differentiators between audience members

- Methods for gathering data about these differentiators
- Approaches for sizing and structuring content to accommodate these differentiators

Building and Maintaining a Prompt Library as a Business Asset
Jason Kaufman, Principal AI Content Strategist, Irrevo

This workshop will explore the creation and maintenance of a PromptBase, a centralized platform for managing, refining, and sharing AI model prompts. Attendees will learn how a well-structured PromptBase can act as a critical business asset, enhancing the effectiveness of AI applications, fostering collaboration, and improving customer experiences through efficient content strategy and management.

In this workshop, you will learn: about

- Understanding the Role and Importance of a PromptBase—Recognizing the significance of a PromptBase as a centralized platform for managing AI prompts, which serves as a knowledge repository, educational tool, and efficiency enhancer.
- Lifecycle Management of AI Prompts— Mastering the full process of AI prompt development, from identifying the need, creating, testing, refining, and finally, publishing effective AI prompts.

- Risk Mitigation in AI Prompt Usage—Learning strategies to mitigate risks associated with AI, including addressing AI hallucinations, maintaining data security, managing drift, ensuring reliability, and mitigating bias.
- Effective Design and Use of Prompt Variables—Understanding how to create versatile and reusable prompts with variables, allowing for adaptation to different scenarios and integration into various workflows.
- Feedback Management and Quality Control for Continuous Improvement—Implementing robust feedback mechanisms and quality control processes to continually refine and update prompts, ensuring their effectiveness and relevance.

Climbing the Google Analytics Mountain (GA4) for Documentation Excellence
Christopher Ward, V.P. of Sales and Marketing, WebWorks

In Brad Stone's book ""The Everything Store,"" Jeff Bezos was quoted as saying, "Treat Google like a mountain. You can climb the mountain, but you can't move it." He also emphasized, "Use them, but don't make them smarter." It is now time for Technical Documentation Writers to leverage the power of Google. With the recent transformation of Google Analytics from Universal Analytics (GA3) to event-driven analytics (GA4), new possibilities have emerged for documentation creators to analyze, report, and enhance documentation, transforming it into a pivotal tool, marketing channel, and strategic asset for revenue and customer growth across all industries.

This workshop aims to equip you with the knowledge and skills to harness Google Analytics (GA4) to elevate customer experience and augment documentation value. You will learn how to leverage key features including User-Centric Measurements, Cross-Platform Tracking, Machine Learning, Predictive Analytics, and Future-Proofing strategies. Discover the latest technological advancements offered by Google within an environment centered not on advertising, but on documentation.

Through practical demonstrations and expert guidance, you will explore the transformative potential of GA4 in optimizing documentation strategies, driving customer engagement, and fostering business growth.

Attend this workshop and embark on a journey to leverage the newest technology from Google to revolutionize your documentation practices and enhance your organization's success.

In this workshop, you will learn about:

- Organizing and Collecting Data
  - Understanding how Google Analytics organizes and collects data to optimize reporting for documentation.
  - Exploring the impact of data organization on the accuracy and effectiveness of documentation reporting.
- Setting up Accounts, Properties, and Data Streams
  - Best practices for configuring accounts, properties, and data streams to maximize insights and analytics capabilities.
  - Strategies for structuring accounts to facilitate comprehensive documentation reporting and analysis.
- Preparing Documents for Reporting to Google
  - Practical tips and guidelines for preparing documents to effectively report back to Google Analytics.
  - Optimizing document structure, formatting, and metadata to enhance tracking and analysis accuracy.
- Tracking Events and Custom Events
  - Identifying events tracked by Google Analytics and exploring the role of custom events in documentation reporting.
  - Leveraging custom event tracking to capture specific user interactions and behaviors relevant to documentation.
- Setting up Referrals
  - Understanding the importance of referrals in documentation reporting and analysis.
  - Guidelines for setting up and managing referral tracking to capture valuable insights into user behavior and engagement.
- Tour of the Google Analytics Interface
  - Navigating through the Google Analytics interface to access key reporting features and functionalities.

- Understanding the layout and organization of the interface for efficient documentation analysis and reporting.
- Setting up Explorations for Documentation
  - Exploring different types of explorations, including Freeform, Funnel, and Path, and their applications in documentation reporting.
  - Techniques for setting up and customizing explorations to uncover actionable insights and trends.
- Utilizing Model and Conversion Paths in Advertising for Documentation
  - Leveraging model and conversion paths in advertising campaigns to optimize documentation engagement and conversion.
  - Strategies for using Google Advertising tools to report documentation insights into efforts for maximum impact.

Optimizing Content Operations: Calculating the ROI of your Production Pipeline
Rahel Bailie, Content Solutions Director, Technically Write IT

Explore how to enhance your content team's efficiency. Learn to identify bottlenecks, optimise operations, and spend more time on high-value tasks.

In this workshop, we tackle a crucial but often overlooked aspect of content strategy: the operational efficiency of content production. Many organizations, particularly at the executive level, underestimate the complexity and resource intensity involved in producing content. The focus tends to be on the final product, neglecting the upstream blockers and bottlenecks.

Workshop leader, Rahel Bailie, will guide you through the content operations landscape, offering insights into identifying problem areas and calculating the ROI of addressing these issues.

You will explore case studies of how organizations managed to tighten their operating models between 50 and 80% through thorough process analyses and a radical rethink of their operating model. You'll learn how this efficiency was achieved, and discuss what you can take from this to apply to your own operating model. The judicious inclusion of AI to improve content operations will be discussed.

Creating a strong operating model doesn't have to stifle productivity and creativity; rather, it provides more time for high-value tasks. You will learn how to focus your efforts on optimizing the right operating model for your content team, turning operational efficiency into a strategic advantage. This workshop is not just about understanding the problems but also about finding tangible solutions to enhance the overall content production process.

In this workshop, you will learn:

- Where to look for waste in the content lifecycle using the principles of Lean services
- How to capture and present compelling data to make the case for an improved operating model
- Ways to calculate a cost-benefit analysis to determine where to focus attention

Building Taxonomies to Leverage Content
Heather Hedden, Taxonomy Consultant, Hedden Information Management

To make the most of content, the right content needs to be found by or delivered to the right people at the right time. Taxonomies are key to this process, connecting users to content by bringing to together the terms of the users with the terms in the content. Thus, taxonomies need to be custom built with input from the users and from the content, in a combination of top-down and bottom-up approaches.This workshop discusses methods and best practices for building taxonomies, whether for marketing content, technical content, or internal enterprise content. Methods include workshops, interviews, content analysis, and text extraction. Best practices include following standards for hierarchical relationships, using suitable labels and synonyms for taxonomy concepts, and using the right taxonomy structures. The workshop includes interactive exercises of hierarchical relationship and alternative label creation.

The goals of this workshop are to:

- Understand the benefits and challenges of taxonomies
- Know the suitable type of taxonomy or knowledge organization system to create
- Become familiar with taxonomy standards and how to use them

- Know the varied sources and how to gather taxonomy concepts
- Be able to form concepts with preferred and alternative labels
- Be able to properly construct hierarchical and nonhierarchical relationships

- Understand taxonomy governance sufficiently to implement
- Know different methods for tagging or classifying with a taxonomy
- Understand the options for taxonomy management systems

5:30–6:30	**Welcome Reception**

Monday, October 28

7:30–	**Registration and Breakfast**

8:30–9:00	**Welcome**

Jack Molisani, Executive Director, The LavaCon Conference

Join us as Jack welcomes you to the start of the 2024 LavaCon Conference.

9:00–9:20	**Building Influence: A Roadmap for Content Expertise and Leadership**

Melinda Belcher, Executive Director, JPMorgan Chase

This session will help content professionals learn how to establish a shared vision and build influence in their cross-functional teams. The key takeaway will be a high-level roadmap for establishing yourself as an SME and a leader.

In this session, you will learn how to:

- Plan your quarters and rationalize decisions.
- Navigate and facilitate alignment with stakeholders.
- Evolve your practice and educate those around you.
- Take care of yourself by setting clear priorities/boundaries.

9:20–9:40	**Metamorphosis: Empowering Our Craft's Evolution in the Dawn of GenAI's Era**

Fawn Damitio, Sr. Manager of AI Infrastructure, Meta
Peggy Sanchez, Sr. Manager, Hewlett Packard Enterprise

"It is not the strongest of the species that survives, nor the most intelligent; it is the one that is most adaptable to change." —Charles Darwin

In the 90s, there was an obscure function beginning to emerge in tech called "human factors." This field worked mostly on making consumer goods, and particularly electronic consumer goods, more usable. Around this same time, psychologist Don Norman joined Apple. No doubt, Steve Jobs was exploring the Human Factors as a trend and brought Norman on board to explore it more deeply. As

Norman dug into this at Apple, he created an umbrella term that encompassed human factors but also included all human interactions with devices: mental, physical, and psychological. Here arose, seemingly out of dust, the now booming industry of UX.

But did it really rise out of nowhere? Those of us old enough to have been working at this time, knew that much of what "UX" and Human Factors did was something that technical writers already did informally. As the first consumers of products, we were strong advocates of product usability. We commonly shaped the design and direction of products with our usability feedback. After all, the entire point of technical content was to help people better use products. Then why was it that Jobs, Norman, and seemingly the rest of the industry ended up whole-heartedly embracing UX while continuing to declare, "No one reads the documentation."?

The case that could be made then, and still today, that it all comes down to our overall lack of expertise in marketing and branding. Many of us "hard core tech writers" shun marketing as "fake" or "unnecessary fluff." Even those of us who don't deride the practice often have little or no experience in leveraging its tools. But there is tremendous power within the craft of a well-marketed rebrand.

We missed the boat in the 90s. That's the bad news. The good news is that, with GenAI, we have been given a second chance. Language and technology are our areas of expertise, after all. In many ways, there is no other industry so well-poised to take the reins of this emerging field than our industry. But will we?

In this talk, we will propose the amalgamation of our work into a rebranded function that fuses our expertise in usability, language, information architecture, and software engineering. We will also equip you with the tools that you need to carry this message forward to your leaders. This is a talk not to be missed.

9:40–10:00   Are Your Canaries Still Singing? An Optimist's Guide to Designing for Failure

Relly Annett-Baker, Head of UX Content Strategy, Google

Have you ever been in a stakeholder meeting and they're describing how that new feature is going to Fix Everything That's Wrong Around Here? They've jumped to hyper-personalized experiences, with integrated dashboards, and AI generated word perfect policy interpretations. Another stakeholder paints an equal feature utopia but somehow the equal and opposite of the first stakeholder. Meanwhile, you just wanted to know how customers use the current edit feature.

Worse still, your research shows that the ways customers are going to interpret the new expanded edit feature is very different from your stakeholders—possibly resulting in vital data or content deletion by your customers, followed by tickets, emails, pitchforks at dawn.

In this talk, I will share my One Weird Tip (just one, and it is weird) for making sure everyone can express and recognize measures of failure as well as measures of success, and how to raise the alarm without being seen as alarmist.

In this session, you will learn how to:

- Easily capture and share mental models and terminology
- Use risk and mitigation conversations to drive alignment
- Map and explain systems of users and data quality
- Use research and experiments to build up a clearer picture of complexity
- Remain an optimist even as things go off the rails (maybe)

Stop Imposing Your Org Chart Onto Your Customer Experience
Sara Feldman, Director of Member Engagement, Consortium for Service Innovation

For too long, we have let internal team structures, workflows, and tools dictate how customers find the information they need. We have excellent intentions! Yes, and, we allow divisions of labor to increase wayfinding effort for our customers.

This session will highlight the common pitfalls that cause internal operations to hinder customer experience. Through real-world examples and practical advice, attendees will learn how to streamline their content strategy to hide the seams of internal boundaries and deliver content more intuitively.

Together, we can challenge the status quo of imposing on our customers and advocate for more unified content delivery.

In this session, you will learn how to:

- Identify the tell-tale signs that your organization's structure is negatively impacting your customer experience.
- Understand the importance of an approach that prioritizes customer needs over internal complexities.
- Walk away with actionable steps to realign your content experience to optimize your customer experience.

Modernizing Content Strategy: Workday's Agile Transformation
Kevin White, Director, Information Development—Information & Learning Experience, Workday
Stefan Gentz, Principal Worldwide Evangelist for Technical Communication, Adobe

In this session, Kevin and Stefan will discuss how Workday is revolutionizing the information experience through a centralized and agile content strategy. Discover how Workday overcame challenges like scalability and fragmented user experiences by integrating advanced tools and technologies.

Learn how seamless integration, unified search, and improved mobile user experience enhanced customer satisfaction. Hear about the

challenges faced and the strategies Workday employed for targeting goals, staying flexible, and maintaining effective communication.

This session is for anyone looking to drive digital transformation with an innovative content management approach.

How We Saved $57K in Deflected Support Cases in Five Months
Pam Noreault, Principal Information Architect, Ellucian

At Ellucian, we had a content problem. Our customers struggled to navigate a maze of complex information scattered across locations and platforms. We had to figure out how to provide a simplified user experience that provided users with relevant content, given the implementation of their solution.

Our team worked to sync and consolidate the information in the different platforms and locations. The result was a unified user experience where customers could access all product and API content.

Through this work, our customers can do more self-serve. We have a 91% increase in documentation views. We have saved over $57k by deflecting support cases through better documentation experiences.

This session will be interactive. Come to this session to share your experiences, best practices, and stories. I will share:

- The goals we created and the stakeholders we have onboard
- Our ongoing best practices
- Our ongoing strategy
- The lessons we have learned
- The evolving user experience improvements
- Our ROI strategy and analytics we use to justify our improvements

Evaluating AI: Best Tools for Your Content Team
Gavin Austin, Principal Technical Writer, Salesforce

How do you help your team select the most suitable AI tools, even if you have limited knowledge of AI? How do you determine which

tools will improve your content, enhance productivity, and provide beneficial results instead of hype?

In this session, you will learn about:

- How to plan and introduce AI tools to a variety of content creators
- Use cases for assessing AI's value in your writing processes and workflows
- Practical templates for evaluating and selecting the ideal AI tools for your teams
- Methods for sharing evaluation findings across large organizations and diverse teams
- Specific outcomes from evaluating several AI tools
- Communication strategies to align AI skeptics and believers
- Explanations on why a team evaluated some AI tools but not others

The Trouble with DITA: A Review of the 2024 DITA Satisfaction Survey
Rob Hanna, CEO and Co-founder, Precision Content

Over the years, we have helped many organizations make the leap into structured authoring with DITA. The DITA XML standard has been widely and successfully adopted by companies across many industries since its initial release 20 years ago. Yet many organizations continue to struggle with adoption. This session will present the results of this year's survey and compare it to the results from the past two surveys we have conducted since 2017. We'll look at what works well and other areas that cause trouble for some. We'll also explore mitigating measures that these organizations could use to get their DITA solution back on track.

In this session, you will learn:

- The continued growth and relevance of the DITA XML standard
- Areas where DITA has helped to improve on content operations
- Areas where organizations still struggle with DITA adoption
- What is holding some organizations from making the jump to DITA

11:15–Noon **Breakout Sessions**

Creating a Truly Customer-centric Content Experience
Laura Miles, Associate Director, Customer Success Operations, NAVEX

In this talk, Laura Miles, Associate Director of Customer Success Operations at NAVEX, will share her team's quest to transform their technical content experience for customers while streamlining their content operations.

Then

The NAVEX team found themselves with an entirely disjointed and fragmented content experience – with a cumbersome publishing process to boot. Customers were forced to search through outdated and inconsistent content across sporadic channels. Various teams were authoring content in differing environments and building a mountain of decentralized, ineffective content that was impossible to track and maintain. Their customer community only surfaced Salesforce articles which meant that a significant amount of valuable content was not serving their customers.

Now

Guided by a desire to help customers find relevant content as easily as possible, NAVEX set about on a gut renovation of their content strategy and experience. The team got to work centralizing content authoring with their seasoned technical writing team. Alongside this change, they created a singular, comprehensive location for customers to find the answers they need within a personalized self-service experience. They built cross-functional feedback channels and leveraged in-depth analytics to pinpoint content gaps and set up new publishing processes that allowed for near-instant updates to be made.

This talk is designed to provide inspiration and practical guidance to documentation leaders looking to radically improve how customers access and experience their content while making substantial productivity gains. We'll share the content strategy, tooling and process that our team undertook and how we're measuring our content performance to continuously improve outcomes.

Integrating Subject Matter Experts Into Structured Authoring Ecosystems
Dipo Ajose-Coker, Product Marketing Manager, MadCap Software

This session addresses the critical role of Subject Matter Experts (SMEs) in structured authoring ecosystems and strategies for effective integration within them. SMEs are invaluable in ensuring the accuracy, relevance, and technical integrity of content. However, their expertise needs to be harmoniously incorporated into the structured authoring process, which often involves specific methodologies and tools. We'll explore methods for facilitating SME contributions without disrupting their workflows, including the use of user-friendly authoring tools, collaborative platforms, and streamlined review processes. Additionally, the session will cover techniques for aligning SME input with structured content workflows, enhancing content quality, and ensuring that technical information is both accurate and accessible.

In this session, you will learn:

- How to leverage SME knowledge within a structured authoring framework, fostering a collaborative environment that enhances content precision and value
- Methods to integrate SMEs into structured authoring processes without disrupting their workflows
- How to use user-friendly authoring tools and collaborative platforms to facilitate SME contributions
- Strategies for fostering a collaborative environment that leverages SME knowledge effectively

Integrating Marketing Into Your TechComm Strategy: A Key to Business Success
Christopher Ward, V.P. of Sales and Marketing, WebWorks

Renowned management guru Peter Drucker once stated, ""Because its purpose is to create a customer, the business enterprise has two—and only these two—basic functions: marketing and innovation."" These words encapsulate the fundamental pillars of any successful business endeavor. Yet, despite their apparent simplicity, many businesses falter because they struggle to effectively execute these core functions.

In today's competitive landscape, content transcends traditional marketing boundaries, emerging as one of the most potent value propositions within a business's marketing arsenal. However, understanding and harnessing this potential remains a challenge for many organizations.

This dynamic presentation aims to shed light on the inherent value of content and elucidate strategies for seamlessly integrating marketing principles into your Technical Communication (TechComm) strategy. By bridging the gap between content creation and marketing objectives, participants will gain actionable insights into leveraging content as a strategic asset to drive business growth and enhance brand visibility.

Don't miss this opportunity to unlock the transformative potential of integrating marketing into your TechComm strategy. Together, let's embark on a journey toward maximizing the impact and value of your content and driving meaningful results for your organization.

In this session, you will learn the following:

- Basic Overview of Marketing—Gain a foundational understanding of marketing principles to empower document creators in comprehending and contributing to any marketing plan within the organization.
- Understanding Marketing Channels— Explore various marketing channels and learn how a documentation channel can effectively communicate with and resonate with target audiences, enhancing engagement and brand perception.
- Convergence of Content and Marketing— Discover the transformative potential of integrating content and marketing strategies. Explore how this convergence

can revolutionize audience engagement and lead generation approaches, driving tangible results for your organization.

- Setting Goals for Documentation Strategy—Define actionable goals for your documentation strategy to enhance its value and foster cross-departmental collaboration. Learn how strategic goal-setting can elevate the impact of your documentation efforts and contribute to organizational objectives.
- Measuring Success and Reporting Value—Explore innovative methods for measuring the success of your documentation strategy. Learn how to effectively report on the value generated by your documentation initiatives and leverage insights for continuous improvement and strategic decision-making.

The Beauty and the Beast: A Relationship with ChatGPT
Jennifer Swallow, Senior Technical Content Manager, Splunk

For many content creators, ChatGPT is a Beast, a looming monster threatening to take away the livelihoods of the Beauties, the highly-skilled knowledge workers. Yet we can't avoid it. We are being forced to confront it head-on. Rather than allow it to imprison us, what if we lean into what it has to offer? What prince might we find hidden beneath the scary surface? This talk is a case study on how a crowdsourced knowledge base, Splunk Lantern, is using articles generated through a custom AI model to provide more self-service content to customers. Using ChatGPT for first drafts allows both the contributors and the content management team to build out content faster to support more Splunk programs and answer more customer questions. But the process hasn't been without its challenges. Just as Belle and the Beast had a few false starts while they tried to understand each other, so too

has working with ChatGPT been an iterative process. But the result is a benefit to Splunk Lantern users and Splunk customers as a whole.

In this session, you will learn:

- How to create an AI model that uses the company's public-facing docs to generate new content based on a specific outline
- What human editors caught while editing
  – Grammar and style issues
  – Wordiness and nonsense phrases
  – Content organization challenges
- How the process to retrain the model based on editorial feedback worked (and didn't work)
- What benefit this AI/human partnership is bringing to the company
  – Enhanced content quality and efficiency
  – Improved knowledge management strategy
  – Better support and user experience through targeted self-help articles

Data Models for DITA Systems
Jim Tivy, CTO, Bluestream

Data models provide an essential tool for understanding DITA and the systems that work with DITA.

In this talk, we explore some key use cases and concepts of DITA and how they are represented in a formal data model. We then trace the DITA model as it flows through a CCMS and finally out to readers.

In this session, you will learn about:

- The key DITA use cases and concepts
- Some UML modeling techniques
- A formal data model for DITA
- Modeling DITA in a DITA CCMS
- Modeling DITA in a content delivery system

| **Noon–1:30** | **Networking Lunch, Dessert in the Exhibit Hall, and Comfort Dogs in Grand Ballroom Foyer** |

Are You My Customer?
Dawn Stevens, President, Comtech Services

To improve the customer experience through our content, we must fully understand who our customer is and what it is they need and expect. Unfortunately, many technical communicators do not have direct access to customers to create user profiles or verify assumptions. Following the model of the Dr.Seuss book Are You My Mother?, this presentation explores the process of identifying target customers. While searching for the appropriate customer, our hero encounters a variety of possibilities, including subject matter experts, trainers, support personnel, and even artificial intelligence, asking each "Are you my customer?"

In this session, you will learn:

- What characteristics are important to identify customers
- Strategies for finding those customers
- How to overcome obstacles on the way to meeting customers

Metrics Madness: From Content Chaos to Data-Driven Delight
Kat Reierson, Manager, Product Documentation, DocuSign

Dive into the captivating tale of one brave soul's journey from utter cluelessness to confident command of content metrics and analytics! Join Kat Reierson for an inspiring and relatable session as she shares her personal odyssey of navigating the murky waters of data without a compass. From the initial panic of staring at incomprehensible graphs to the triumphant moments of uncovering actionable insights, this session offers a candid and humorous glimpse into the highs and lows of mastering content analytics.

In this session, you will learn:

- The Importance of Embracing the Journey—Understanding that everyone starts somewhere and learning to appreciate the process of growth and learning in content metrics and analytics.
- Navigating the Data Deluge—Strategies for managing overwhelming amounts of data and navigating through complex analytics terminology.

- Finding Your Bearings—Practical tips and resources for beginners to kickstart their journey toward content analytics proficiency, including recommended tools and learning resources.
- Celebrating Milestones and Victories—Learning to recognize and celebrate small wins and milestones on the path to mastering content metrics, fostering motivation and perseverance.
- Engaging in Q&A and Group Discussion—Participating in interactive discussions, sharing experiences, seeking advice, and connecting with fellow attendees to build a supportive community of learners.Through this session, attendees will gain not only practical insights and strategies but also a sense of encouragement and camaraderie as they embark on their own content metrics adventure.

Achieving Customer Success Through Self-Service Support
Patrick Bosek, CEO, Heretto
Barbara Green, UX Content Lead, ACS Technologies

Explore how self-service solutions revolutionize customer support and drive business success. Learn from the team at ACSTechnologies, where understanding the need for self-service and a commitment to great customer experiences led to a game-changing portal launch.

The key points of this presentation are:

- Customer-centric self-service—Discover how self-service portals meet evolving customer expectations and empower users to find solutions independently.
- Business value—Understand the undeniable business benefits of adopting a self-service model.
- Building a strong business case—Learn how to create a compelling case for self-service that secures buy-in from stakeholders.
- Gaining recognition: See how launching a self-service portal can boost recognition and elevate technical documentation teams.
- Real-world insights—Hear real-life examples from ACSTechnologies on how

their self-service portal launch boosted customer satisfaction and departmental recognition.

Don't miss this opportunity to transform your support operations and elevate your career! Join us for a concise, insightful session that promises to deliver actionable strategies and invaluable insights.

In this session, you will learn about:

- Technical communications involvement—The critical role of technical communications in implementing a self-service solution
- Proven strategies—Techniques for promoting self-service adoption and utilization
- Effective ticket deflection—Preemptively addressing common issues through robust self-help resources
- User-centric portal design—Creating intuitive and engaging self-service portals
- Scaling support—Leveraging new self-service tools to handle complex issues more efficiently
- Measuring success—Key metrics to track and evaluate the impact of your self-service initiatives
- Future trends—Stay ahead with insights into the evolving landscape of self-service.

The Truth about GenAI and Content Delivery: Promises vs. Real-life Use Cases
Fabrice Lacroix, CEO, Fluid Topics

With two years since GenAI made its debut in our tech toolkits, let's go beyond the hype and delve into its practical capabilities. Together, we'll dissect the gap between expectations and reality, exploring what implementations are currently feasible and secure, and shedding light on the challenges of delivering human-like interactions.

Join Fabrice Lacroix, CEO of Fluid Topics, for an insightful session rooted in two decades of research and development in Language Models (LLM) and AI, along with recent AI projects within the industry.

Through real-life case studies, we'll explore the nuances of AI integration, offering strategies for managing expectations and maximizing its potential within the current capabilities.

Don't miss our actionable insights to stay ahead in the evolving landscape of artificial intelligence.

Building Your Own Content Design System From Scratch
Andrew Dubrov, Head of CX Content Design, Verizon

Are you a content strategist/design thinker in a massive organization? Do different content authors and teams have their own CMS instances, standards & processes? Is everyone and no one in control of how content matches customer delight, brand voice and content architecture? Well, welcome to the club! And welcome to a healthy, design-driven way of beginning to tackle these issues.In this session, we'll go over concrete steps to take in creating a reusable design-thinking inspires, content design system.

Topics will include:

- What you and cannot control—Functional mapping of content creation and management roles
- Common reusable content components and assets—Content asset definitions, elements, models, taxonomies and glossaries
- Distribution, Intervention. and governance models
- Shaping generative AI output for user centricity

Examples from experience will form a basis for explaining concepts and an improvised workshop portion, based on an invented scenario will help participants grasp how to put some of the suggestions we will bring into action.

In this session, attendees will learn how:

- Design thinking can create a content creation and management governance model
- To identify, audit, and create reusable content assets
- To advocate for good content practices in the architecting of emerging generative technologies

Operationalizing Generative AI
Sean Angus, Sr. Director of Solution Consulting, Acrolinx

Most companies are racing to add Generative AI capabilities to their organization's content development practices. Doing so securely, safely, and in ways that complement your business goals must be kept in perspective. Organizations are facing significant challenges with governing knowledge, managing risks, and ensuring compliance with standards, at scale. Professional writers are in general quick to adopt new tools and technology. Business writers are typically less mindful of how to maximize content development practices.

In this session, you will learn:

- Best practices needed to securely integrate Generative AI into content development processes, at scale.
- Strategies for governing knowledge, managing risks, and making sure compliance with standards when scaling Generative AI.
- How to maximize efficiency for professional and business writers, understanding their differing needs.

Curing Chaotic Content by Cutting to the Core
Mark Johnson, Documentation Manager, Securonix

Documentation projects are often like E.R. patients. I know this from watching just about every episode of the medical drama House M.D. In each episode, Dr. Gregory House (an unconventional, misanthropic medical genius) leads a team of diagnosticians through the process of investigating often rare combinations of strange symptoms in search of the proper treatment. He clashes with his fellow physicians because many of his hypotheses about patients' illnesses are based on subtle or controversial insights, and his disregard for hospital rules and procedures frequently leads him into conflict with his boss, the dean of medicine. While abrasive, I found the character easy to like. In every episode, there is a eureka moment as some random coincidence sparks just the right insight, and he is able to connect the missing pieces and triumphantly announce the diagnosis and treat the patient.

I was in need of such a moment in September of 2022. I had just started as Lead Technical Writer at Securonix, and my patient was a documentation portal showing some troubling symptoms, including inaccessible, incomprehensible, and unsustainable content. Furthermore, our main 2023 corporate documentation objective was to implement "Contextual Documentation". This would be needed in addition to a completely new online documentation portal. Our patient was unconscious on a hospital bed, and would need to be fixed up and ready to run a marathon in a matter of months!

It was clear some superficial band-aids and gauze was not going to suffice. We needed a consistent, comprehensive, comprehensible, and scalable content strategy that would accommodate a growing UI. This meant we needed to strike at the root cause of the scalability issues and address them throughout.

This session describes how the Securonix documentation team cut to the core of the chaos with exploratory surgery, diagnosed, treated, and eventually cured our content conundrum.

In this session, you will learn:

- Actionable advice for developing extensible documentation
- Ways to leverage this strategy in context help and in an online doc portal
- The process, partners, tooling, and timeline we undertook to launch so quickly
- How we plan to continue to build on this success

Content is THE Most Strategic Asset for Unparalleled Customer and Business Success
Bernard Aschwanden, AEM Guides Technologist, CCMS Kickstart

Gulfstream. Adobe. Broadcom. Mayo Clinic. What do they have in common? Big organizations? Create content? Or, in the context of the session, we can go with ""they have corporate assets"". Sure. Assets are typically defined as ""any item of economic value owned by the corporation, including cash, securities, accounts receivable, inventory, office

equipment, and property"". This definition will often miss CONTENT as the most strategically important corporate asset.

Businesses that leverage content as an asset foster collaboration and fuel organizational growth, paving the way for shared success between content creators and content consumers, as well as their own internal teams. In this session, we delve into real-world case studies showcasing how content serves as a pivotal business asset, driving unparalleled success. We'll explore strategies employed by companies to leverage content effectively, along with tactics used to implement these strategies.

And, of course, we'll touch on the importance of taxonomy, metadata, and information architecture as part of emerging trends including AI in content creation, management, distribution, and automation.

In this session, you will learn:

- How top companies manage content for success
- Strategies for leveraging content as a business asset
- Tactics for implementing effective content initiatives
- Importance of taxonomy and metadata in content management
- Successful content strategies, based on real-world case studies
- Impact of information architecture on content effectiveness
- Emerging trends in AI for content creation and distribution
- Practical insights for improving customer experiences through content

Beyond the Hype: How Doc Teams are Leveraging AI to Make a Difference
Joe Gelb and Tom DeBeauchamp, Zoomin

In many companies, doc teams are the first team to get an AI solution up and running. The success of AI initiatives hangs on the knowledge it's grounded in. Pioneering doc teams are taking the lead in building the critical infrastructure for their entire company's AI feasibility, and, at times, even strategy.

When it comes to AI, a lot of talk can be vague or theoretical. But many companies out there are doing the hard work to implement AI solutions that move the needle. Slowly but surely, best practices are emerging.

AI isn't coming for your job. But AI-savvy docs professionals might. As AI continues to transform the way we work, we must transform our own roles to meet this new reality and continuously implement emerging best practices around AI.

That's why we want to share some of the best practices that we have uncovered. These are real, tangible insights from peers putting in the work and successfully deploying GPT solutions. No theory, but meaty, value-packed insights.

Join us in learning from the pros, including:

- How other industry giants are leveraging AI to work smarter and deliver better self-service experience
- How to get started with AI initiatives and the functionality to prioritize
- The collaboration required with other teams to move with speed
- How to track and communicate the impact of your work

Programmatic Loves Structure: Why You Need a DITA-first Headless Strategy
Jim Edmunds, President & CEO, Ingeniux

In today's rapidly evolving digital landscape, the demand for agile content management and delivery has never been higher. Enter DITA-first headless strategies—a transformative approach poised to revolutionize how organizations create, manage, and distribute content.

DITA (Darwin Information Typing Architecture) provides a structured, modular framework for content authoring, allowing for unparalleled flexibility and reusability. When coupled with a headless CMS (Content Management System), which separates content creation from its presentation layer, organizations gain unprecedented control and efficiency in delivering content across multiple channels and devices.

This presentation explores the synergies between DITA and headless CMS, demonstrating why this combination is indispensable for enterprises aiming to streamline content workflows, enhance content consistency, and improve time-to-market.

Join us to discover why embracing this paradigm shift is not just advantageous but also essential for achieving content agility and competitive advantage.

In this session, you will learn about:

- Efficiency gains—How DITA's structured authoring minimizes redundancy and maximizes content reuse, leading to more efficient content creation and management.
- Omnichannel delivery—Leveraging headless CMS to deliver DITA-structured content seamlessly across websites, mobile apps, IoT devices, and more, ensuring a consistent user experience.
- Future-proofing content—The scalability and flexibility of a DITA-first headless strategy empower organizations to adapt swiftly to technological advancements and market demands.
- Real-world success stories—Case studies illustrating how leading organizations have successfully implemented and benefited from a DITA-first headless approach.

3:15–4:15　　　　**Snack Break in the Exhibit Hall**

4:15–4:35　　　　**The Business Case for Content Operations**

Sarah O'Keefe, CEO, Scriptorium

Discover the compelling business case for content operations in this keynote session as Sarah O'Keefe shares insights into cost and revenue correlations, key competitive advantages that are often overlooked, and other business benefits.

In this session, you will learn:

- What is content operations?
- How content operations impact revenue
- Key competitive advantages of content ops
- How to position your business case for maximum success

4:35–4:55　　　　**To be announced**

4:55–5:15　　　　**The Story of Cathy Content**

Stefan Gentz, Principal Worldwide Evangelist for Technical Communication, Adobe

During this closing keynote session today, Stefan Gentz tells the story of a fictional comic heroine. Cathy Content is the Director of Content at a global company. She tackles real-life challenges of modern content management and navigates the content lifecycle in a fast-paced digital landscape.

Learn how Cathy increases productivity, optimizes workflows, leads employees, and ensures consistent omnichannel content experiences. Explore the future of search, content consumption, and user support, and learn how these trends can transform your content strategy.

Be inspired by Cathy's journey and move your content initiatives forward in Stefan's fast-paced presentation.

5:15–6:45　　　　**Networking Reception**

8:00–10:00   Live Storytelling Event

Kelly's Olympian, 426 SW Washington Street

From poetry to stories and stand-up, grab your beverage of choice and hang out with your LavaCon peeps as we "talk story" (as they say in Hawaii).

They'll be a place to sign up if you want to participate (five minutes per person).

No prior speaking experience required!

Tuesday, October 29

7:30–   Breakfast

8:30–8:50   Truth Collapse: The AI Meta-Crisis

Noz Urbina, Principal, Urbina Consulting

AI offers us good, bad, and ugly, all at global sales. As much as it is offers the greatest strategic opportunities of our lifetimes, there are many unintuitive dangers we must navigate as teams and societies as it becomes more pervasive than event the web itself.

We'll explore some key mental model shifts can boost you or your teams' capacity to apply AI, then we'll dive deep into the pressing ethical concerns and practical threats AI poses to the internet, employment, societal stability, and truth itself.

Let's push the boundaries of content strategy using AI, but also start a meaningful dialogue about the boundaries and true human impacts of these technologies.

In this session, you will learn:

- How to maximize your leverage of AI with a non-techie but deep understanding of how it works
- How to see past the distractions in the AI hype to the real opportunities
- What the longer term dangers are, for which we all must prepare.

8:50–9:10   Shining a Light on Internal Documentation's Extensive Impact

Michelle Irvine, Technical Writer, Google

Documentation is a fundamental part of software development. With Google's DevOps Research and Assessment program (DORA research program, we shine a light on internal documentation's extensive impact.

In our most recent survey, we found that teams with high-quality documentation report 25% higher team performance relative to teams with low quality documentation. And we see an interaction similar to sunshine: Just like a plant needs water and sunshine to thrive, an organization with good technical practices and good internal documentation is significantly more likely to meet or exceed their performance goals.

My talk shares how we at Google and DORA measure documentation quality, some of our surprising (and not so surprising) findings throughout our decade of research, and how this research supports our role as writers and content professionals in the industry

In this session, you will learn how to:

- Why DORA was founded and who we are

- DORA's research methodology
- Surprising findings from research (Docs are like sunshine)
- Ways research has been applied at Google and other organizations
- How our research can improve your work and help your advocate for more resources

9:10–9:30   **The Unseen Challenges and Hidden Costs of Adopting Markdown for Technical Documentation**

Scott Abel, Content Strategy Evangelist, Heretto

As a linchpin in the field of technical documentation, Markdown has become a widely adopted format known for its simplicity and perceived user-friendliness. Its role in facilitating the creation and management of digital content across various platforms has positioned it as a go-to tool for many tech docs teams. However, beneath its surface of convenience and widespread adoption lie challenges and costs that are far-too-often overlooked.

This talk will explore these unseen aspects, particularly focusing on how Markdown's adoption may inadvertently hinder the development of essential capabilities in technical documentation teams. You'll learn why the process of selecting Markdown, often influenced by a desire to include software developers as contributors, brings forth a set of unseen challenges and costs that merit closer examination.

This presentation delves into the complexities of these challenges, exploring how the selection of standards like Markdown can negatively impact an organization's efficiency, innovation, and overall content strategy.

In this session you will learn how adopting Markdown introduces:

- Scalability Limitations—How Markdown, despite its fast set-up time, may not be well-suited for scaling content production to meet growing organizational needs.
- Personalization Obstacles—How Markdown prevents tech docs teams from delivering personalized content.
- Multi-Channel Experience Hurdles—Insights into the struggles of leveraging Markdown for delivering seamless multi-channel experiences, an increasingly crucial aspect of technical documentation.
- Advanced Formatting and Design Constraints—How Markdown's simplicity, while beneficial for basic tasks, can be limiting when advanced formatting and intricate design are required.
- Difficulties Integrating with Modern Tools and Systems—The challenges in integrating Markdown with other cutting-edge tools and systems necessary for dynamic content creation and management.
- Impacts on Team Skills Development—Discussion on how reliance on Markdown might limit the technical skill development of documentation teams, potentially hindering their ability to adapt to more complex tools and technologies in the future.

9:45–10:30   **Breakout Sessions**

The Transformative Power of Component Content Management
Bernard Aschwanden, Principal AEM Guides Technologist at CCMS Kickstart, Canada

Stefan Gentz, Principal Worldwide Evangelist for Technical Communication, Adobe

In this fast-paced and entertaining session, Stefan Gentz and Bernard Aschwanden will take you on a journey from drops to drips. They will discuss why documents are dead, the future of desktop authoring and desktop publishing, and why structured component content

management for enterprise knowledge is a must for any future-ready organization. They will also give you an insight into Adobe's strategy and solutions.

The key takeways from this session are:

- From drops to drips—How knowledge and information management has changed from document management to Component Content Management
- From document repositories to structured content management—Why an enterprise-wide content strategy requires an enterprise-wide content management approach
- From desktop to cloud—Why a cloud-first strategy is crucial for content success
- From A to Z—How Adobe enables content professionals to manage all aspects of the content life cycle

Building a Phenomenal Content Community of Practice
Christi Guzik, Lead UX Content Strategist, Rocket Companies

People who design and create content experiences seem to find themselves in all different types of organizational structures. In fact, many content practitioners find themselves reporting to someone who doesn't understand content or all of the things important to those who create that content. Despite these organizational hurdles, you can still create an exceptional content community of practice. But, how do you actually start connecting these individuals into a cohesive unit who work together? Join me to walk through creating a content community of practice!

In this session, attendees will learn and leave with:

- Suggested ways on kicking off a content community of practice
- Ideas to keep content community members engaged in distributed workplaces
- Tips for getting management buy-in for focus on content-specific work

The Ultimate Practical Guide to Measuring the Impact of your Technical Content
Rita Khait, Director of Customer Enablement, Zoomin

Documentation teams have historically struggled to track, measure and communicate the impact of their work. Not only does this leave them without a seat at the decision-making table, it also leaves them unable to make strategic priorities and investments, get buy-in from other teams and achieve internal recognition. Many teams know they should be trying to measure their ROI, but the question is how?

I've spent the last two years at Zoomin delving into the performance of documentation teams to uncover the KPIs that matter, as well as reviewing the data gleaned from almost 100 million end user sessions to establish industry benchmarks.

In this talk I'll share everything you need to know about ROI measurements so you can become a data-driven documentation team with indisputable, enterprise-wide impact.

In this session, you will learn:

- The 20+ KPIs you should be measuring
- How to actually measure the performance of these KPIs
- Key insights from our brand new 2024 Technical Content Benchmark Report so you can assess your performance compared to your peers.

Content and Context and AI, Oh My!
Eeshita Grover, Director, Product User Content, Cisco Systems

In this discussion, let's think as a leader who is trying to influence multi-dimensional thinking in a team of content creators.

Content creators are often required to keep context in mind—what am I writing about? Who, what, how, when, and why. All of these set context for the content. But today, when most customers have access to an unlimited amount of content, how do we know the context that's driving their interest?

As a content lead with all the details on product strategy, how do you influencing your team of authors to focus on the context equally as the content? Attend this session for a proven method of doing just that.

In this session, you will learn about:

- The pros and cons of context-specific or context-agnostic.
- Working through content silos
- Using content as a buying tool for your customers

DITA Conversion: DIY vs. Outsource? An Oxford Style Debate
Marianne Calilhanna, VP Marketing, Data Conversion Laboratory

Once an organization has determined that DITA XML is the appropriate structure and best approach for managing content, the next decision is "how to get there?". Often organizations spend more resources vetting tools and various workflows than determining how content is transformed into DITA. Different vendors tout different approaches, making it a challenge to determine what is most cost effective and produces the best results.

Join two of the industry's leading conversion companies, Data Conversion Laboratory and Stilo, as they debate the merits of DIY conversion and outsourcing conversion. This Oxford style debate starts with an opening statement in which the audience will vote yay or nay in support of the positioning statement. Next, each company will present their position based on their industry experience. Audience participation is encouraged and will allow the debaters to respond and clarify their position. At the end of the respectful and well-mannered debate, audience members vote again, and results will be shared in real-time.

In this session, you will learn how to:

- Understand the decision-making process involved in selecting a content management approach, specifically focusing on the transition to DITA XML.
- Evaluate the factors that influence the choice between DIY conversion and outsourcing conversion when transitioning to DITA XML, including cost-effectiveness and quality of results.
- Analyze the arguments presented by industry experts from Data Conversion Laboratory and Stilo regarding DIY conversion versus outsourcing conversion, and critically assess the merits of each approach in the context of organizational needs and goals

---

10:45–11:30 **Breakout Sessions**

Evolution of Technical Writing: Transforming to a UX Content Design Team
Kelsey Drillen, Director Content Design, PointClickCare

In today's digital landscape, the role of technical writers has evolved beyond traditional documentation. With the rise of user-centered design and the importance of seamless user experiences, organizations are increasingly transforming their technical writing teams into UX content design teams. This session aims to provide you with a comprehensive understanding of this transformation process and equip you with the necessary knowledge and skills to successfully make the transition.

Throughout the session, you will explore the fundamental differences between traditional technical writing and UX content design. You will learn how UX content design focuses on creating user-centric content that enhances the overall user experience. By understanding these differences, you will gain insights into why transforming a technical writing team to a UX content design team can significantly benefit user experience.

The session will delve into the key skills and roles required for a successful UX content design team. You will learn about the various responsibilities within a UX content design team, such as content strategy, information architecture, and content creation. By understanding these roles, you will be better equipped to build a cohesive and effective UX content design team.

One of the core aspects of the course is exploring strategies for transitioning and upskilling technical writers to become UX content designers. You will learn about the necessary skills and knowledge gaps that need to be addressed during this transition. You will also gain insights into best practices for upskilling technical writers, including training programs, and collaborative projects.

Furthermore, you will gain valuable insights into the challenges associated with transforming a technical writing team. You will explore change management strategies, including how to effectively communicate the benefits of the transformation to stakeholders and gain their buy-in. You will also examine best practices for overcoming resistance to change and ensuring a smooth transition.

By the end of this session, you will have an understanding of the evolution of technical writing to UX content design. They will be able to identify the key differences between the two approaches and appreciate the benefits of a user-centered content design strategy. Additionally, you will possess the knowledge and skills to transform a technical writing team into a successful UX content design team, including strategies for upskilling and managing the change process.

In this session, you will:

- Understand the differences between traditional technical writing and UX content design.
- Learn why transforming a technical writing team to a UX content design team is beneficial for user experience.
- Explore the key skills and roles required for a successful UX content design team.
- Discover strategies for transitioning and upskilling technical writers to become UX content designers.
- Gain insights into the challenges and best practices for transforming a technical writing team, including change management and stakeholder buy-in.

The Horror of Modernizing Content
Janet Zarecor, Director of Clinical Systems Education Mayo Clinic
Alan Pringle, Chief Operating Officer, Scriptorium

Changing the way you develop content can be a horrifying experience, but proper planning will help you beat back the monsters that derail your progress:

- Fear of the unknown tech lurking around the corner.
- Villagers (staff!) with their pitchforks out.
- Frustration over moving your current documentation monster from one castle to another.

But you don't need a bigger boat to defeat the creature: small steps can be very effective to make incremental progress. Many of these steps are system-agnostic and can benefit you, regardless of the technology you ultimately pick.

Mayo Clinic and Scriptorium partnered to move from copying and pasting Word documents into the future of healthcare provider education with flexible, scalable content.

Learn about the planning and work you should do before picking new technology—and set yourself up to vanquish the extra redundant work monsters.

In this session, you will learn how to:

- Take small steps to optimize your content for reuse, automated delivery, and more.
- Acclimate staff to the idea of changing how they create and distribute content.
- Stop focusing on the tech. Focus on the people and outcomes.
- Achieve buy-in and investment from everyone because it is crucial for success.

You will also learn what worked and what didn't and how ACIG made adjustments.

How AI, Microsoft Integration and Workflow Automation Is Shaping Enterprise Content Strategy in Highly Regulated Industries
Emerson Welch, VP Global Marketing, Quark Software

Emerson Welch, VP Global Marketing at Quark, shares new statistics and narratives gathered from a recently commissioned enterprise CCMS survey with expert industry analysts IDC.

Learn how content strategy and knowledge management for highly regulated and compliant use cases are rapidly changing due to the impact of generative, semantic and intelligent content AI, why platform integration with the Microsoft ecosystem—including Microsoft Word for structured & technical authoring—is so important, and what board level objectives should be considered as part of the wider content automation strategy into 2025."

In this session, you will learn:

- The new findings of CCMS outcomes and adoption in 2024 and 2025
- How content strategist are approaching AI and for what purpose

- Where content automation supports top-level organizational goals

Combining Corporate Language with GenAI: Treat or Threat?
Torsten Machert and Michael Mannhardt, Congree

Nowadays companies do not only use multiple communication channels. With the advent of GenAI the challenges in terms of content consistency and content quality lead to new challenges.

Consistent corporate language is an aspect and important asset of corporate identity.

To make sure that this asset is not getting lost by using GenAI, you want to take advantage of other assets that you already have: the content targets of your organization.

Linguistic assets like company specific style guides and terminology can be the perfect basis to create brand-compliant content even in the age of generative AI.

In this presentation Torsten Machert and Michael Mannhardt will be explaining why corporate language is an important asset of a company's corporate identity and how companies can retain control over their corporate language even in the age of AI by defining linguistic standards and implementing and continuously reviewing them.

In this session, you will learn:

- The significance of corporate language for Corporate Identity (CI)
- The risk of losing corporate language through GenAI
- How content targets like company specific style guides and company-wide

terminology already build an important asset and the basis to train LLMs
- How to benefit from those assets while using GenAI in the content creation process while keeping your corporate language as integral part of your CI

Bot Parenting 101: Raising the Bot Right
Rashmi Ramaswamy, Chief Information Strategist, Innovatia

Organizations increasingly face pressure to ensure the accuracy and reliability of the information delivered by their chatbots. Despite the challenges with AI explainability, organizations are turning to chatbots because they offer numerous benefits such as improved customer service, increased efficiency, and round-the-clock availability.

Developing a chatbot mirrors raising a child. A well-behaved bot can enhance a company's reputation, while one that goes rogue can tarnish it. Drawing parallels from parenting, we'll simplify the various activities involved in designing and maintaining a well-behaved bot. We'll explore the holistic process of chatbot management, covering everything from initial planning and design to ongoing optimization and maintenance. We'll delve into the intricacies of conversation design and how with a proper content strategy we raise.

In this session, you will learn:

- The basic anatomy of a bot
- Rule-based bots vs Retrieval Augmented Generation (RAG)
- Strategies for planning and designing chatbots
- Innovatia's content lifecycle for conversational AI

11:30–Noon	**Lunch and Learn: Introducing the Component Content Alliance: A Resource for Content Professionals**

Marianne Calilhanna, Data Conversion Laboratory

The Component Content Alliance (CCA) is a new collaborative initiative formed by industry leaders who work in organizations that support content creation and management. The alliance promotes collaboration, knowledge sharing, and the adoption of best practices in component content management – also known as structured content management – across various industries. Comprising leading technology providers, consulting firms, and industry experts, the alliance empowers organizations to drive operational efficiencies, enhance customer experiences, and streamline service and support through optimized content authoring and management processes.

This interactive panel presentation from some of the founding CCA members offers you the opportunity to learn how you can take part in the CCA or rely on the CCA for insights, experiences, and industry knowledge.

In this session, you will learn how to:

- Understand the diverse perspectives and roles within the Component Content Alliance (CCA), including those of industry experts and novices, and how they contribute to the collaborative learning environment.
- Explore key tenets of content management presented by panelists representing different sectors within the CCA, gaining insights into various approaches and best practices.
- Identify opportunities for leveraging the CCA as a resource for learning about the content management landscape, including accessing expertise, gaining insights, and fostering professional development.

Noon–1:30	**Vendor Demos and Dessert in the Exhibit Hall, and Therapy Llamas in the Grand Ballroom Foyer**

1:30–2:15	**Breakout Sessions**

The Unexpected Relationship Between Adopting a CCMS and ContentOps
Marie Etzler, Magaya Corporation
Alex Masycheff, Intuillion

Before a CCMS

- Documents saved on a server folder
- Lone Tech Writer
- User Manuals in PDF and a homegrown online knowledgebase

Changes Leading to the Need for a CCMS

- Company acquisitions
- New products
- Growth

CCMS and Publishing Tools Researched and Implemented

- Selection based on company size, tool cost, XML, DITA, translations
- DitaToo CCMS
- Zoomin for Salesforce

Speedbumps and Detours on the Road to Success

- The need for internal company support, budget
- Define and get commitments from other departments
- Plan for more time and help than you imagine

Unexpected Benefits

Standardization of processes, which I included in a new ContentOps plan: I wrote out everything that my department does, and I graded the maturity level: Our use of XML and CCMS workflows is the most standardized of all our processes and graded at a level 5.

Takeaways

- Have internal support for each step
- Pace yourself

In this session, you will learn:

- Key points to consider when evaluating a CCMS and publishing tools
- How your ContentOps plan can influence your selection process

Launch to the Sun: Implementing Docs Like Sunshine Principles
Jared Bhatti, Sr Staff Technical Writer, Alphabet (Waymo)

Google's DevOps Research and Assessment program (DORA), found that high quality documentation shines the path to increased productivity and clearer decision making at organizations. However, high quality documentation doesn't build itself.

How do you fix an organization without documentation? How do you build a company culture that values writing things down as part of its process? How do you get buy-in from leadership?

In this talk, I show how I applied findings from DORA's program to advocate for and build a documentation organization at Waymo as its first technical writer. I show step by step my process for addressing these questions, including creating processes for documentation, leading documentation fixits, and measuring developer satisfaction at scale. I also show how you can apply these principles and processes to your own organization.

Conscious Leadership in Uncertain Times
Kit Brown-Hoekstra, Comgenesis
Andrea Ames, Idyll Point Group

Leadership is not about a role or a title, but rather leadership is an act of influence [and a way of being]. Each of us is a leader because each of us has influence."—Dr. Daniel Friedland

To be effective leaders in a rapidly changing world, we need a bigger box of crayons and new ways of connecting with our teams. True leadership begins with our inner work, which enables us to remain centered, flexible, and resilient, even in the midst of a crisis so that we can creatively serve our teams.

During this double session, we will explore how neuroscience and mindfulness can move us from states of reactivity to creativity and allow us to tap into our greatest strengths so that we can lead holistically. We will learn about the power of the pause, how to incorporate micro-moments of mindfulness into our daily lives, why the questions we ask matter and how to create better ones. We will build connections with each other, and gain a basic understanding of the power of appreciative inquiry.

In this session, you will learn:

- How neurology influences your capacity to be an effective leader
- At least three techniques for building your self-leadership capability and capacity
- How to begin creating and asking more effective questions
- How appreciative inquiry can expand your capacity for leadership, improve your change management, and create a better corporate culture

Navigating AI: Real Tales from Content Frontiers (A Case Study)
Amber Swope and Joe Gregory-DeBernardi, DITA Strategies
Lief Erickson, Intuitive Stack

At the beginning of 2023, Amber Swope, Lief Erickson, and Joe Gregory-DeBernardi embarked on a mission to integrate AI into our information architecture and content strategy work. Distracted by the shiny newness of ChatGPT and the like, we jumped into the fray without thinking much about what it all meant. A year and a half later, we've revised our process and narrowed our approach. Our goal is to understand how knowledge graphs can support LLMs, and then to leverage that knowledge into content solutions. In this session, we'll share our findings and discuss our first case study.

Are you tired of stories about curated, perfect AI projects? Come hear the real story (flaws included) from content professionals who are deep in it.

In this session, you will learn:

- How small- and medium- sized content teams can integrate knowledge graphs and AI
- Why content professionals are uniquely positioned to understand that structured content is crucial to the future of AI
- How to kick-start your internal AI initiative
- Practical guidance around structured content for teams just getting into AI

Out of Many, One: Building a Semantic Layer to Tear Down Silos
Guillermo Galdamez and Nina Spoelker, Enterprise Knowledge

Valuable knowledge is locked away within multiple silos in organizations – scattered across myriad systems, hoarded by individuals, and sometimes even forgotten by the organization. Curating, connecting, contextualizing, and delivering the right content to the right people at the right time can advance organizational efficiencies, nurture innovation, facilitate decision-making, accelerate the adoption of AI, and bring tangible business value to organizations.

As knowledge management consultants for the world's largest dedicated KM services firm, Guillermo and Nina have been helping organizations unlock their knowledge and maximize the value they obtain from capturing

it as content, curating it, and sharing it with the right people. In this talk, Guillermo and Nina will provide practical, proven guidance on how to break down knowledge silos using a semantic layer and streamlining the delivery of content. Speakers will illustrate the approach using various real life examples, including an investment firm grappling with sprawling content in the form of unstructured documents and disparate data across multiple repositories, a trade association seeking to provide a cohesive digital experience to its members, and one of the world's top retailers streamlining the assembly of learning experiences, among others.

The session will set the stage by exploring the problem space: diving into the conditions that lead to the proliferation of knowledge silos within organizations, and their resulting impact on operations and business costs.

Guillermo and Nina will proceed to provide an overview of what a semantic layer is: what it does, its benefits, business value, and enterprise applications and use cases. Once they establish this baseline understanding, the presenters will explain the components of the semantic layer, and how they enrich and enhance users' content experiences to overcome the common challenges that organizations face in setting up their knowledge bases. Independent of their level of technical expertise, the dissection of the semantic layer will help attendees understand

each of the underlying technologies, the associated skills needed to set them up, and how to orchestrate them to streamline content delivery to users.

Guillermo and Nina will then guide participants through a proven approach to implement the semantic layer, emphasizing the benefits of Agile, user-centered approaches to ensure the successful deployment of a semantic layer. They will again illustrate the approach using real-world examples, and the tips and lessons learned throughout the implementation process.

The session will conclude with a Q&A session to address any inquiries from participants.

In this session, you will learn how to:

- Identify knowledge silos, understand their origins, and measure their impact on business
- Define a Semantic Layer and the elements that make it up
- Define and prioritize use cases
- Assemble a roadmap for putting together a semantic layer to achieve your outcomes
- Identify common pitfalls and risks, and approaches for mitigating them
- Receive practical advice on how to overcome the inertia of maintaining the content status quo
- Define KPIs and ROI for the semantic layer

2:30–3:15	Breakout Sessions

Writing a Book on ContentOps: It Takes a Village of Experts
Carlos Evia, Sarah O'Keefe, Rahel Baile, Patrick Bosek, and Scott Abel

This panel session tells the sometimes scary, frequently challenging, but always exciting process of writing a book on the topic of Content Operations (ContentOps). The characters in this book, titled *Content Operations from Start to Scale: Perspectives from Industry Experts*, include superheroes from the content industry: some of them with powers in technical communication, others with accomplishments in user and customer experience, a few with marketing communication battle stories, champions of diversity and inclusion in content profession, and even some nerdy college

professors who truly care about the world of Content Operations. In this panel session, contributors to this open access book will guide the audience through many aspects and concepts related to ContentOps, including its definition(s), the business case for it, the technologies that support it, its integration with user experience, its importance for content governance, localization, and personalization, and practical hands-on approaches for adopting ContentOps in enterprise workflows.

In this panel discussion, you will learn:

- The experience of putting together an international team of content experts to write an open access book on Content Operations

- Tips and recommendations for collaborative writing across time zones
- Fundamental concepts of Content Operations, with emphasis on the business, technology, and practical approaches to adopting this content methodology
- The large-scale coverage of ContentOps as a framework for technical communication, user experience, marketing communication, and diversity, equity, and inclusion.

Goal-oriented Content Delivery: Beyond AI, Search, and "One Right Answer"
Alvin Reyes, Senior Business Architect RWS

Customers often have questions a single page of content cannot answer. Writers are challenged to design content for sophisticated tasks that require reference information, scenarios, and guidance across different media for many contexts while following unpredictable paths. And it's not enough to rely just on search, curated hyperlinks, taxonomy, varying page lengths, or even AI.

There isn't always one right approach nor one right answer. Sophisticated user goals require a combination of techniques to create a flexible, scalable, and trustable information model. Come to this presentation to learn the real needs of complex user tasks and how to map them to usable metadata. See what AI can do to suggest appropriate content and what it can't. And consider suitable goal-oriented solutions for your own organization's needs.

Taxonomies in the Age of AI: Are they still Relevant?
Rebecca Schneider, Executive Director, AvenueCX

Many contend that Artificial Intelligence (AI) negates the need for a taxonomy as AI has the ability to crawl very large data and/or content repositories and draw relationships between concepts. This presentation outlines how taxonomies and ontologies can inform AI systems and ensure the proper breadth, depth, and consistency of an AI application across content sets. It will outline recommended approach that leverages taxonomies as part of

AI or machine learning projects. Discussion will also cover potential pitfalls and mitigation methods.

In this session you will learn:

- How taxonomy fits within the realm of AI
- How taxonomies and ontologies can be used to improve training models as part of an overall AI application.
- Practical approaches to use as they embark on AI-related projects—focusing on the use of taxonomies and ontologies to improve the performance of AI applications.

Best Practices for Implementing Your Content Management and Content Automation Initiatives
Alex Masycheff, CEO, Intuillion Ltd.

The Gospel of Luke is very clear about bringing new ideas to the old world: "And no one puts new wine into old wineskins; or else the new wine will burst the wineskins and be spilled, and the wineskins will be ruined. But new wine must be put into new wineskins, and both are preserved."

The same can be said about new ways to manage and deliver content. Combine a new technology with an old content, and customer's experience will be ruined.

At this session, we are going to talk about the lessons we've learned when implementing content management and content delivery solutions at companies in various industries, including manufacturing, automotive, and aerospace.

In this session, you will learn:

- What happens when companies try to wrap old content into a new technology without redesigning content.
- How your content should change.
- What you should take into account when migrating to a new technology, from content granularity to language to cross-references.
- What roles are required to support implementation of a new technology, and what their responsibilities should be.
- Why content should be validated before it's delivered to customers and what approaches to content validation exist.

4:00–4:45   **Breakout Sessions**

Focus on Content Experience for a More Sustainable Web
Jackie Pysarchuk, Enterprise Content Strategist, American College of Cardiology

If the internet were a country, it would be the fourth-largest polluter on the planet. The energy cost of powering the web is often overlooked, but should be a major talking point for those of us who shape it.

This session will illustrate how content experience directly influences a website's sustainability score. We'll discuss ways to optimize accessibility, search optimization, user experience, and content governance practices to support more green-conscious work.

In this session, you will learn:

- Sustainable website practices
- The tools digital teams should use as they develop content
- Talking points for leadership buy-in

Effective Change Management for Content Teams
Kevin White, Director, Information Development, Workday

Things are always changing, and the rate of change is ever-increasing. Leadership, org structure, expectations. Business goals, content tools, approaches. Assignments, priorities, the products we write about. Even the audience.

While we make changes to improve the business and content experience, these changes impact our biggest asset–the people. Our writing team–the creative thinkers, the problem-solvers, the ones that ask the right questions and find the best answers. Our stakeholders–the partners who depend on our work and help provide the best user experience. Our customers–the ones who rely on our knowledge and expertise to get their own jobs done. Leaders, whether they are managers or individual contributors, need to guide and support all these people through change.

This session covers strategies for how to navigate common changes on content teams and turn these challenges into strengths, both for the people driving the change and those who must adjust to it. To illustrate the essentialness of change management, this session draws from real experiences of the Workday information development team. The team has gone through plenty of change over its nearly two decades, and we've learned a lot. By sharing our do's and don't and lessons learned, we hope to better prepare you for your own change efforts.

In this session, you will learn:

- The benefits of driving change in your organization
- Some common changes that deserve care on content teams.
- Why effective change management is crucial to a successful outcome
- Common pitfalls to watch out for during the journeys of change
- Techniques to navigate successful change management

The DIY Revolution: Crafting a Content Experience to Drive Revenue and Save Support Costs
Alisa Conboy, Director, Content Experience, DocuSign

In 2023, the DocuSign Product Documentation team focused on redesigning our self-serve product documentation to address real human outcomes, resulting in reduced human-assisted support interactions. We invested significantly in reducing the time it took for customers to find relevant product documentation, as well as making it the centerpiece of our customer support experience.

I wish I could tell you that we started our venture with executive buy-in and assistance from teams who understood our value. Sadly, no. Instead, we succeeded by sheer will and by understanding what was within our control. We focused on impactful changes within our reach, including changes to our content structure, SEO & search, portal organization, analytics implementation, and accessibility.

Users can now quickly find the information they need instead of reading extensively, increasing user satisfaction and improving product efficiency. By enabling quick access to information, not only did we reduce support costs, but we also accelerated the adoption of new features.

The results of our project extend beyond equipping customers with relevant content. We were able to help our company save a whopping $12 million in support costs while impacting over $1.7 million in revenue growth.

NOW, we have executive attention.

In this talk, I'll share the investments we made amid this transformation, how we quantified the impact of our team's work on support costs and revenue, and how our customer experience has been entirely transformed in the making.

In this session, you will learn how to assess what improvements are within your team's reach, including:

- Content and portal organization that builds findability
- Search and SEO traps to check
- Actionable analytics you can use for content improvements
- Turning metrics data into your own success story

Unleashing the Benefits of GenAI in Content Management and User Support
Lingxia Song and Marla Azriel, Meta

Are you struggling to manage thousands of user questions and effectively define taxonomy? Do you find it time-consuming to manually triage user questions to the right engineering group for support? Have you attempted to use GenAI bots for support questions, only to discover they hallucinate and struggle to provide accurate responses to domain-specific questions?

GenAI holds immense potential, but it requires strategic guidance to fully unleash its capabilities. In this presentation, we will divulge our insights and best practices for leveraging GenAI to optimize content management and streamline the technical support process.

Our discussion will cover:

- Enhancing Answer Quality—Retrieval Augmented Generation (RAG) methods we employ to improve response quality for domain-specific questions, with case studies.
- Creating GenAI-Friendly Documentation— Guidelines on crafting high-quality documentation that makes Large Language Model (LLM) training more efficient, and that produces higher-quality answers.
- Implementing GenAI Solutions—Case studies around GenAI solutions to help teams auto-analyze their support burden and provide custom remediation solutions, like auto categorization and triaging to reduce support burden.
  - Auto categorization reduced engineering work from 12 days in tagging 3 month's customer questions to 2 days
  - 700 gold standard sets of Q&A pairs from high-volume customer question groups have helped improve the LLM performance by 22% over the production model.

Join us as we delve into the world of GenAI and turn the jargon into reality to create efficient and effective content for user support.

Conquering Content Chaos: The Legendary Quest of Content Auditing and Maintenance
Emma Pindera, Content Strategist, PointClickCare

Drawing from our two years of experience in content auditing, this presentation highlights the significance of content auditing and maintenance in enhancing organizational efficiency, consistency, and user experience. We will share our lessons learned and insights gained through extensive content auditing, focusing on effective techniques for conducting audits, strategies for prioritizing content updates, best practices for implementing a content maintenance plan, and tools to streamline the process. By the end of this presentation, participants will benefit from our knowledge and tools, enabling them to improve their content management practices and ensure their content remains up-to-date and relevant.

In this session, you will:

- Understand the importance of content auditing and maintenance in improving organizational efficiency, consistency, and user experience.

- Learn effective content auditing techniques to identify gaps, redundancies, and outdated content within your organization.
- Discover strategies for prioritizing content updates and improvements based on audience needs, business objectives, and industry trends.
- Gain insights into best practices for developing and implementing a content maintenance plan, including establishing workflows, roles, and responsibilities.
- Explore tools and technologies that can streamline the content auditing and maintenance process, making it more efficient and effective.

5:00–5:20	**Phantoms of Content Strategy: The People Who Help and Hurt Content Projects and What You Can Do About It**

Michael Haggerty-Villa, Director of Content Strategy, Teradata

Let's talk about people. They're scary enough without us calling them phantoms.

But we need to talk about the phenomenon of phantom content strategy: when people in your organization do content strategy, often without calling it that and sometimes (often?) without collaborating with the content team.

Product managers frequently do phantom content strategy—naming things without considering the established product taxonomy, predesigning how a feature might look and the language in it, or telling content designers or technical documentation writers what to write.

Other folks in your organization might also do phantom content strategy. Managers, product designers, project managers, software engineers. Yes CEOs have been known to do it too. It happens everywhere. And it happens in your organization.

What can we do about it?

Sometimes we welcome the extra work. Sometimes the extra work doesn't, well, work. That's where good intentions might lead to some scary content harm.

Let's chat about these things and figure out ways to bring more content strategy value into the light.

In this session, you will learn how to:

- Collaborate with everyone
- Value relationships more than content
- Find the content strategy balance for your organization

6:15–	**Chinese Dragon Parade, followed by Annual Karaoke Night Sponsored by RWS**

The annual karaoke night is at Kelly's Olympian, 426 SW Washington Street.

Wednesday, October 30

8:00–   **Breakfast**

8:30–9:15   **Breakout Sessions**

From Chaos to Clarity: How to Surface Strategic Insights from Content Inventories and Audits
Vanessa Stuivenvolt Allen, Director Content Strategy, Resolute Digital

Hello LavaCon! As content inventories and audits have always been an essential part of my role as Content Strategist, I'd be thrilled to speak at Lavacon. My session would help to practically guide other content strategists through content inventory creation and maintenance, how to perform an audit, and what kinds of audits might make sense for different websites. Attendees will leave my talk with not only a clear understanding of the importance of a well-maintained content inventory (I'll give specific examples of all the different functional areas outside of just content strategy that can benefit from a content inventory), but a step-by-step walkthrough of how to create one, and all the most imperative fields to maintain. Once we've covered content inventory creation, I'll cover a few different types of content audits: how and what to audit on a site depending on your business and content goals, key tips for not getting overwhelmed (and never completing the audit) and what a good "outcome" of a content audit looks like.

A few case studies I'll touch on:

- Audit of 100 URLs that resulted in clear recommendations that were estimated to have $124K in quarterly revenue potential.
- Audit of 40 top traffic and 40 low traffic intranet pages that uncovered a clear trend in editorial style, title length, and format that was contributing to lower-viewed content.

In this session, you will learn:

- Why creating and maintaining a content inventory is good your site's business

- Basic fields you need to maintain in a content inventory and how to gather them (hint: not everything is manual!)
- How to organize a content inventory & what formulaic fields to include (tools and tips)
- Why (and when) content audits are necessary, and what kinds of content audits to perform (hint: engagement audit, conversion audit, UX audit, editorial audit)
- How to action on content audit findings

Lessons learned in Scaling up the Login.gov Contact Center
Rachel Houghton, Login.gov User Support Lead, General Services Administration

This case study presentation will go over the lessons learned in scaling up a Contact Center from an email-based support team of 25 agents working M-F 9-8 to an email and phone based support team of approximately 100 agents working 24/7/365, including federal holidays.

- In this session, you will learn about:
- Planning for scaling a Contact Center
- Doing a phone support pilot to gather information for staffing
- Timelines
- Gotchas that can trip you up or add time to the process

Navigating The Generative AI Era: What Do You Need To Do To Keep Yourself Relevant?
Alexander Lum and Richard Kung, Ciena

Generative Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools are not going away. Generative AI is expanding and evolving daily. Every executive expects you to incorporate Generative AI tools to improve user experience with your content. How do you navigate the Generative AI era and contribute successfully to the company goals of incorporating Generative AI into your workflow?

We will discuss some elements of how to keep yourself relevant and provide some practical use cases that we have been involved in to help achieve a better user experience in incorporating Generative AI.

In this session, you will learn:

- How to use Generative AI to remain relevant and not become obsolete.
- Generative AI is not your enemy if you learn to complement it.
- Generative AI strengths
- Generative AI weaknesses
- How to leverage your Emotional Intelligence (EQ), something Generative AI lacks.
- How to get started with Generative AI.
- Is your environment ready for Generative AI?
- Is DITA a good launching point?
- Where do you need help?
- Some of the common use cases practiced by Ciena content developers (demo).
- Discoveries from evaluating Generative AI and Retrieval Augmented Generation (RAG) techniques with Ciena technical publications.

At the end of this session, you will gain insights on some of the elements you need to consider in embracing Generative AI. You will observe some practical use cases that you can incorporate into your content development workflow to achieve a better user content experience.

Preparing Your Content for AI: Curation, Creation, and Cultivation
Val Swisher, CEO, Content Rules, Inc.

The quality of your content is the single most important factor in determining the performance of your AI system. The adage, "Garbage in, garbage out," has never been more relevant. Many organizations possess years, or even decades, of content that may be outdated, inconsistent, inaccurate, or simply not up to the mark for AI utilization.In this session, attendees will learn how to transform their content into a valuable asset for AI readiness.

We will explore:

- The Importance of Curation—Understand why carefully selecting and refining your content is crucial for effective AI training and outcomes.

- How to Curate Content for AI—Dive into practical strategies for evaluating, cleaning, and organizing your content to meet AI requirements, ensuring it is accurate, relevant, and diverse.
- Creating Three Training Sets from Your Curated Content—Learn how to develop three distinct training sets—training, validation, and test sets. Each set serves a specific purpose in training your AI models, optimizing their performance, and validating their accuracy in real-world applications.

Join Val to discover how to elevate your content from "just plain not good" to "AI-ready," unlocking the full potential of your AI systems.

In this session, you will learn:

- How content quality directly impacts AI success
- Practical strategies for curating content
- The use of training sets and how to create them

How to Set Up (and Improve) a Documentation Portal
Allie Proff and Christopher Stice, Airbus Robotics

Imagine being the first (and only) technical writer at a small company. You get to set everything up!

Or even if you're a solo technical writer or in a small team with a documentation portal already set up, there are probably ways you might want to improve it.

During this session, we will go over how we set up a documentation portal from scratch accompanied by questions you can ask yourself or your team for each topic.

We'll cover a number of considerations that go into intentionally setting up or improving a successful documentation portal: stakeholders, your content management system (even a homegrown one), writers and readers, templates and style guides, metrics, and change management.

In this session, you will learn:

- Six different areas to consider when setting up or improving a document portal
- Stories of one case study plus questions for you to ask yourself or your team for each topic

From Content Vision to Content Project: A True Story
Alan Porter, CEO, The Content Pool
Mike Dickerson, Content Project Lead, ACIG

In late 2023 the American Contractors Insurance Group (ACIG) realized they had a content problem. After 40 years as an industry leader, hardly anyone was reading their content any more.They knew something had to change and they had a vision of where they wanted to be – "In three years time our content will be the differentiator that allows our members to be the best in the construction industry."

But how to go from vision to reality.In early 2024 ACIG kicked off a multi-year project to transform everything they do with their content, from the way they write it, to the way they design, manage, and delivery it.In this session Alan J. Porter from The Content Pool, and Mike Dickerson from ACIG will take a look at the steps undertaken in turning an idea into a practical project, and provide an insight into the story so far—what worked, and what didn't—plus take a look at what's next.

In this session, you will learn:

- How to recognize you have a content problem
- How to develop a content vision
- How to prioritize and map out a practical plan
- How to address concerns through change management
- The importance of customer involvement
- What worked and what didn't and how ACIG made adjustments

Mastering Interpersonal Dynamics: Navigating Difficult Personalities
Jackie Damrau, Product Owner, Cathedral Plumbing of Texas

In this engaging and informative presentation, we'll delve into the art of handling challenging interpersonal interactions. "Mastering Interpersonal Dynamics: Navigating Difficult Personalities" is designed to equip you with the tools and strategies to effectively deal with various difficult character traits you might encounter in your personal and professional life. We'll explore five common personality traits that

can make individuals difficult to work with and provide practical techniques to navigate these challenging dynamics.

Whether you've faced aggressiveness, passive-aggressiveness, narcissism, stubbornness, or manipulativeness, this session will help you build your confidence and competence in managing these complex relationships.

In this session, you will learn about:

- Understanding Difficult Personalities—Gain insights into the different character traits that make people challenging to deal with, helping you recognize these traits when you encounter them.
- Effective Communication Strategies—Learn how to communicate assertively, set boundaries, and encourage open and honest dialogues with difficult individuals, reducing conflict and stress in your interactions.
- Conflict Resolution and Negotiation—Develop skills to resolve conflicts and negotiate effectively with difficult personalities, including techniques for compromise, empathy, and maintaining your own well-being in challenging situations.

Sellsword: Life as a Successful ~~Mercenary~~ Contractor
Jayme Perlman, Senior Technical Writer, GitHub

Is contracting really a viable long-term career option for knowledge management professionals? Absolutely yes! Knowledge management is uniquely suited to contracting—IF you're prepared financially, mentally, and professionally. It's a parallel world to the familiar FTE experience with its own unique rules, processes, astounding benefits to seize, and unexpected pitfalls to avoid. I spent nearly 30 years as a ~~mercenary~~ highly-successful career contractor. Come explore the Upside Down and discover if this could be the right path for you, too.

Calling all Adventurers! Understand the differences between types of contracting.

- Read the Map—Explore the contracting ecosystem.

- Dispel the Mystique—Most "obvious" issues really aren't important.
- Buff up—Evaluate your personal risk/reward/effort tolerance.
- Step 3: Profit—Straight talk about the money.
- Grind Reputation—Build ""triple wins"" to level up fast.
- Join a Guild—Develop your network.
- Cover Your...Back—Avoid or escape a bad gig.

Transforming Technical Communication with ChatGPT: More Real-World Applications and Demonstrations
Jason Kaufman, Principal AI Content Strategist, Irrevo

In an era where artificial intelligence is reshaping the landscape of technical communication, our session, "Transforming Technical Communication with ChatGPT: Real-World Applications and Demonstrations," offers a deep dive into the practical applications of ChatGPT, one of the most advanced AI language models. This session promises to be an engaging blend of theoretical insights and hands-on demonstrations, showcasing how ChatGPT can revolutionize content strategy and enhance customer experiences.

In this session, you will learn about:

- How to Develop AI Intuition—Gaining an understanding of how to recognize opportunities for using AI like ChatGPT in daily tasks and workflows, and the importance of starting small and scaling AI applications.
- The Art of Prompt Engineering for ChatGPT—Mastering the creation of effective prompts, including setting the role/persona, context, and specific requests to generate precise and relevant responses from ChatGPT/
- Practical Applications of ChatGPT in Technical Communication—Witnessing real-world demonstrations of ChatGPT for tasks like combating writer's block,

converting community discussions into knowledge base articles, and ensuring consistency in documentation.
- Utilizing ChatGPT for Content Analysis and Enhancement—Learning how ChatGPT can be used to analyze user feedback, document data, and identify opportunities for enhancing existing content, making data-driven decisions more efficient and effective.
- Engaging in Interactive, Real-Time Problem Solving with ChatGPT—Participating in an open forum to discuss challenges, share additional use cases, and explore innovative ideas for implementing ChatGPT in various technical communication scenarios.

Getting it WRONG: Lessons Learned from Building a Web Content Audit Tool
Paulo Fernandes, Co-founder, Luscious Orange

Auditing a website can be a complicated and tedious process. It often evolves a lot of time and energy, but it also needs some sort of structure to track it all. Most folks who start a web content audit eventually end up with a mix of spreadsheets, air tables, Trello cards, and Post-it notes. Lots of Post-it notes.

Our team decided it would be a good idea to build a tool to help with all that. We set out to build a tool that was a combination of web-scraper, site analyzer, and project management tool. It turns out we spent just as much time trying to understand what folks do in their content audits, as we did writing code.

We're going to share those lessons learned, so that you can save time, pain and frustration on your next web content audit.

In this session, you will learn:

- Commonly used patterns that you can use to keep your audit on track
- Lessons learned from applying various technologies to analyze page content
- Suggestions for how to structure and organize your next content audit

10:30–11:15   **Breakout Sessions**

Estimating for More Fun and Greater Profit
John Hedtke, Principal Consultant, Double Tall Consulting

This presentation is aimed at both freelancers as well as in-house staff and managers.Knowing how to estimate is one of the most important skills for any technical communicator. Making solid estimates keeps you from having to put in lots of time and makes you look like a hero no matter where you work. If you can't estimate, you can't set rates, schedules, or production dates. Conversely, being able to set precise estimates lets you make accurate bids and tighten your schedules so you can squeeze in that much more work.This 90-minute presentation discusses how to use simple time logs and personal project journal to assess your performance, as well as how to use a

spreadsheet template (available as part of the presentation) to identify precisely what you're doing as well as giving you an accurate,

In this session, you will learn how to:

- Track time spent on a project to develop accurate personal metrics (so you know how long it takes you to produce something) with a simple daily time log
- Identify your overall writing process using a personal project journal
- Create detailed documentation plans using a spreadsheet template (handed out as part of the presentation) that identifies exactly what you're producing and the level of change, as well as providing enough granularity that you can predict your progress day-by-day

11:30–12:15   **Closing Panel Discussion: The Future of Content**

Jack Molisani, The LavaCon Conference (Moderator)

1:00–5:00   **Post-Conference Workshop**

Beyond Design Thinking: Innovation Through Co-Creation and Questions
Andrea Ames, Customer Success/Retention Strategist, Idyll Point Group

Understanding and leading workshops is just scratching the surface of the power of Design Thinking. Join Andrea for this completely experiential workshop to dive deep on the concepts and practices that underlie Design Thinking.

Together, we will ask ourselves the right questions and co-create innovation for ... guess who? ... Jack and the LavaCon Conference! Throughout the workshop, Andrea will break down and debrief the experience to provide her tips and tricks for leading super-successful Design Thinking workshops of your own.

If you've taken Andrea's "Design Thinking for Content" workshop in the past, this will take your skills and impact to the next level. If you've never taken Andrea's workshop, you'll learn the "Design Thinking for Content" process AND enjoy the magic of participating in a Design Thinking experience.

Accessibility in Content Strategy
Jennifer Lee, Former Content & Design Lead, NIKE, Inc.

All companies should understand the content-compliance requirements established by The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), the Federal Communication Commission's Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act & Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG). In this workshop, you'll be guided through the standards for accessible internal & external content and gain skills in seamlessly building accessibility into your content strategy.

In this hands-on workshop will:

- Provide scenarios and easy-to-follow to-do-list frameworks for creating content that is accessible to all
- Connect you to free tools that ensure content readability, content visibility & screen-reader access
- Include poll-like quizzing to help you assess progress and cement your new-found knowledge
- Allow you to follow along within your own documents, bringing at least one page of sample content to full accessibility by the workshop's end

Speakers

Scott Abel

Scott Abel has been helping content-heavy organizations improve the way they author, maintain, publish and archive their information assets for over two decades.

Dubbed "The Content Wrangler," Scott Abel is the founder and CEO of a global content strategy consultancy with the same name. Abel also serves as a content strategy evangelist for Heretto, an AI-powered component content management system platform in use by technical documentation teams globally.

Abel also serves as the editor of a series of content strategy books from XML Press and is the producer of several content industry events, including Technical Documentation Roundup and Information Development World. In addition, Abel also serves on the advisory board for the Customer Experience Certificate Program offered by the University of California Santa Barbara, Professional and Continuing Education division.

Dipo Ajose-Coker

With an MA in Multilingual and Multimedia Document Conception from Université Paris Cité, Dipo Ajose-Coker has dedicated 18 years to technical communication roles in the Fintech and MedTech industries, including DITA migration expertise and technical communication. In 2021, he pivoted to Content Creation and Marketing, serving as an essential intermediary between software developers and end-users to align expectations with deliverables. In the complex landscape of Technical Communications, Dipo functions as the conductor, orchestrating a harmonious dialogue between users, industry experts, and vendors.

LinkedIn Profile: linkedin.com/in/dipocoker/
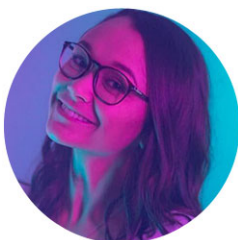
Vanessa Stuivenvolt Allen

My name is Vanessa Stuivenvolt Allen, and I am a seasoned director-level content strategist with 8+ years of experience. I've led Content Strategy for everything from small websites with niche audiences to billion-dollar brands' sites that garner millions of visitors a month. In some roles, my goals were simply to improve brand awareness, engagement, and time on site, whereas in others there was a heavy focus on click-through rate, conversion rate optimization (CRO) and improving revenue per visitor (RPV). For more, check out vanessastuivenvoltallen.com.

Andrea Ames

Andrea's passion is for supporting people to become wildly successful at work and in business. Embracing that we bring our whole selves to work, she has supported hundreds of business owners, executives, leaders, and teams to grow and honor their humanity as individuals while getting business done.

After 35 years in strategic, corporate roles focused on capability building, learning and development, and content and customer experience, Andrea started her business, Idyll Point™ Group, to take that work beyond a single company and broaden her impact. Her small-business clients call her the Customer Success Jedi, and she is an ICF certified coach, a trainer and facilitator, as well as a sought-after keynote speaker, an author of numerous articles and two award-winning technical books.

You can find out more about Andrea, how to connect with her on all the socials, and how to book time on her calendar from her website (idyllpointgroup.com)..

Sean Angus

Sean Angus is the Sr. Director of Solution Consulting at Acrolinx. He helps large-scale organizations with content and brand strategies leading to higher performing content for their business. Sean has 20+ years of experience in the content development world spanning the full customer journey. He's committed to defining content goals that achieve real business impact.

Relly Annett-Baker

A content strategist for too many years, Relly lives in England with her husband and a collection of animals and teenagers.

She spends her work hours running content teams, writing content strategy docs, overseeing content delivery, petting office dogs, and she's lost track of what else.

She's very good at saying "it depends" to stakeholders and pointing at graphs while nodding sagely.

Bernard Aschwanden

Bernard Aschwanden is a trusted thought leader, management consultant, business leader, and a senior content technologist with CCMS Kickstart. With over 30 years of experience, Bernard combines business leadership with the skills of an accomplished speaker to deliver compelling narratives that illustrate the transformative power of strategic content deployment as a driver of organizational success.

Through authentic storytelling based on guiding organizations to success, Bernard brings unparalleled expertise to your organization's discussions on essential content-focused topics. His insights into the development and implementation of unified content strategies make him an invaluable resource for anyone seeking to optimize content initiatives.

Gavin Austin

Gavin Austin is a writer, speaker, and Salesforce veteran who's helped grow Salesforce's content experience team from 3 to 500+ writers. With more than 20 years in the technical communications field, he's shared the lessons and technologies he's learned at a variety of conferences, including Dreamforce, ContentTECH, Intelligent Content Conference, Information Development World, Agile2013, WritersUA, LavaCon, Confab, and more.

Marla Azriel

Marla Azriel is a documentation strategy lead at Meta. She co-leads the Docs@Scale programs, which are scalable self-service content solutions for teams across Meta. Marla created Meta's Doc Training program to increase eng contributions to documentation, and the Doc Consult program, which helps teams identify strategic areas to improve and provides actionable recommendations.

Before Meta, Marla managed the Cloud User Assistance team at Oracle, delivering comprehensive content sets for multiple product suites. Prior to that role, she worked as a Senior Principal Technical Writer in the Content Management and Business Intelligence groups. She started her career at Fujitsu Network Communications doing technical writing, project management, UI and Web design, marketing writing, and information design and strategy.

Marla holds a BA in English from the University of California, Berkeley and studied abroad at the University of Kent in Canterbury.

On the personal side, Marla loves nature photography and travel. She is currently a black belt candidate in Tae Kwon Do.

Rahel Bailie

Rahel Anne Bailie is the Content Solutions Director at TWi. She brings with her a strong background in developing successful digital content strategies, tackling the complexities of managing content for clients globally. With a aim of using content to deliver better experiences and increase the ROI of product lifecycle content, she applies the principles behind intelligent content to deliver operational efficiencies in a scalable, sustainable way. In her 20+ years of consulting, Rahel has worked with many global companies, including Welch Allyn and A-dec Dental. Rahel is a recognised thought leader, having authored and contributed to several industry books, magazines, and academic journals. She presents at events worldwide and also teaches in the Content Strategy Master's Program at FH-Joanneum in Austria.

Melinda Belcher

From brand strategy to sales enablement to product design, Melinda has spent over two decades honing her problem-solving skills in nonprofit, agency, and enterprise environments. Throughout her career journey, she has had the privilege of designing physical and digital experiences for esteemed organizations such as Salesforce, John Deere, IBM, AT&T, Microsoft, and the Girl Scouts.

Currently, Melinda brings her expertise as an Executive Director at JPMorgan Chase in New York City, where she leads a team of design, content, and research experts focused on driving innovative solutions to customer problems. "I take pride in fostering strong connections with product, tech, data and legal partners," she said. "I enjoy finding new ways to streamline processes and helping teams work better together."

Jared Bhatti

Jared (he/him) is a Senior Staff Technical Writer at Alphabet. His accomplishments include founding Waymo's documentation team, co-founding Google Cloud's documentation team, and co-authoring the book Docs for Developers: An Engineer's Field Guide to Technical Writing.

He has worked for the past 17 years documenting an array of projects at Alphabet, including Kubernetes, Fuchsia, App Engine, and Adsense. He currently leads technical documentation at Waymo and mentors several junior writers in the industry.

Patrick Bosek

Patrick is a believer and thought-leader in Content Operations and structured content. His purpose is to advance the content and information development industry with new technology, thinking, and approaches that improve our experiences with the organizations we work with and for. At Heretto, he is a co-founder and CEO. He and his team work on a wide range of projects all focused on improving authoring, production, and distribution of content.

Kit Brown-Hoekstra

Kit's super power is understanding culture, which is most obvious when consulting with her localization and technical communication clients. She has built an award-winning career from training and consulting with life sciences companies to create strategic content in the most effective ways for international audiences.

Gifted with an abundance mindset, Kit has spent decades sharing her knowledge by speaking and publishing regularly on content-related topics. After exploring conscious leadership and appreciative inquiry and applying these concepts, she is propelling her clients and the content community to new levels of content strategy, creation, delivery, and leadership.

With 25+ years in the field, Kit has also contributed to the content industry as an STC Fellow and former society president, by co-authoring a book on managing virtual teams, and as editor of The Language of Localization. You can find out more about her and connect through her blog (pangaeapapers.com).

Marianne Calilhanna

Marianne has been involved with structured content since the days of SGML. She helps people understand the true business value of markup languages (e.g., DITA and other types of XML) in an organization's content strategy. Marianne is the VP of Marketing at Data Conversion Laboratory, an organization that provides data and content transformation services and solutions.

Alisa Conboy

Alisa Conboy, the Director of Content Experience at DocuSign, is a seasoned professional with over 30 years in the industry. After accidentally falling into technical writing, she has since accumulated diverse expertise in communications, marketing, information architecture, website design, training, graphic design, and UI design.

At DocuSign, Alisa is a driving force in establishing a center of excellence for technical writers. Her leadership is marked by a passion for training and nurturing the next generation of technical writers.

Beyond her professional achievements, Alisa leads a vibrant life as a singer in a rock band, a Scout leader, and a dedicated mom.

Alisa Conboy firmly believes that the key to crafting exceptional content lies in understanding the audience inside out and being crystal clear about the intention behind every piece of writing. Her insights and expertise make her a sought-after speaker in the content and technical writing community, inspiring others to strive for excellence in their craft.

Fawn Damitio

Fawn is a seasoned tech professional with a career spanning since the late '90s. She's held diverse roles such as PR specialist, project manager, content designer, and technical writer. In leadership roles, she has managed large documentation teams for Fortune 100 companies and currently leads documentation engineering for Meta's AI Infra, Integrity, and Data Infra groups.

Beyond corporate endeavors, Fawn actively teaches and mentors, empowering graduate students and underprivileged individuals in writing and technical skills. She's also a daily meditator and teaches yoga and mindfulness.

Fawn holds a BS in Journalism and an MA in English Literature. With a love for technology and a commitment to empowering others, she remains a guiding force in the dynamic tech landscape.

Jackie Damrau

Jackie is a Product Owner for Cathedral Plumbing of Texas LLC working at MiView Integrated Solutions where she assists with managing patent/trademark deliverables, writes/edits customer documentation, and has two software modules where she serves as the Product Owner for the MiView product platform.

In her spare time, Jackie is raising her two grandchildren and loves reading murder mysteries along with other esoteric subjects when time permits.

Connect with her on LinkedIn at linkedin.com/in/jackiedamrau.

Tom DeBeauchamp

BIO TO COME...

Mike Dickerson

BIO TO COME...

Kelsey Drillen

.As a natural-born leader, Kelsey has dedicated her career to coaching, guiding, and inspiring others to reach their full potential. With a proven track record of motivating teams through challenging times, She has honed her skills in managing individuals to keep teams aligned and working toward shared goals. Kelsey firmly believes in fostering a collaborative culture and leading by example.

Currently, Kelsey serves as the Director of Content Design at PointClickCare in Toronto, ON. In this role, She works closely with leaders across design, product management, and engineering to create forward-thinking content design strategies.

Before transitioning into Content Design, she held various managerial roles at PointClickCare. As the Manager of Product Knowledge, she led a team of Technical Writers responsible for creating release training, communications, and help files. She also oversaw a team as the Manager of Financial Education, collaborating with product, implementation, and support teams to create release training materials and maintain the internal certification program. Additionally, she played a crucial role as a Product Manager, setting the strategic direction and vision for various financial products.

As the Manager of Product Knowledge at PointClickCare, she led the transformation of our technical writing team into Content Designers. Recognizing the importance of user-centric design and the role of content in enhancing the user experience, she reshaped her team to improve product documentation and create a more intuitive content experience.

Outside of work, Kelsey is passionate about continuous learning and personal growth. I actively seek opportunities to expand my knowledge and skills, staying up-to-date with industry trends. In my free time, I enjoy attending my kids activities, being active, reading, traveling, and spending quality time with her family and friends.

With a strong commitment to leadership and a passion for creating exceptional user experiences, Kelsey is dedicated to driving positive change and helping others reach their full potential.

Andrew Dubrov

Originally an academic (French), Andy has moved through several lives from conversational design, to digital assistant product development and now leading content design thinking and operations at Verizon.

His strong grounding in communication theory, design-thinking, and CX omni-channel architecture have helped give him a unique perspective that has seen fruitful systemization work begin to flourish at Verizon.

He lives in northern New Jersey, a stone's throw from The City (NYC) with his partner, two kids, and (for now) their old dog.

Jim Edmunds

Jim Edmunds is the founder and CEO of Ingeniux Corporation, a leading provider of digital content management software. Ingeniux software is used by organizations around the world to create and manage websites, communities and enterprise knowledge. The company was founded in 1999 to create innovative tools for managing and delivering content for the emerging digital marketplace.

Jim possesses a unique background in technology, publishing and entertainment. He has worked as an independent filmmaker, digital media producer, video game producer and senior technology manager. Prior to starting Ingeniux he held leadership positions at Electronic Arts and Microsoft MSNBC.

When not talking about content management, you may find Jim crafting a new wine varietal. Ask him about his new CMS (Cab, Merlot, Syrah) Meritage.

Lief Erickson

Lief is the co-founder and principal consultant of Intuitive Stack. He began his career in the content industry as a technical writer over two decades ago. He has held positions as an information architect and content strategist. His focus is to reduce or remove friction wherever it is in your tool stack or processes.

He holds a bachelor's degree with a dual focus in Technical Writing and German. Lief has a M.A. in Content Strategy from the University of Applied Sciences—FH Joanneum (Graz, Austria), where he teaches information architecture. He is a contributor to the DITA-OT open-source project and presents at conferences on topics ranging from ContentOps to taxonomies and search.

Marie Etzler

Marie Etzler is a writer and knowledge manager. In addition to being a director of a team of technical writers, she also manages the creation of video tutorials for Magaya Corporation, a logistics software company. Maire has a bachelor's degree and a master's degree in English, and is a published writer and award-winning screenwriter.

Carlos Evia

Carlos Evia is a professor of Communication at Virginia Tech, where he is also associate dean for transdisciplinary initiatives, and chief technology officer in the College of Liberal Arts and Human Sciences. A mediocre studio session DJ turned decent entertainment journalist, Carlos moved to the intersection of information technology and the humanities with early jobs as database designer and technical writer. In his academic career, he has been a professor of English (Professional and Technical Writing) and Communication (Digital Publishing and Content Strategy), and award-winning researcher of transdisciplinary technical communication and content operations. He is the author of Creating Intelligent Content with Lightweight DITA, and worked on the development of the Darwin Information Typing Architecture (DITA) and Lightweight DITA (LwDITA) standards for digital content.

Sara Feldman

Sara Feldman, Director of Member Engagement for the Consortium for Service Innovation, is a certified Knowledge-Centered Service (KCS) Trainer and experienced with customer-centric functions in the software industry. She enjoys naps, saying cheers, and working from home in Las Vegas. The Consortium for Service Innovation is a not-for-profit think tank focused on customer engagement.

Paulo Fernandes

Paulo is the co-founder and lead web developer of Luscious Orange, a digital agency based out of Winnipeg, Canada. He manages the company's cross-disciplinary team and specializes in finding a balance between design, programming, and content. As a part of an agency, his focus is on understanding different perspectives from both his clients and his team members. After years of collaborative work, with a wide range of clients, he's built a skill in appreciating different points of view and explaining web topics in a way that doesn't make you feel like an idiot.

Guillermo Galdamez

Guillermo is a Principal Consultant at Enterprise Knowledge, specializing in the Knowledge Management Strategy, Taxonomy Design, and Content Strategy initiatives at organizations as diverse as the US federal government, Fortune 500 companies, NGOs, and International Organizations across the Americas, Europe and Asia. He holds a Masters in Library and Information Studies from McGill University.

Stefan Gentz

As the Principal Worldwide Evangelist for Technical Communication at Adobe, Stefan Gentz's mission is to inspire enterprises and technical writers around the world and show how to create compelling technical communication content with the Adobe Technical Communication Suite tools. Stefan is also a certified Quality Management Professional (TÜV), ISO 9001/EN 15038 auditor, ISO 31000 Risk Management expert, and Six Sigma Champion. Stefan is a popular keynote speaker and moderator at conferences such as tekom, tcworld, Information Energy, Intelligent Content Conference, Congility, LocWorld, TCUK, STC, GALA, ELIA, TTT, Translation Forum Russia, and many others. He is a member of the Conference Advisory Board of the world's biggest TechComm event, the tekom/tcworld Conferences, and member of the iiRDS working group for Intelligent Information. He is also an active social networker on Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn.

Joe Gelb

Joe Gelb has more than 20 years of experience helping enterprises implement, maintain, and capitalize on structured content. At Zoomin, he has spearheaded the development of advanced technology solutions for digital experience. Prior to founding Zoomin, Joe was the CTO at Live Linx, a leading provider of software and system integration services for technical product information, where he designed and implemented solutions for aerospace, defense, manufacturing and high-tech companies. Joe holds a degree in Mechanical Engineering from Stevens Institute of Technology.

Barbara Green

BIO TO COME...

Joe Gregory-DeBernardi

Joe Gregory-DeBernardi is a DS partner and an Information Architect specializing in taxonomy and metadata framework development in helping organizations connect online content and resources with their intended audiences. With nearly 18 years of experience developing scalable, enterprise content management & delivery platforms and 10 years of experience developing metadata frameworks and systems, Joe focuses on the data layer of information architecture in driving content management, findability, dynamic-delivery, and reporting capabilities forward for organizations.

Eeshita Grover

As the Director of Product User Content at Cisco, I lead the end user content experience and deliverables for the Cisco Networking business. I have over 20 years of experience in content creation, management, and strategy, with a passion for leveraging the power of content to market, sell, communicate, and persuade the audience.

Christi Guzik

Christi Guzik works as a Lead UX Content Strategist at Rocket Companies. Prior to Rocket, she held a Content Strategist position at DocuSign focusing on content quality initiatives and improving processes across Content Design and Technical Writing. Additionally, she worked at Boomi where she established the content design discipline and as a Technical Writer at IBM's Silicon Valley Lab, focusing on DITA migrations and developing effective UX content to modernize a mainframe database.

She holds a bachelor's degree in Technical Writing and Communication and a master's degree in Professional Writing from Carnegie Mellon University.

In her spare time, Christi serves as a facilitator and volunteer manager for Delta Delta Delta fraternity and enjoys reading, baking, watching Broadway musicals on trips to New York City, and exploring the museums and historical sites in and around Philadelphia.

Michael Haggerty-Villa

Michael Haggerty-Villa is the director of content strategy at Teradata, where he leads a team that encompasses content design, help and education content, and technical documentation. He has served as a design and design systems manager at Compass, BILL, Intuit QuickBooks, and other brands, and he spearheaded the initial launch of the Intuit Content Design System (contentdesign.intuit.com). He has put his content design and content strategy skills to work with a diverse set of companies, such as Blue Shield of California, HP Software, eBay, and Disney Parks and Resorts Online. He lives outside Washington, DC.

Rob Hanna

Rob Hanna is CEO of Precision Content and an industry leader in the structured authoring space. Along with Scott Abel at the Content Wrangler, Rob has sponsored and analyzed the results from three recent DITA Satisfaction Surveys to help understand how to best help organizations looking to adopt DITA for the first time.

Carol Hattrup

My first publication in a national literary journal came many years ago at the same time I was living the dream of raising two children and three dogs in an old house, earning an MFA, and returning to work full-time in software. I'm not sure what I was thinking. But at the time, I couldn't help noticing the similarities between crafting poetry and creating tech doc.

Since then, I've had poems published under a pseudonym in Avalon Literary Review, Boston Accent Lit, California Quarterly, Crack the Spine, Euphony, Figure 1, FRiGG, Ghost City Review, Hawaii Pacific Review, The MacGuffin, Midwest Quarterly, The New York Quarterly, Owen Wister Review, Pennsylvania English, Pudding Magazine, Quercus Review, Soundings East, South Dakota Review, Sweet Tree Review, The Virginia Normal, Westview, Zone 3, and many others. My essays have appeared in The International Journal of Ethics and Information Technology, in The Journal of Philosophy in the Contemporary World, and in an anthology published by Potomac Press.

I currently work at Netsmart, a healthcare software company, as a people & content manager in Client Learning. I've been in the software industry for many years – sometimes in technical documentation and sometimes in quality assurance. Long ago, I also taught elementary school, where I used poetry to connect with children from a wide variety of backgrounds and to engage them in learning.

Heather Hedden

Heather Hedden has been a taxonomist for over 25 years in various organizations and as an independent consultant. She currently works as a Senior Consultant with the knowledge and information management consulting firm Enterprise Knowledge, LLC, where whe helps clients with taxonomy and ontology projects. Previously she worked in taxonomy-related roles at Semantic Web Company (vendor of PoolParty software), Gale/Cengage Learning, Project Performance Corp, First Wind, and Viziant. Heather has designed and developed, taxonomies, thesauri, ontologies, and metadata schema for internal and externally published content, including websites, intranets, and content management systems. She gives workshops on taxonomy creation through various organizations and her own business, Hedden Information Management. Heather is author of *The Accidental Taxonomist, 3rd edition*.

John Hedtke

John Hedtke has over 30 years as a writer and documentation manager. He has written documentation for many leading software products. John has also published 27 books and 200 magazine articles on technical subjects. (Lists of books, articles, and projects can be found at his website, www.hedtke.com.)

John lives near Tacoma, WA. When not otherwise occupied, he plays the banjo, writes magazine articles, and writes slogans for a button company. John is a Fellow of the Society for Technical Communication.

Rachel Houghton

Rachel Houghton is a technical writer who now works in customer experience and puts her 24-year career as a technical communicator in various industries to good use in framing a positive customer experience for individuals using Login.gov to sign into government agencies.

Michelle Irvine

.Michelle Irvine is a Senior Technical Writer at Google Cloud. With the DORA project, she leads research into the impact and production of technical documentation.

Before Google, Michelle worked in educational publishing and as a Technical Writer for physics simulation software. Michelle has a BSc in Physics, and a MA in Rhetoric and Communication Design from the University of Waterloo.

Mark Johnson

Mark's fascination with music theory and composition, at some point, morphed into a passion for documentation content strategy. This all started twenty-two years ago when he took a job at MakeMusic Inc. authoring the user manual for Finale music notation software. Since then he has embarked on various content conversion adventures working with procurement and cybersecurity companies to bring accessible, helpful, scalable online documentation content to users.

Mark currently works as the Documentation Manager for Securonix, the creators of Unified Defense Siem, which unifies threat detection, investigation, and response (TDIR) on Snowflake's Data Cloud. Over the past eighteen months he and his team completely reinvented the product's online documentation system, implemented contextual help, and built the internal infrastructure, standards, and operational procedures to accommodate the growing documentation demands of a leading SaaS cybersecurity platform.

Mark lives in Bloomington, Minnesota with his wife, two boys, and two salvaged barn cats Mango and Murray.

Jason Kaufman

Jason Kaufman is the President and Principal AI Content Strategist at Irrevo and a pioneer in Generative AI consulting. With a 20-year legacy in content strategy and knowledge management, he now leads the charge in integrating AI-driven solutions for businesses. His expertise lies in melding technical writing and AI, transforming traditional content strategies with innovative AI applications. Jason holds certifications in KCS and AI for Decision Making, underscoring his commitment to ethical and efficient AI integration in enterprise environments. At Irrevo, he steers organizations toward harnessing the full potential of AI, ensuring strategic growth and enhanced customer experiences.

Rita Khait

Rita Khait is the Director of Customer Enablement at Zoomin. Since 2022, Rita has been dedicated to empowering customers to gain the full value from Zoomin's products. This includes leading the company's online learning academy to equip clients with essential skills for success.

Before joining Zoomin, Rita was deeply involved in instructional design and learning content development, leading teams to create impactful e-learning solutions. Her journey in the learning and development field began at KPMG Russia, where she spent over six years shaping learning strategies.

Holding an MA in Educational Psychology, Rita combines academic insight with practical experience to deliver effective learning solutions and customer engagement strategies. She is passionate about making a real difference in the way people learn and interact with products, aiming to make each customer's experience both enriching and rewarding.

Richard Kung

Richard Kung, a Senior Manager in Ciena Product Content Development, has over 25 years of experience in developing customer-centric solutions and content strategies that prioritize user experience and scalability. A recipient of the 2023 LavaCon Content Impact Award, Richard transformed the process of cataloging and publishing Visio stencils at Ciena. His previous experience with cognitive search, knowledge portals, and chatbots helped pave the way in integrating Generative AI tools into technical publication and product support workflows.

Fabrice Lacroix

Fabrice Lacroix is a serial entrepreneur and a technology pioneer. He has been working for 25 years on the development of innovative solutions around search technology, content enrichment and AI. He is the founder of Fluid Topics, the leading Content Delivery Platform that reinvents how users search, read and interact with technical documentation.

Jennifer Lee

As a Content & Design Lead at NIKE, Inc., Jennifer manages end-to-end content strategy for multiple working iterations of interactive concurrent projects, including full-scale accessibility for WCAG, ADA & Section 508 compliance. She brings previous accessibility experience as a training and content expert for Airbnb.

As the content tent migration strategist for Oregon's Sherman County website migration, she enabled Section 508 Compliance for county images, graphics, and screen-readable content, resulting in 3x more users with more than twice as many new visitors, 268% more page views, 40% more pages per session, 26% lower bounce rate, 42% lift in target conversions, and 400% jump in active mobile visitors.

Alexander Lum

Alexander Lum, Director of Product Content Development, has experienced the evolution of content authoring tools and processes in content development workflow throughout his 30+ years of experience.

Today, he specializes in many things, including end-to-end product content development and publishing. His primary focus today is improving customers' user experiences and updating authoring tools with digital transformation initiatives, including incorporating Generative Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools into product content development workflows.

Torsten Machert

Before joining Congree, Torsten Machert was Managing Director of EasyBrowse GmbH. He specializes in the design and implementation of workflows based on SGML and XML and has industry experience in aerospace, defense, engineering and publishing. In the past few years, he has concentrated on the development of industrial processes for the production and distribution of highly effective electronic publications.

Michael Mannhardt

Michael Mannhardt is President & CEO of the San Francisco based Congree US-subsidiary Congree Language Technologies Inc.

Michael graduated with a degree in Business Administration and has over 15 years of experience in the language technology industry. At Congree he spreads the message of content optimization the world over and supports global partners and customers. Before joining Congree in July 2019, he previously worked at Acrolinx and Across Systems.

Alex Masycheff

Alex Masycheff is CEO of Intuillion Ltd. (http://intuillion.com/) that develops solutions for creating, managing, and delivering product content in scale.

He's been in the content industry for 28+ years. He lead implementation of XML-based solutions in many companies, including Kodak, Siemens, Netgear, and EMC.

Alex believes that the key to leveraging the value of the product content is in combination of semantically rich structured content, automation, and artificial intelligence.

Laura Miles

Laura's role, is to oversee operational aspects of our Customer Success Organization, including customer education, help documentation, project enablement, change management, and resource management. She also collaborates with cross-functional teams to ensure customer satisfaction, retention, and loyalty. Leveraging analytical skills, Laura partners with colleagues to identify and solve customer issues, optimize processes, and drive continuous improvement. She has recently obtained three certifications that demonstrate my commitment to learning and enhancing my skills in leadership and management and am currently working on a fourth certification through Harvard Business School Online.

Jack Molisani

Jack Molisani is the President of ProSpring Technical Staffing, an employment agency specializing in technical writers and other content professionals. He's the author of *Be the Captain of Your Career: A New Approach to Career Planning and Advancement*, which hit #5 on Amazon's Career and Resume Best Seller list. Jack also produces the LavaCon Conference on Content Strategy and Technical Communication Management (lavacon.org).

Pamela Noreault

Pam Noreault is a Principal Information Architect at Ellucian. She has over 25 years of experience in technical communications, education, and management. She specializes in content strategy, customer engagement, content conversions, and social networking strategies. Pam has an undergraduate degree in education from The Ohio State University and a master's degree in English and Professional Writing from Wright State University.

Bridget O'Donnell

Bridget is a senior content strategist at Alibaba Group based in Hangzhou, China. She works with product teams at AliExpress to address complex business challenges and enhance the user experience for international customers through clear, engaging & localized communication strategies.

Sarah O'Keefe

Sarah O'Keefe is the founder and CEO of Scriptorium. Driven by learning and exploration, she takes pride in providing a meaningful contribution to the world of customer-facing content and beyond. As a pioneer in the content industry, she is a globally recognized author and speaker.

Jayme Perlman

As a career contractor, Jayme specialized in large-scale, high-visibility, V1 projects across the tech industry. She wants to share her unique depth of experience navigating and conquering this parallel universe with other intrepid explorers eager to dodge the pitfalls and reap the rewards of a "patchwork" career. Jayme is currently a Senior Technical Writer at GitHub defining and implementing information workflows in the never-ending pursuit of better customer support.

Emma Pindera

Emma Pindera is a driven and self-motivated professional with a background in content strategy, instructional design, and project management. With a Master's degree in Educational Technology (MET) and experience in roles such as Content Strategist and Instructional Designer, Emma has a deep understanding of effective learning design principles and content management. Her expertise includes planning and executing content strategies, developing high-quality training materials, and implementing project management frameworks.

Alan Porter

Alan is an industry thought leader and catalyst for change with a strong track record in developing new ideas, embracing emerging technologies, introducing operational improvements, and driving business value.

He has held senior leadership roles in Content Operations, Product Marketing, and Customer Experience and was named one of the Top 25 Content Strategy Influencers.

Alan Pringle

A pillar in the content industry, Alan is the COO and an experienced content strategist at Scriptorium. Driven by a mission to connect your content creators to your consumers, he pinpoints technologies and process improvements so your content accomplishes your corporate goals. He then guides your team through company culture and change management obstacles.

As a strategist, Alan identifies the technology that will do the heavy lifting of managing your content lifecycle. He shows your team how these advances make their professional lives better while allowing them to contribute to the growth of your organization.

Allie Proff

Allie Proff, CPTC, is passionate about technical writing because it combines her loves of reading and writing with math and science.

She has been communicating technical knowledge for almost 20 years, whether it be in the US Navy, as a high school math teacher, or as a technical communicator for other companies.

Her aim is to help people do amazing things by connecting them with the content they need in a way they understand.

Jackie Pysarchuk

Jackie Pysarchuk is an Enterprise Content Strategist at the American College of Cardiology. She offers a data-informed approach and a dedication to advocating for company goals while focusing on providing the best experience to end users. She is committed to creating content experiences that are sustainable, accessible, and thoughtful.

Her career combines content strategy, content operations, and user experience strategy. She previously worked at Yes& Agency, Northrop Grumman Corporation, American Bankers Association, and American Council of Engineering Companies. In 2018, Jackie was named an Association Technology Star by DCA Live.

Rashmi Ramaswamy

Rashmi Ramaswamy is the Chief Information Strategist at Innovatia Inc., where she focuses on understanding the problems organizations face with the ever-growing volumes of data and content and design systems that make it easy for people to find and use what they need.

Rashmi's interest in AI started in 2016 when she began exploring smarter ways to deliver the right information at the right time to the right person. Since then, she has focused on analyzing customer feedback, understanding content usage patterns, enhancing enterprise search functionality, and crafting systems that facilitate efficient information retrieval.

Before joining Innovatia, Rashmi spent a decade at Dell's Research and Development team in Bangalore. There, she led efforts to improve the way we create and manage documents, making them easier to understand and more consistent across different products.

Rashmi has led projects to update legal documents, make user guides more helpful, and convert old content into simpler formats, saving money and making things easier for users.

Overall, she enjoys finding ways to make information easier to access and understand, drawing on ideas from different industries to improve content experiences.

Kat Reierson

With over a decade of experience as a technical writer and manager, Kat Reierson leads a team at DocuSign in crafting user-friendly product content. Dedicated to simplifying complex technical information, fostering collaboration, and driving process improvement, Kat is committed to excellence. Beyond work, Kat is an avid adventurer who loves exploring the outdoors with her Bernese Mountain dogs. She is passionate about giving back through volunteer work and supporting professional organizations that have shaped her career.

Alvin Reyes

As a business architect with RWS, Alvin Reyes consults with enterprise customers to improve their end-to-end Content Supply Chain across Web, Structured Content, and Language technology and processes.

He loves blogging, online communities, and promoting and supporting content (management) champions!

Peggy Sanchez

Peggy is an accomplished Technical Documentation professional with a passion for transforming organizations' development, management, and delivery of technical content products. She believes that technical documentation is not only a product, but also a service that can add value to the customer experience and the business outcomes. She strives to create a culture of excellence, innovation, and collaboration among her teams and across the organization. She is always looking for new ways to improve the quality, efficiency, and effectiveness of technical documentation and to align it with the strategic goals of the business. The move into AI has provided the opportunity to redefine what technical writers can do. Currently her teams are piloting programs using AI to improve documentation production and developing best practices with AI in technical writing teams.

She recently added Technical Training Services to her team and is updating the training facilities and developing the training organization for her business unit. Her ability to foster strong relationships and build efficient workflows has resulted in significant cost reductions, increased productivity, and enhanced customer satisfaction.

Peggy has often shared insights and best practices in technical documentation at national industry conferences. With a deep understanding of the evolving industry landscape, Peggy provides invaluable guidance on modernizing documentation departments, enhancing content delivery, and leveraging emerging technologies.

Rebecca Schneider

Rebecca is co-founder of AvenueCX, an enterprise content strategy consultancy. Her areas of expertise include content strategy, taxonomy development, and structured content. She has guided content strategy in a variety of industries: automotive, semiconductors, telecommunications, retail, and financial services.

Lingxia Song

Lingxia Song co-leads the Docs@Scale program at Meta, which provides scalable content solutions to help engineering teams increase their productivity and efficiency. The program offers doc consult, docathon, and doc training services to support these efforts. She initiated the Gen AI for Docs work stream as a key component of the Meta Docs@Scale program and has since then led various Meta-wide initiatives, projects and speeches on creating Gen AI-friendly docs.

Lingxia holds a BA in Chinese literature and MFA in Writing for the screen and stage. Before becoming a technical writer, Lingxia was a journalist and sitcom writer in Shanghai. With a diverse background in journalism, technical writing, and content strategy, Lingxia's experience in creating engaging content for various audiences has equipped her with a deep understanding of how strategic content can drive productivity and efficiency.

Nina Spoelker

Nina Spoelker is a Senior Knowledge Management Analyst at Enterprise Knowledge with a background in project management and team leadership. She works with clients in the government and private sectors to develop targeted strategies and implement scalable, tailor-made solutions, focusing on Knowledge Management Strategy, Content Strategy, and Change Management. She is a certified Knowledge Management Specialist.

Dawn Stevens

Dawn loves solving problems, whether it is related to content strategy and management for her clients or to help her out of an Escape Room. She teaches minimalism in writing, but does not practice it in her life—having just put up 50 Christmas trees with over 6000 ornaments in her home this past holiday season. She loves Disney and has decorated her office with Disney villains to remind her employees of her true nature.

Christopher Stice

As a newcomer to technical writing, Christopher enjoys blending skills that he developed by studying Philosophy and Computer Science. He believes that sound logic, informed by the human experience, produces the best outcomes in work and in life.

Jennifer Swallow

Jennifer Swallow is a controlled language expert who has brought her passion for simplified technical English and a good template to many different roles. Her twenty-year career spans a variety of industries, including standardized testing, medical devices, sailing, and cybersecurity. At Splunk, she runs a customer success website that documents use cases, best practices, and tips from field personnel. She's highly skeptical of AI applications, mainly because of poor training data, but she's also interested in using it more. When not at work, Jennifer can be found scaling rugged mountains, running ultramarathons, or walking dogs at the Albuquerque City Shelter.

Val Swisher

Val Swisher is the Founder and CEO of Content Rules, Inc. Val enjoys helping companies solve complex content problems. She is a well-known expert in content strategy, structured authoring, global content, content development, and terminology management. Her customers include industry giants such as Google, Meta, Cisco, Visa, and Roche.

Val has been using natural language processing with her customers for more than 16 years. She has written and spoken on AI topics at conferences all over the world. Val believes that knowledge is power and the key to successful AI is understanding how best to harness the technology and make it work for you.

Her latest book is *The Personalization Paradox: Why Companies Fail (and How to Succeed) at Creating Personalized Experiences at Scale* (XML Press, 2021) with co-author Regina Lynn Preciado. She is on the Advisory Board for the Technical Communications Program at the University of North Texas. When not working with customers or students, Val can be found sitting behind her sewing machine working on her latest quilt.

Amber Swope

Amber Swope is an internationally recognized expert on the Darwin Information Typing Architecture (DITA) and information architect. With over 20 years of experience in the information development field and 15 years of DITA expertise, Amber specializes in helping organizations create opportunity through information architecture. She not only helps teams build scalable IA solutions to future-enable their content, but also mentors team members to advance the architecture as it evolves to meet new business needs.

Jim Tivy

Jim Tivy is the CTO at Bluestream and a product architect of the XDocs DITA CCMS and the XDelivery Documentation Portal. In the past, he was a member of the W3C XQuery Working Group and architected a commercial XML database. He was also a member of the OASIS DITA TC for many years.

Noz Urbina

Noz Urbina is one of the few industry professionals who has been working in what we now call "multichannel" and "omnichannel" content design and strategy for over two decades. In that time, he has become a globally recognized leader in the field of content and customer experience. He's well known as a pioneer in customer journey mapping and adaptive content modelling for delivering personalized, contextually-relevant content experiences in any environment. Noz is co-founder and Programme Director of the OmnichannelX Conference and Podcast. He is also co-author of the book "Content Strategy: Connecting the dots between business, brand, and benefits" and lecturer in the Master's Programme in Content Strategy at the University of Applied Sciences of Graz, Austria.

Noz's company, Urbina Consulting, works with the world's largest organizations and most complex content challenges, but his mission is to help all brands be able to have relationships with people, the way that people have with each other. Past clients have included Johnson & Johnson, Eli Lilly, Roche, and Sanofi Pharmaceuticals; Microsoft; Mastercard; Barclays Bank; Abbott Laboratories; National Geographic; and hundreds more.

Christopher Ward

As an individual, I am deeply committed to personal authenticity and fostering genuine connections grounded in verifiable facts. With an unwavering belief in the power of personal growth and meaningful interactions, I strive to embody these principles in every aspect of my life.

My overarching goal is to make a substantial impact on the Documentation Industry, elevating its significance as a pivotal tool for business growth and success.

To achieve this objective, I have dedicated myself to understanding the intricate needs of documentation teams and the profound influence of the content they create. This journey has taken me across the globe, where I have had the privilege of presenting on this critical topic at esteemed conferences such as STC Summit, LavaCon, Tekom, DITA NA, DITA Europe, and numerous others.

In addition to my contributions as a presenter, I have authored insightful white papers and contributed articles to esteemed publications like STC Intercom, among others. Through these avenues, I endeavor to enhance the industry's comprehension of the transformative potential of documentation in revenue generation and organizational success.

My analytical journey commenced in Military Intelligence, where I honed my skills in strategic analysis and critical thinking. Building upon this foundation, I transitioned to the dynamic realm of the business world, collaborating with Fortune 500 and small business enterprises alike. In each endeavor, I seek opportunities to share my expertise and empower individuals to achieve their aspirations on the path to success.

With a steadfast commitment to excellence and continuous improvement, I am driven to inspire positive change within the Documentation Industry and beyond.

Emerson Welch

Emerson Welch is VP Global Marketing, responsible for driving Quark's marketing strategies to strengthen the company's market position to support business growth. With over 25 years of B2B software product marketing experience, Emerson has successfully led marketing teams for small startups, channel partners and large enterprises. He was most recently marketing director at Adobe-based workflow management software company, Oppolis.

Emerson's technology expertise in content automation, creative collaboration workflows, ERP, CRM, IT support services and more, has resulted in a consistently strong track record of enabling sales to grow revenue through simple messaging and innovative content that turns prospects into customers.

Kevin White

As a Director of Information Development, Kevin White leads a team of more than 120 technical writers and managers who are responsible for the creation, delivery, and user-experience of product documentation for Workday customers. With 10+ years in leadership and 15 years writing content across three enterprise software companies, he has a deep understanding of the field and has learned a lot along the way that's worth sharing. His purpose is to transform information into knowledge that helps customers, partners, and employees achieve their full potential.

Ted Wolff

Ted Wolff is an Information Architect at Precision Content Authoring Solutions Inc with a wide variety of experience in structured content and technical communication. Ted has worked across multiple industries, including finance, insurance, manufacturing, transportation, and software development. He has also worked across content roles to hone a well-rounded content perspective, from content development, tools administration, team management, and consulting.

Janet Zarecor

Janet trained her first computer application in 2000 in Los Angeles, CA and has worked in the training space ever since. In 2010 she started working as Epic trainer at NYU. She was then promoted to PT and then took over leadership of the team in 2013. She turn-keyed her knowledge in eLearning and video creation to her team and made them efficient and talented, creators, producers, and VO artists. In addition, she oversaw the planning and building of state-of-the-art training spaces all over the New York ambulatory and inpatient implementations in the five boroughs and Long Island. Janet was thrilled to begin a new chapter at the Mayo Clinic, focusing on Instructional Designers, providing upskilling in new systems, software and implementing a content management system to revolutionize the way curriculum is created, maintained, and delivered. Janet loves to focus on staff professional development and growth based on the changing landscape, individual passions, and innovative solutions. Janet spends spare time building puppets, creating artistic mayhem, gardening, playing with cats & dogs and walking until her legs fall off.

LavaCon loves a parade!

We danced with a jazz band in a Second Line Parade down Bourbon Street in New Orleans. We strutted our stuff in Las Vegas and Austin. And now, we're back in Portland, where we're having a Chinese Dragon Parade! Help carry a colorful dragon from the conference hotel to dinner, followed by an evening of networking and karaoke.

At LavaCon, you don't watch the parade. You are the parade!

Don't miss the fun...register today!

facebook.com/LavaCon

twitter.com/LavaCon

vimeo.com/LavaCon