

Pittsburgh Perl Workshop 2013

Feedback

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An Introduction

This document contains the feedback and comments that were submitted by attendees of the 2013 Pittsburgh Perl Workshop, during a survey taken after the event had completed.

Organizer's Prologue

On behalf of The Pittsburgh Perl Mongers, thank you very much to everybody who contributed to this year's conference. The list is too long to mention everybody specifically. Suffice it to say that there would not have been a conference this year without our volunteers, sponsors, speakers, and participants. As always, you have pulled through and held PPW up to its long standing tradition of quality.

This was the 6th year of PPW. In some regards, things have become easier with practice and refinement. In other regards, every year still presents its own unique challenges.

Communications have always been difficult for PPW. The establishment of a Facebook group did improved things significantly this year. Communications happened more frequently, in a less formal tone. Feedback was encouraged. Polls and discussions helped shape the event.

A giant milestone for PPW in 2013 was the successful publishing of the talk videos following the conference. Traditionally, this step is forgotten in the post-event recovery. We've walked away from the event with some huge lessons learned about videography and hope to utilize better techniques for image and audio capture next year.

The largest hurdle of 2013 was the uncertainty of the event itself. Venue changes and volunteer availability both caused major hurdles in publicizing the event. This, in turn, led to a delay in recruitment of speakers, which caused us to adopt a single-track format this year.

The single-track format seems to have received mixed reviews. Many people enjoyed the “every talk is a keynote talk” aspect of the event. Others would have preferred more variety to choose from. Future format will most likely be dictated by attendance and number of talks submitted. There has always been a high demand for more beginner-level talks. Unfortunately, it is very difficult to recruit experienced speakers that are willing to present beginner-level material.

People did not react well to the suburban atmosphere of the venue this year. Clearly, people would have preferred a downtown option. The choice to go with PTI came down to two important factors: availability, and cost. Several downtown venues were considered this year, but none were cost-effective.

Plans for 2014:

- Earlier planning.
- Establish a go/no-go date at least 3 months prior to the event with well-defined criteria.
- Explore the usage of hotel space rather than a university for the venue.

We look forward to seeing you again next year.

Sincerely,

The PPW Organizers

Pittsburgh Perl Workshop 2013

Regarding Pittsburgh Perl Workshop 2013 specifically, please answer the following as best you can.

Would you like to expand on any strong views?

- Suggestion: have tracks or workshop paths - one for beginner, one for intermediate, one for advanced.
- i really think it was a great workshop. I enjoyed the size (like always) and thought everyone did a great job in putting it together. I did miss being in the downtown more but we made a trip to enjoy the south side on the night before.
- Local IT should have more responsive on Friday.
- [Feedback regarding the Zero to Perl course has been redacted and forwarded directly to the instructor]
- On the one hand, the location near the airport was very convenient and saved me a hundred bucks in cab fares. On the other hand, I really hated staying in a strip mall for three days, and I was sorry not to see the actual city of Pittsburgh, which I love.
- The venue was alright, but I'd really like to go back to CMU.
- Food was pretty heavy. Would have liked to see more of Pittsburgh, though honestly there isn't much free time in a quick conference like this. This was my first PPW, so I don't know if the Carnegie Mellon venue would have offered more in terms of walkability, but I would have enjoyed an area with a bit more to do after hours.

Feedback

For the Pittsburgh organisers

Do you have any feedback you would like to give specifically to the organisers?

- Suggestion: have tracks or workshop paths - one for beginner, one for intermediate, one for advanced.
- Great workshop; looking forward to attending again.
- Great job Dan.
- Thank you Winter and Dan for doing a great job and working hard to put on this event.
- Thank you very much for everything.
- We should consider using usteam.
- You and Autumn did a terrific job and you should be very proud.
- I loved the single track conference, it was great that everybody was in attendance for every presentation.

For future workshop organisers

Do you have any suggestions for improvement (please give examples where possible)?

- Suggestion: have tracks or workshop paths - one for beginner, one for intermediate, one for advanced.
- I like single track.
- The website needs to be changed (because I doubt an entire course can be altered at this rate). The From Zero to Perl course description says that no programming experience is required, but it's not that simple. That was an extremely difficult course to understand and a difficult instructor to follow, coming from a non-programmer. I would dare to say that almost all who would attend in my situation would understand even less than I did. It's not for beginners with no programming experience at all.

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[1] <http://pghpw.org/ppw2013/>

[2] <http://yapc-surveys.org>

[3] <http://www.perlfoundation.org/>