

How to Write a DAC Special Session Proposal

Introduction

Each year, the DAC Program Committee solicits suggestions for special sessions for the DAC technical conference. These guidelines offer suggestions for the form and content of special sessions.

This document addresses special sessions. However, DAC also encourages panel, tutorial and technical paper submissions. You should determine whether a panel, tutorial, special session, or technical paper is the best way to convey your message to the DAC audience. Proposals may consist of a mixture of formats described below. There are separate deadlines for various kinds of submissions. Special session, panel and tutorial proposals must be submitted by November 1, 2006 and technical paper submissions are due November 20, 2006. If you would like further information regarding DAC submissions, visit the website at www.dac.com or call the DAC office at 303-530-4333.

DAC Special Sessions

DAC Special Sessions are part of the technical program. They occupy a regular slot in the technical program of either 1.5 or 2 hours. As in a regular session in the technical program, there is a moderator and an opportunity for 3 or more participants to speak in a room with theater style seating with a seated audience of up to a thousand people.

Key considerations for a DAC Special Session proposal

There are a number of things to consider in a special session proposal:

- **Focus** – Technical or business? The majority of special sessions have a technical focus, which is appropriate, as they are part of the technical program. Sometimes they have a mixed focus, but a business-only special session would likely be better as a panel or part of a special DAC “management track”. DAC has introduced the idea of special theme days, and a special session may be proposed to tie into that. For 2007, the special theme is “Automotive Electronics”.
- **Premise and Motivation** – Consider why a special session is appropriate and what the overall theme is meant to convey. What is the key issue? Why have it at DAC, and why in 2007? (i.e. what makes it timely?) Why the special session format?
- **Topic and Speakers** – There are only a few special sessions in each DAC, and the topic should be of significant importance to the technical audience at this time. The speakers need to convey compelling information about the topic, and it must be of high value to the attendees.
- **Speakers and Structure** – Who are the invited speakers? What is the title, the length and the topic of each talk? Speakers should be confirmed in advance before making the proposal. They should know and agree to the theme of the session. Will they each be writing a paper for the proceedings, or collaborate on a joint paper for the session, or just print their abstract in the proceedings? What ties the speakers together into the overall theme, and what is the order of the talks? A special session may have an interesting thematic structure – for example, the first talk may give a mini-tutorial overview of a problem; the next talks may give various solutions to that problem. (See below for more suggestions on structure.)
- **Chair** – The chair of a special session and the organizer(s) are different. Be sure to confirm a chair in advance and include them in your proposal.
- **Constraints on Roles** - No single individual may have more than one of the roles of organizer, chair or speaker. Also, no organization (e.g. company or institution) may be associated with both the chair and speaker roles. That is, the chair must be affiliated with a different organization than all the speakers.

Remember, the deadline for submission of panel suggestions is November 1, 2006 at 5:00 pm Mountain Standard Time. All suggestions must be submitted via the DAC website (www.dac.com).

Possible Structures for a DAC Special Session

There are three different popular structures for a DAC Special Session:

1. Traditional – As many 30-minute talks as will fit into a session of 90 or 120 minutes.
2. Mini-tutorial plus solutions – The first talk is a 30 or 45 minute setup talk which acts as a mini-tutorial outlining a problem, followed by 15 or 30 minute talks which cover various solutions or experiments looking for solutions in the topic area.
3. Talks and panel – e.g. three 30 minute talks, followed by a 30 minute panel discussion moderated by the session chair and involving all the speakers, and Q&A by the chair and the audience.

Of course, variations on any of these structures may be appropriate – but please justify your choice of structure in your proposal.

Entering Your Proposal for a DAC Special Session

When you enter your proposal at the DAC web site, be sure to include:

- **Title** – Indicate the focus (technical, business or mixed)
- **Theme, motivation and premise** – Indicate why it is appropriate for DAC 2007, and why the special session is preferred to a panel, tutorial or other format.
- **Abstract or description** – Summarize the content of the special session and the proposed length – 90 or 120 minutes. What are the viewpoints of the main sub areas in the session? What is the balance between vendor and customer (user), technologist and methodologist, various competing technology solutions, etc? What is your chosen structure, and why?
- **Organizer information** – Names, addresses, contact information.
- **Proposed chair** – Confirmed in advance - names, addresses, contact information
- **Presenters/authors** – Confirmed in advance. Names, affiliations and contact information.
Presentation/paper titles, short summaries, sequence, time slots, length. The short summaries should be 2-5 sentences long, and clearly indicate the planned content and role of each presentation within the session.

As well as filling out the DAC web form, there is a place for attaching a one-page pdf file with your session description in it. This is MANDATORY, and is used by the Technical Program Committee as the ONLY summary of the proposal for first-round selection processes. Be sure to include all the information suggested above. Special session proposals that do not include all the above items will be at a significant disadvantage.

IMPORTANT: Do not submit your special session proposal until you have confirmed participation by the chair and speakers. Do not wait to find out if the special session has been accepted before obtaining confirmation.

DAC Special Session Selection Process

The DAC Program Committee determines which and how many special sessions are included in the DAC program, as well as their placement in the conference schedule. The Program Committee selects special sessions based on:

- The completeness of the special session proposal
- The timeliness of the proposal – i.e., why it is especially suitable for DAC 2007 to cover this topic
- The breadth of interest in the area
- The confirmed speaker list and the coverage of the topic in their talks
- How well the topic fits within the overall content of the conference

Once the special session submission has been reviewed, the Program Committee may make any changes to the panel they deem necessary, including:

- modify the topic
- replace the proposed chair
- add, remove, or replace proposed speakers

If multiple special session proposals are submitted with similar topics, the Program Committee may choose to accept one over the others, to merge the proposed sessions, or to reject all of them.

Who Is Involved In a Special Session

- **Special Session Organizer:** The organizer writes the proposal for the special session, selects and confirms the participation of the moderator and session speakers, and submits the proposal to DAC by the due date (November 1, 2006).
- **Chair:** The special session chair fills the same role as the chair of any regular technical program session. He or she is usually NOT an organizer. He or she briefly introduces the session and each speaker, keeps track of time, and manages the question and answer session after each paper.
- **Speakers:** The speakers for the special sessions fill the same role as any regular technical speaker at DAC, and are encouraged to put a paper in the proceedings. However, they may provide either a short paper or abstract summary.

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