



Conference for Software User Assistance

# Daily News

## 13th Annual WritersUA Conference Opens in Vegas

by Chuck Martin

The user assistance industry has changed significantly since the early 90s. Technologies have emerged and died. Companies were born and bought. Staffing levels (and the amount of work) have risen and fallen.

But one beacon of consistency through the storms of the industry has been the WritersUA (formerly WinWriters) Conference for Software User Assistance. Now in its 13th year, today it opens for the first time away from the West Coast, in Las Vegas, Nevada.

Approximately 400 user assistance professionals have gathered here at the Tropicana to learn that latest trends and technologies that will help them do their jobs better and faster. Some of the top industry names will be presenting over the next 3 days, ending with a closing session by William Horton.

Conference sessions are all held along the hallway in the Island Tower. The conference registration booth will be open throughout if you have any questions.

The days here will be full. You'll have multiple sessions to choose from all day, every day (except for the opening and closing sessions), so use your conference program to

### Monday Forecast

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Ronald Brannan and Andrew Clayton share information (and a computer) during on of the Sunday supplemental sessions.

map out your days.

This newsletter will be available every morning and will contain useful and up-to-date information, including

- Any changes to session information
- Summaries of some previous day sessions
- Current industry news
- Conference raffle winners

Speaking of raffle winners, you have a chance to win great software and other swag. Just fill out your session evaluations and drop them in the boxes near the door in every room. Evaluations will be drawn at random and the people who filled out the evaluations will win prizes.

See Conference on next page

### Don't Miss this Monday Session!

A Monday afternoon conference session was inadvertently left off the Conference-at-a-Glance card and the Conference Program. Here are the details of the 3:30-4:45pm session:

#### Using DITA for Information Architecture, Michael Priestley, IBM

DITA is an architecture for the design, development, and publication of technical information. The role of the information architect in this process is explicitly supported by DITA through the use of DITA map documents, which store the information architecture for an information set, and allow the information architect to define task flows, support relationships, and conceptual hierarchies across complex information sets. The information architecture in DITA is not a throw-away design document: it is a living part of the information set. It not only defines requirements on the content but also manages navigation, related links, and metadata, and is used to select and control how topics are built into output deliverables such as helpsets, Web sites, and PDF documents. Demonstrations will include previews of map functionality not yet available in the DITA public toolkit.





*Conference, from previous page*  
Prizes can be picked up at the registration desk.

These evaluations are very important. Conference organizers read them carefully and use the information to make future conferences better and more useful. Please take a moment after each session to fill out these evaluations, which are on a small pad in your conference materials bag.

You might want to take a moment to put your name on the session proceedings.

Of course, Las Vegas has a lot to offer, but so does this conference. In addition to sessions all day, there are events for networking and

socializing, especially today. First up is a networking lunch (the only day with a conference-provided lunch) from noon to 1:15, then a networking mixer from 4:45 to 6:00 by the hotel pool.

Conference sessions begin early on Tuesday and Wednesday, at 8:30am, so don't forget to set your alarm.

If you have any questions, just look for someone with a Conference Staff flag on their badge. They will be glad to assist you.

Above all, enjoy the experience. There is lots of knowledge here and it's all for the taking. Drink deeply from the well of knowledge here, then rejoice in your newly found wisdom.

## Monday Notes

### Convivo Absent

Convivo will not be able to staff its booth today, nor will it be doing its product demo tomorrow (Tuesday).

### Conference Badges

Your conference badge is required to enter all sessions.

### Session Evaluations

Please remember to fill out your sessions evaluations and drop them in the boxes by the doors.

### Conference Bookstore

The conference bookstore is open daily from 8:00am to 5:30pm (except Wednesday, when they close at 4:30pm) in the exhibition in the Caribbean Ballroom

### Internet Access

The conference provides 6 free Internet access stations in the Caribbean Ballroom during conference hours. Please be aware and considerate if others are waiting to use the stations.

## Vegas Freebie

Right here at the Tropicana, every 2 hours beginning at 11:00am, check out AirPlay, with acrobats, aerialists, jugglers and singers, above the slots every day.

### Newsletter Staff

Chuck Martin: Writer, editor, photographer, layout, production

Mike Hamilton: Vegas Freebies



*Dave Gash prepares for his Sunday afternoon session.*



*LaunchPad participants listen at orientation.*

## Sunday Session Summaries

Sunday was the supplemental half-day conference seminars that took up the entire afternoon.

### Introduction to Web Technologies for User Assistance, Dave Gash

Dave brought his unique brand of presentation style to explaining current web technologies, from the basics of HTML coding to JavaScript and Cascading Styles Sheets (CSS).

### Implementing Structured Authoring, Sarah O'Keefe

Sarah delved into, among other things, the business case for implementing structured authoring. After explaining the concept, she explained that it could be used on a small, medium, or large scale, and then gave some samples that showed costs savingn, sometimes large, sometimes small. She also explained some of the concepts behind analyzing your situation and how to apply structure to it.

### Single-sourcing with RoboHelp, Rob Houser

Rob talked about the techniques of single-sourcing with one of the most widely-used user assistance tools, RoboHelp. Some of the session included specific information on how to design and write topics, including how to create links and how to organize the TOCs.



*Patrick Neary and Diane Eaker chat during a break.*

