



# Writing an Awesome Proposal for a UX Conference





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# UX Research & Strategy

DB/UX  
DALLAS BLACK UX





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Why is this important?



# Why us, why this talk?

Encourage the diversity of thought by educating potential speakers on:

- ◇ The conference submission process
- ◇ Common mistakes that hurt or disqualify submitters
- ◇ What to consider when choosing a conference





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# Identifying a Topic

What should you present?



# Find a topic that speaks to you...

- ◇ Personal interests
- ◇ Trends
- ◇ Successes
- ◇ Failures
- ◇ Case Studies
- ◇ New application of existing methodologies
- ◇ Revisit less commonly used methodologies
- ◇ Conference themes or topics







# Repeat

You can usually submit more than one proposal, just prioritize them in case more than one is accepted





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# Select a presentation type

How should I present my topic?



# Things to consider:

- ◇ Are you comfortable speaking on your own?
- ◇ Have you previously spoken at a meet-up or conference?
- ◇ Would the presentation be better if someone else told their part of the story?
- ◇ Do you know a lot of cool people who should speak on a topic?
- ◇ Do you want your work bestie to attend the conference with you?
- ◇ Would you rather not speak much at all?





# Pick a Submission Type

- ◇ Individual presenter
- ◇ Co-present
- ◇ Panels
- ◇ Workshops
- ◇ Posters



# Submission Types

Submission Type	Definition	FYI
Individual Presentation	Just you for 20-50 minutes	At a minimum receives a discount on conference fees
Co-Presentations	You and someone else for 20 - 50 minutes	This person may not get compensated or any discounts
Panels	3 - 5 panelists and a moderator	Strive for diversity of thought ; The panelists may not get compensation or discounts
Workshops	½ day to full day sessions; usually before a conference	Usually involves making handouts, designing activities, usually compensated
Posters	Visual representation of your talk	Usually requires you to speak for a very short period ( 5 to 10 minutes)



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# Judging Criteria

What are judges looking for?



# Clear, Concise, Marketable

- ◇ Clearly state your thesis and position
- ◇ Demonstrate expertise or knowledge without name dropping
- ◇ Make sure it is grammatically correct and easy to read
- ◇ Will bring in a crowd
- ◇ Supports the mission or perception of the conference





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# Writing the Proposal

What makes a good proposal?





# Successful Proposals

- ◇ Twitter-Friendly title
- ◇ Marketable to an audience
- ◇ Fresh/ new ideas
- ◇ Well structured
- ◇ Concise thesis and argument
- ◇ Grammatically correct



# Parts of the Proposal

Part	Purpose	Intended for
Twitter Description	Why should we come see your talk in 280 characters or less?	Conference Attendees
Presenter(s) Bio	Who are you? What experience do you have in this space?	Attendees & Judges
Short Description	What is your talk about?	Conference Attendees
Long Description	What are you going to present and how are you going to present it? How will your talk benefit the audience/ conference?	Judges

Webinar: How to Write Awesome Proposals, 2019



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# Submission Review Process

What happens when you click 'Submit'?

# Submission Review Process






6

How to choose a  
conference to submit to



# How to find conferences



- 
- ◇ Industry journals
  - ◇ Meetups, local events, user groups
  - ◇ Social media channels
  - ◇ Blogs and podcasts
  - ◇ Word of mouth at conferences







Does the conference  
suit the work you  
want to present?






- 
- ◇ How does the theme pertain to your topic?
  - ◇ What have past years programs looked like?
  - ◇ Do the different presentation types fit your style and topic?
    - Short or long sessions
    - Posters
    - Panels
    - Workshops




- 
- ◇ Conference size. Not just how many attendees, also breadth of scope.
    - For some, the smaller, more focused meetings are more useful.
    - For others, a broad scope like SxSW is more energizing and engaging.



- 
- ◇ Choose one that's most relevant to your topic and will provide the highest level of impact of your topic to the field.
    - Talking to a specific audience? Make sure the conference will provide them
    - Going for citations of your work? Make sure the attendees will be likely to cite your work



- 
- ◇ Sometimes you just want to present at a prestigious conference that will look good on your resume. That's ok! Just keep these things in mind to increase your chances of being chosen and increase your satisfaction with presenting.






If you choose a conference just based on its focus, you run the risk of ending up at a C-tier venue full of people who are there for the food and the location, not the conference content





Do the conference logistics match your needs?



- 
- ◇ Will you need to take time off?
    - Where is it located?
    - What time of year is it?
  - ◇ Do speakers get a free ticket?
    - What about your co-presenters?





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You've been chosen!  
Now what?





Congratulations!!!

Now the panic sets in!





Don't worry. You've got this!

You've got plenty of time to  
practice and refine your  
message.





## REMEMBER:

They chose you because they felt their attendees would benefit from your topic.





So, where should I start?





◇ Confirmation from the organizers

- Read it!
- Does it have information about tickets?
- Are there any dates you need to abide by?
- Are there any permissions you need to grant the organizers?
- Sign and return if applicable





Now, it's creation time!





◇ Presentation slides

- What do you want your audience to come away with?
- Start with the problem and build it into something exciting, compelling, and emotional
- Less detail or more?
- Big fonts
- Clear, good quality photos






If you don't feel good about your presentation, then there's something not right with it – keep tweaking!







◇ Practice! Practice! Practice! And practice some more

- Learn the opening by heart
- Learn the closing by heart
- Learn the middle so you know most of it
- Use a clicker and time it





◇ Dealing with nerves

- Show up early
- Get some water
- Figure out what calms your nerves and do it!





◇ Presenting

- Own the stage
- Remember to pause
- Don't apologize if you make a mistake
- Don't read your slides
- Try to have fun!





◇ Dealing with questions

- Let the asker finish their question before you answer
- Repeat the question for the wider audience
- If you don't know the answer, just say you don't know





# Thanks!

## Any questions?

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