YAPC::NA 2013

Feedback

a joint production by

The Perl Foundation

& YAPC Conference Surveys

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An Introduction

This document includes many fragments from comments that were received from attendees of the 2013 YAPC::NA Perl Conference during a survey taken after the conference had completed. Each survey provided the attendee with the ability to provide suggestions for future events and feedback on the 2013 event.

It should be borne in mind while reading this report, that everyone's time and effort in putting on the conference was given freely. All the organisers have full time jobs and we are fortunate enough that they have partners and family who were willing to put up with losing them for several days and nights over the previous year, while they organised the conference for the benefit of the Perl community. A big thank you to everyone involved.

YAPC::NA 2013

Regarding YAPC::NA 2013 in Austin, TX specifically, please answer the following as best you can.

Please let us know of any specific comments you have regarding the YAPC shirt.

- the front is a big ugly
- Please provide women's sizes!
- The advertising etc., doesn't have that much bearing on whether I will wear the shirt. I just have a lot of T-shirts and they have to be pretty special to actually get worn.
- It's a little too loud - I don't mind wearing a YAPC shirt, but I generally prefer shirts without the iron-on decal feel (apologies for not being able to describe it better)
- Really bright blue.. it's going to become a work-in-the-yard shirt.
- It's awesome!
- I'm wearing it today at work in fact...
- I did not attend the conference. My focus was on the Perl tutorial and improving my limited perl skills.
- I didn't even take one. I don't really wear that kind of thing.
- It rocks and I love how it messes up the TSA scanners. This should be a tradition now!
- Don't often wear t-shirts, only collared shirts for work, etc. Gave the shirt to my son, who will wear it.
- I've heard bizarre rumors that it sets off alarms at the airport? Thanks for the keepsake Tee.
- I'm not big in advertising on my shirts. It might be one thing at the conference but I probably won't wear it outside of the conference.
- The shirt looked very nice. Good color choices, good design.
- the ink on the front is thick, heavy, and feels like floor carpet
- Does it contain lead?
- I didn't pick up a shirt. I generally don't wear shirts with advertising, even if they advertise things I support.
- Better than last year's
- It's not that it has advertising, it's just that I don't find men's shirts comfortable to wear (I am female) and therefore I did not take one.
- I only decide whether to wear them by whether I like the look of them. This shirt is fine, but not something I'm likely to wear again.
- I received several positive compliments from strangers outside of the conference about the t-shirt, and they asked me what 'Perl' was.
- The color is very gaudy, it really doesn't lend itself to wearing in public.
- i don't like the heavy decal that does not breathe. i'd rather have dyed cloth that is still permeable. also, heard rumors that the decal triggered metal detectors at the airport.
- The printing technology you've chosen will degrade over time rather quickly. Ten years from now I'm going to be wearing my YAPC::Europe 2012 instead of yours because that one was printed more durably and is likely to actually last ten years. I want a conference shirt that's at least as enduring as Perl. :)
- I will never wear a shirt with ads on it. I love the 2011 shirt for this reason.
- However I will only wear it at conferences, mostly in Europe.
- 100% cotton FTW! I often have issues with synthetics in t-shirts.
- The front is fairly busy; I'd probably not wear it to work (not that work would care, but I do).
- I hope the print on the t-shirt will survive my washing machine The print is a tad busy
- I just don't wear Tshirts myself

- The neck ring is too small. The design makes it hard to use afterwards (Colors!) Could we do away with the solid mat? For a T-shirt, less is more. Perhaps an idea/input/review gathering in the future?
- I would have preferred a black shirt. Possibly with less think design on the front. It's kind of heavy, which diminishes comfort.
- It set off the body screens in the airport, in the chest area.
- Awesome!
- Using something that won't set off the airport alarms would help.
- The "advertising", such as it is, is pretty inobtrusive. I don't have a problem with thanking our sponsors by putting their logo on the t-shirt, so long as things don't get garish. =)
- I will still wear it, but I don't quite like the fact that it's full of ads.
- I would be happy to wear the YAPC shirt even with advertising on it, except you were unable to provide me with a shirt that fits. I know there are multiple logistical challenges regarding shirt provision, but the message not having women's cut shirts sends -- even though you don't intend to send it -- is a lot worse than "TPF's shirt sizes database is full of dirty data and we have to make a best guess". I really hope this issue can be fixed by YAPC 2014.
- Too much screen printing on the front makes it horribly uncomfortable to wear in warmer climates as it tends to trap heat/sweat.
- Perl is written as "PERL" (caps), and I wouldn't do that.
- The advertising isn't a problem at all. I have no trouble with wearing the logo of companies that have given to YAPC/YAS/TPF. The t-shirt ink on the front is quite heavy and somewhat uncomfortable.
- Um... the design's a bit garish. I wish that it was based on a design a little less literal than a giant Texas-shape with PERL written on it. I quickly learned while touristing around Austin that Texans love putting Texases on things, but I really could have done with something more subtle. 2012's cow + velociprator design was honestly a best-case scenario for combining Perl and State-Pride design elements. I hope to see more of that in the future.
- don't like the huge decal as it's not very durable in the wash, and not very breathable in hot & humid climates
- Ads ok, didn't care for design
- Apparently it triggers airport sensors. This is awesome.
- See above. Seriously, folks: *solved problem*. Once again, http://geekfeminism.wikia.com/wiki/T-shirts answers all the questions and concerns conference organizers have, and provides a list of good vendors.
- I find the applique (rather than screen printed) t-shirts very uncomfortable. This will not be a favorite tshirt in the weekly rotation, but will be hauled out for the office next week and from time to time as appropriate.
- I appreciate the effort, but I don't really wear t-shirts anymore, only v-necks. :) I'm never looking for swag; just a personal preference.
- The shirt is rather heavy. I generally prefer light, breathable fabric so that I don't overheat.
- I think the advertising on this shirt is much better than Madison's shirt, in that the top line is not advertising and the font sizes are more appropriate.

Would you like to expand on any strong views?

- People need to shut-up during talks. This means that employees/staffers of the Perl Conference should not be chatting in the back of a room during a talk. If they need to talk, they should leave the room. In addition, if staff really want to be useful, then during a talk there should be a designated non-talker ready to shush folk in the hallway, and the designated non-talker should closed the doors to the room. It's common sense, it's respect,

and for whatever reason, it was all ignored. mst even stopped in the middle of a talk to figure out why someone was talking in the back of the auditorium, and the staffers/talkers were still completely oblivious that they could be heard from the stage.

- The conference was very well executed. My only "complaint" would be the amount of pages on the wiki that weren't filled out, without an intention to fill it out.
- Some of your volunteers were quite loud during talks. At one point another attendee had to turn around and tell him to shush. He was obnoxious and a poor reflection on an otherwise well executed conference.
- Hotels were very far from the venue in the Texas Heat. You did not list the address of the conference anywhere I could find on the web page! This made it challenging to put into my phone to figure out how to walk there the first day. The LBJ Auditorium was way too cold. I skipped some talks in there I might've gone to because of that. Overall, I did have a fantastic time.
- As a veteran of many academic conferences I was hugely impressed by the time-keeping by all the speakers.
- What can I say? I loved the conference and can't wait to come again.
- The food for the speaker dinner was a bit disappointing for vegetarians - I know it can be hard to get a clueless restaurant to do the right thing!
- I feel like when I first arrived the location of buildings was not clearly mapped out, we could have used a map showing the relationship of the two buildings in the handbook. I was confused as to how to find things on some parts of the web site, like what the actual schedule was originally. Also Training says 2nd day, I originally thought that was the 2nd day of the conference, I think that saying 5th day might have been more appropriate. Where we should park was confusing, also some of the parking area's were partially roped off, (3 of 4 lot exits were unusable), this same lot also had reserved parking, I think that having YAPC signs out in front of the other lots might have made this easier (also signs on the doors when I first approached since the buildings were large and blank). Not sure how feasible these suggestions are on a volunteer project.
- I only attended the Zero-to-Perl sessions. I did not attend the conference so my responses are limited.
- need some filtering on the email list; too many people spamming!
- the 20 minute talks were mostly useless. The 45 minute talks were mostly useful. The 20 minute talks should be lightning talks, and we should have another slot for 45 minute talks (tutorials and more technical things) the hotel and lunch spots were a bit of a long walk from the venue.
- More physical postings on buildings to guide you to the venue on day one - point me to the basement of LBJ with sheets with arrows and instructions. Some more interactive social event (not just board games) - karaoke, dancing, games.
- Way too much email spam generated by submitting my email address during registration. By the time I realized it was a problem, it was too late to remove myself from threads and I had to simply filter it all to the trash.
- Don't know why site was not secured (ie https rather than http).
- More communication about after hours events both during and before would be good
- It was an amazing conference, I am very happy that I was able to attend.
- Overall great experience. Can't believe it only cost me $80. Gartner commits highway robbery.
- I should be able to get an ical for the talks I want to see. Defaulting to everything just clutters up my calendar on gmail. It would be helpful to have the room listed in the calendar entry. Snacks seemed to run short which is a problem for folks that are late to the feeding line. It would be nice to have sugar free items available (sugar free mints, chocolates, maybe some (assorted) nuts, etc).

- Well, I've been using Perl for 10 years. I have baked it into my Corporation's infrastructure, at least in my domain -- Corporate HR Employee Portal backend (The Boeing Company). Things can change in a heart-beat, and they frequently do, but after attending this YAPC, I'm still at a loss to explain to my co-workers exactly what the future of Perl looks like. On that subject: I think Perl's Open Source culture and freedom for core developers to go in different directions is noble and good, I still think it's killing Perl, even after all the apology speeches I listened to this week, and I took in all the relevant talks on Perl 5 and Perl 6 and "state of Perl". I think the Perl community lacks leadership. Okay Perl has Larry Wall, Larry Wall is a god, I get that, but it still lacks leadership. I don't know all the history of the "Perl 5/Perl 6 version debate" -- and I don't care, but I do know that the Perl 5/Perl 6 dichotomy has gone on too long, to Perl's detriment. Okay, enough of that, the conference itself was great, right up to the flame war over advertising on the mail list after the conference ended - that was ridiculous. Anyway, the content was great (some comments on content below) And I thought the atmosphere was more inclusive than some Oracle and Ruby conferences I have been to (not many, but a few) so Kudos on that! I love you guys (REALLY!) Perl is in my prayers! :-)
- Please do not automatically subscribe every conference attendee to an unmoderated mailing list. There was too much chatter on it (and needless drama) to be of use.
- I wish we'd had the dorms earlier on as it would have been nicer to have as many of us as possible close together.
- 1) Thanks for all your hard work Todd, Matthew, Heath, Ya'akov, genehack, ... 2) It was great for me to have the opportunity to speak, especially since I am a Newbie. 3) It was great to get to know all of you and so many others. 4) I felt like I was welcomed into a family. 5) The job fair brought about promising results, and I may soon find myself in my first salaried position using Perl. 6) I connected well with many people and began what promises to be several close professional relationships. 7) It was great to meet people in person who have communicated with and helped me at irc.perl.org and blogs.perl.org. 8) I thoroughly enjoyed myself the entire time, it was a great experience that I don't think I will soon forget. This was one helluva way to reenter the world of software development after being out of it for a very long time. I really couldn't have a much greater affirmation that I was fortunate to choose Perl as the open-source language to study when I decided to try and get back into this. Sincerely, j0e
- My experience might be different than others b/c I already knew two people at this conference, both of them pretty well (co-worker and former co-worker/supervisor). I attended as many talks as I could and tried to strike up conversations, despite being mostly introverted ((Hallway++)++, btw). I enjoyed being surrounded by geeky people (not just Perl folk), learning things from most every talk I attended, rubbing shoulders with the Perl community rock stars (who are remarkably down-to-earth) and expanding my skills/comfort with Perl via 2 training sessions.
- Twenty minutes for a talk was wayyyy too short. The biggest bang for the buck that I got out of the conference were the lightning talks. The mailing list is a great idea, but I was shocked at the numerous inappropriate comments by some. As a first-time attendee, this was incredibly off-putting, because it showed me how nasty some of the attendees are despite the otherwise openness and friendliness. (And, yes, I understand that there are people like that at every conference. I just usually don't have to see examples first-hand.) As an employer looking for prospective candidates at this conference and participating in the job fair, I was disappointed at the remoteness of the job fair from the rest of the conference (i.e. why not in the lobby of the TCC or the hallway in the LBJ rather than a room off on second floor?).
- Parking refers not to the venue itself, but to many of the social functions which were difficult to park at. Lack of recycling containers at the hackathon was a small disappointment. I do not like throwing away cans.

- Talk rooms should be closer together
- Well, the food I tried was institutional food, and the vegan options were limited to the worst bagels ever with no margarine, and fruit. I still recall going to OSCON 2001 and having actually decent food (vegan cookies at snack break!). I know there's a lot of limitations on the options that the venue can provide, though. The speaker's dinner vegan options were pretty terrible. After asking me and Nick for advice on what to offer, it seems like we were just ignored completely. Steamed vegetables and chips do not make a meal. Most vegans are not vegan for the sake of asceticism. We actually like real food. That said, I do know it's hard to find a venue that can accommodate 80+ people, serves alcohol, and has good vegan food. OTOH, I know such venues exist ;) Year after year, I volunteer to help with the food planning and have not been taken up on the option. Maybe 2014 is the charm?
- Having warm food in the morning (pigs in a blanket and eggs) was great. Only having one serving line for cookies in the afternoon was not. At the very least the table should have been pulled away from the wall so we could use both sides. Even better would be multiple tables. People were still waiting for a first cookie as the keynotes were starting.
- Staff and volunteers were absolutely excellent. Directions, specifically involving the dorms, were somewhat confusing.
- Directions/maps: please provide exact addresses of venue of conference/workshops, restaurants/places of social meetings. Why? Many people use navigators/software to reach them. The walk between the LBJ Auditorium and the TCC is at least 5 minutes, and when one talk ends late, it turns up to be difficult to reach the other building in time. Directions in buildings: the first time it was hard to find the rooms, no signs at entrance what was where. The banquet's hall had acoustics for performances, not for a banquet and certainly not for game night: the sound was deafening, it was extremely hard to understand another person. I had to leave, as did others.
- Why a whole track devoted to Perl 6? ;)
- The VIP event was over-crowded and very constrained due to the restricted location. Having the hackathon room with snacks right near the workshops was brilliant.
- The conference venue was excellent; the choices and variety for breakfast, snack and drinks were great.
- mailing list rapidly degenerated to the point of spam.
- Heath already knows my strong views.
- The BOFs were a little too ad-hoc and JIT.
- The pervasive wifi (incl outside) was awesome (thanks ATT!). I also would have liked to have certain talks last longer, allow for Q&A and not be so rushed. I don't think I was a single talk where I thought to myself "*yawn* When's this going to end?".
- The TCC and LBJ buildings made for a great venue. I especially liked the LBJ lounge upstairs -- the L-shaped area with a smattering of tables and chairs -- for quiet, low-key hanging out and hacking.
- I really enjoyed YAPC Madison because everything was centrally located: hotels, lectures, food, etc. There was no way we could have gotten to all the places we needed to be without a rental car in Austin. We has several people in our group so it required a great deal of schedule coordination to make sure everyone had time for lunch, made it to lectures, and went to dinner & YAOC social gatherings. I much preferred the Madison YAPC conference because of that.
- I think that having it at a venue that almost has to have a vehicle really hindered a lot of the interaction and the people. It made it so I had to miss an entire day instead of a couple of talks from not feeling well.
- While the conference was overall well attended, I did not like the rather noisy mailing list which I was opted into by default, nor that it was the main avenue to get pre-show updates. I may opt-in to the same mailing list next year, but I'd prefer to have one mail list which is

announce-only, by the conference, and one for random conversations and chats. That way, I could set up mail rules to filter it appropriately and spend less time trying to discern which conversations were very valuable, and which ones were merely chit-chat.

- I found the official hotel (the University Doubletree) expensive (even with the conference discount), remote, and possessing few amenities. It was the weakest part of YAPC, for me.
- The only thing I was not very satisfied with was the room I had at the Doubletree. The bath was scary and the room A/C unit inhaled cigarette smoke from outside. For health reasons, it's very uncomfortable for me to go several days without soaking in warm water and I didn't find a convenient venue (the DT has no hot tub that I could find).
- Would have been nice to always have coffee available, especially on morning arrival.
- I'm concerned that not all the talks seem to have made it to the archives yet. Mass subscribing folks to a peer-to-peer discussion list without their consent is such an obvious NO-NO, I'd hope it would be unnecessary to point that out to this audience. If in doubt, please refer to best practices as recommended by SpamHaus.
- The mailing list leading up the conference was rather ridiculous.
- I thought the venue for the banquet was not great. I would have preferred it to be a little more elegant, not so loud, and perhaps a slightly larger space.
- As a first time attendee, was surprised and somewhat dismayed to be subscribed to an unmoderated, chatty email list where the lion's share of the traffic was dedicated to social events I was not interested in, like movie night. I think separating the lists into yapc-announce and yapc-social is a good solution. Web site in general was functional but underwhelming.
- I didn't understand the BoF setup at all. It was a terribly loud event with 200 people talking, then everyone wandered off. Only one BoF location got listed on the boards. As far as I can tell, if you weren't on the private in-the-know communication channel, you got left out. Value is amazing as usual. $80 for the conference is ridiculously cheap (I love it, as it enables real open source people to attend, not just people being sent by their company). Making dorms available is good. Maybe if the next venue doesn't have dorms, set up a room share? The wiki seemed a unorganized. Sometimes I spent 5+ minutes just trying to get to a page I knew was in there, but couldn't find. Occasionally I had to resort to using my browser history as all links to the pages had been removed. I realize that as a wiki I could have been ambitious and solved this.

Feedback

What past activities from past YAPCs do you wish we could bring back?

- put the IRC backchannel on a second screen during lightning talks and possibly the other auditorium presentations at the speaker's request.
- First attendance
- Auctions.
- Maybe revive the auction as a silent auction only?
- Free training. The early YAPCs had training tracks as part of the conference proper. Trainers were not getting paid -- and participants did not have to pay extra.
- Auction
- Poetry
- The TPF Auction
- Auctions.
- N/A
- The auction was fun and profitable (we held it at the Italian YAPC::EU and we raised quite some money): I know it can be boring at times, so it would need some rethink - but bringing it back _somehow_ would be nice.

What "Traditions" would you like to see retired from YAPCs?

- The arrival dinner. This year it seemed lit a bit of a fiasco, with the arrivial, anti-arrival, antianti-arrival, etc. Just let people work out the details on their own.
- I know I'm in the minority and this won't happen, but as a non-drinker, I don't like how beer-oriented the community is. This creates a barrier I can't cross to connect to large portions of it. Instead, I find non-beer-based subcultures and interact with those. But I don't know if people realize that this is an impassible barrier to entry for a lot of people.
- Let's have people keep their shirts on during the last lightening talk.
- I'd like to see the "humorous" presentations like the keynote go away. The actual information content of presentations like that are almost zero.
- Talking about Perl being dead. Stop talking, do something.
- Tradition is fine. They all seemed worthy.
- 13 year old boys pretending to be perl programmers
- I was glad Uri's action was gone.
- I would like to see the Far West Penalty killed with fire. OSCON and YAPC::NA are not competitors and I'd like to be able to host a YAPC::NA in my native San Diego someday.
- Auction
- Keep the live auction dead.
- Paying travel/hotel costs for a selection of the speakers. Opening and closing keynote by employees from the same sponsor. More variation in keynote speakers would be welcome anyway.
- (none)
- None, at least that I am aware of. And next year I promise to remember to bring my octopus if Matt Trout is speaking.
- I would like to end the apparent tradition of the mailing list being full of off-topic chatter. Having an -announce mailing list next year would be a great start.
- Cussing. There's a line where expressing yourself just becomes rude. Many speakers crossed well past that line.
- N/A

- I'm happy to see that the auction has been absent from the last 2 YAPCs. I'm in favor of whatever sponsorship that has been set up that has made that possible thus far, especially since I do not think the level of sponsorship is obnoxious at all.

For the Austin organisers

Do you have any feedback you would like to give specifically to this year's organisers?

- Better signage outside would help been very helpful on that first day. We didn't know where to go to register, what building, etc. I know, perhaps we are just slow, but still...
- You guys kick ass.
- Great tshirts
- The isolated nature of the conference from most food and lodging was not property articulated. If I'd fully realized (and yes, I can google map, so it's mostly my fault, but you asked), I would've gotten a rental car and been happier.
- It would've been nice if you had let me give my lightning talk
- overall, they did a great job!
- Well done, guys!
- The cheese snack in the afternoon should have been spread out, I never waited the long line for it.
- They did a great job!
- Outside auditorium acoustics terrible.
- Great job, thank you so very much. Wish the website and schedule had been up earlier, even if it was only tentative.
- Thanks for continuing game night and streaming.
- Well done.
- I felt everything was put together very nicely and there was a lot of great content. I do wish there wasn't so much walking back and forth between sessions especially when you only had 20 minute classes at times. I didn't like the 20 minute classes and wished it would have had fewer classes which had more content.
- It would have been nice to have hourly buses back from the banquet to the ut campus. There was plenty of snacks - that was nice.
- Excellent job guys! My only minor complaint was that the wireless was finicky (but when isn't it?) Keep up the good work! (And do another YAPC!)
- I wish all future YAPCs were held here.
- Great job! Austin rocks!
- I enjoyed that the dinner's were unprogrammed, allowing for more networking.
- Thank you for your hard work, it was a great conference.
- First YAPC, but great job! My only complaint is regarding wireless access. This is partly a configuration issue (my Ubuntu/Mint laptop) although I've never experienced such trouble and I work on a college campus (with campus-wide wireless). It wasn't that there was insufficient wireless access but rather that I kept getting disconnected and spent several hours (4+) over the course of the conference and classes adjusting/modifying my wireless setup up to and including kernel module options in an effort to achieve a stable connection. FWIW, I believe UT and AT&T are responsible for this issue and not the YAPC organizers.
- Great job!
- overall, good job. thank you for your work and time.
- Great job overall, despite my complaining about the food. I had a great time and Austin was a great city to visit.
- Great job!
- Thank you very much for an excellent conference. You were awesome!

- I thought the organization was fantastic. Thank you!
- For some reason it seemed to sneak up on me this year. Perhaps more 'drum beating' earlier?
- Fantastic work!! In particular, thanks for getting the wi-fi sorted out Friday! Also, power cords readily available in the TCC talks!
- I only have thank you for the organizers. They've done an impeccable job for the entire conference.
- You did an awesome job! Thanks!
- Foodservice at the event was great! The minor downfall was that there may not have been enough of it -- unless you made a very deliberate effort to be at the front of the line, you were probably going to miss out on the nibblies. I totally appreciate that there are serious financial considerations at play here, though -- conference food service and catering is usually really expensive! The LBJ lobby where the Monday night mixer was held was waaaaay too small for the number of people we tried to pack in there. Between the hard-surfaced walls and the number of folks in the space at once, it was almost impossible to hear each other -- the noise level was incredible. Anybody who was claustrophobic at all or had any kind of hearing difficulties would have had zero chance of getting on-board with a group for dinner. The idea itself, though -- a casual pre-dinner reception/mixer on the first evening of the conference -- is a great one, though! I'd really like to see it again at future conferences -- just in a larger space, to make it easier for people to interact. All in all, this was a great conference -- the content was great and the logistics were handled well. Thanks for having put it on! I know it takes a lot of hard work, and I appreciate it.
- Well done!
- I sent an email to admin@yapcna.org and got NO REPONSE! I could not attend this year but wanted my conference materials and tshirt shipped (at my expense).
- Great job. Matthew was especially helpful on several occasions.
- Thank you so much for holding this great event, y'all.
- I would like to request either shorter walks in hot weather or a conference event in a cooler climate.
- awesomeness
- Austin was great fun.
- Thank you for hosting an excellent conference. Comparing this year to the previous year (Madison), I had a bit more fun this time around. Madison was beautiful and the organizers also did an excellent job, but it felt overly political (due to the dire picture that Schwern painted in his keynote). Basically, I felt burdened/judged the entire time. Surprisingly, this year felt less political, even with the dramatic discussions regarding the establishment of the CoC. In summary, the conference last year felt a bit hijacked, but this year I feel like the community regained control of YAPC. I wasn't sure I was going to come back to the conference after last year's, but I'm glad I did.
- I thought the communication to the speakers leading up to the conference was excellent, especially compared to former conferences.
- Last year we arguably had too much pre-conference information (the one-a-day blog posts forwarded to blogs.perl.org). This year I think there wasn't enough. Breakfast was too early for me -- I never managed to make one. We always had coffee, and that's a good thing :). I liked the short "advertising" before each lightning talk. I just wish I could have made myself get up there and say something. Oh, and one last thing. Thank you *very* much for everything, and I'll come again.

For future organisers

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

- I only have 2012 to compare too, but Madison has an advantage, because all the food and other venues were a very quick walk to get too, no bus rides required. I suggest you try to get a location that has lots of food and activities withing a close walk so people don't need cars. Ideally, you could get a hotel with enough conference space so that most can stay in that hotel. It would make getting impromptu BOF type of gatherings easier, as well as a more convenient game night, etc.
- A raffle where each social media post is an entry. Perl is not dead, its not a dead end, and we need to shout it from the rooftops!
- Have a group drinking party that starts with everyone introducing themselves. Then, have dancing, karaoke and other games (not just board games).
- Get the website and schedule up early, even if it is only tentative.
- Please continue streaming and game night.
- None at this time.
- Make sure your wifi is painless to use if you can.
- Weather, no broiling alive hot on the sidewalk. Walk ability. Atleast 3 buses an hour to "the strip" or "downtown". Make sure it is accessible to someone with no car, and no friends to hitch ride, and is too poor for $20 after $20 taxi, so must use public transit. Large number of hotels close together to compete for attendes.
- I enjoyed that the dinner's were unprogrammed, allowing for more networking.
- Try to get at least potential BOF topics together beforehand. I never saw any real BOFs other than Good Movie Night and Bad Movie Night that were very explicitly planned and executed.
- As a Newbie, the opportunities to socialize and the time and effort top-tier Perl people took to spend time with me and help me feel welcome was very important to me. It helps me feel connected to the Perl community, increases my motivation to give back to the community when I am able to do so, and increases my self-confidence and sense that what I am doing is the right thing for me to do.
- Perhaps an independent contractor or YAPC attendee w/ expert-level big wireless network knowledge can review the setup and either communicate w/ the wireless providers or help out attendees who are struggling w/ network access? I saw some traffic on #yapc which made me wonder if the wireless network folks though all 'net access problems are solved by deploying more WAPs.
- Do more to attract corporate sponsorships. Money makes things go. It can also enhance the potential offerings of the conference and turn it into a better recruiting grounds for open jobs. Perl needs to grow, not turn into a quiet country club in a small town.
- the newbie bingo card supposedly would have a prize(s) associated with it this year. however, i didn't know where to turn mine in, and not having a place to add a name to the card seems to have been an oversight. how would you award a prize if there is no identification on the card? The final close of the conference wednesday seemed abrupt without any mingling afterward. People scattered quickly. Not sure what to do about that. Some kind of social hour for people to say goodbyes or talk about dinner plans would be nice (if the venue staff hadn't cleared all coffee/drinks entirely away). ride board or standard meetup locations for folks wanting lift to/from hotels to venue. i gave rides a few times to folks without a vehicle, and would have gladly done so everytime if there was a spot i knew to look for people who wanted one.
- It would be nice to have a banquet dinner held in a significantly larger venue (say, a city park) so that we have room to move around and talk to more than the three people we are seated next to and across from.
- Better food and better vegan options ;) I think game night is a great thing and should be continued. It's about one million times more fun than an auction. I liked Sawyer's idea of having prizes for the bingo. Maybe make that a more formal thing. Or instead of bingo just

give prizes based on filling out as much of the card as possible. This might require items to be confirmed somehow (ask for signatures/stickers/something?). Overall, I like YAPC as it is right now. I think it has the right balance of events and free time to just hang out with others and do fun stuff.

• Lightning talks need to come directly after a break, not a keynote away from a break.
• An "official" mobile app that ties the event together for both organizers and attendees.
• Please do not make it mandatory that talks get recorded/streamed. It will prevent me from submitting a talk.
• More food during hackathons/workshops at tea/coffee breaks. Think about signs indicating what is where. Please post exact addresses of venue and restaurants/bars, many attendees use navigator/software to reach it, and info like "TCC" or "LBJ Auditorium" is not exact enough.
• I would love to see more upfront advertizing and discussion
• Having casual areas to sit & hang out is exceptionally helpful, particularly if they can also be use for private events such as the VIP welcome. The (Linode?) sponsored VIP greet in Asheville still stands out as one of my favorite events at recent YAPC's. Avoid having the big sponsored party Monday night if possible. Bottomless whiskey Monday night made Tuesday morning very difficult. Usually I'm not that tired until the third morning, and not a mess until the morning after the last day. ;)
• Getting the social events organized sooner might be helpful. Of course I realize these are planned by the attendees. :)
• I would have loved to participate more in the hackathons before and after the talk schedule (early morning and evening/nightime) and to also have a bit more publicity around what people are hacking on and are looking for collaborators.
• Please make it possible for people whose bodies don't fit the usual range of M-XXL men's cut shirts to have a shirt. Either allow us to special-order shirts in advance and be guaranteed that those special orders will not be given out to anyone else who walks up and asks for them, or gather more accurate shirt size data from all registrees.
• If you are located anywhere south of the mason-dixon please consider instead to hold the conference in climates not filled with the hate of a thousand burning suns. Such as north. Where it isn't so god damn hot. Because nothing is more terrible than a room full of sweaty geeks. Also, North America includes more places than just the US.
• Central location.
• Yes, please allow folks to register and pay a bit more to have their conference materials shipped for those of us who have hardships or disabilities. I'm still hoping to watch some of the presentations from the website soon, but too busy with work right now. I still want my tshirt that I paid for!
• Thank you for having the speakers' dinner *after* the event. Previous YAPCs I've attended (long ago; YAPC::EU 2002) have had it on the first night, enforcing an inner-circle/outer-circle feeling for the rest of the event.
• This survey gives the impression that some folks have been complaining about advertisements from sponsors? I'd just like to state that I attend many small-to-medium-sized tech confs and sponsors are not just par for the course, but nearly everyone understands that sponsors help to make them possible in the first place. In YAPC's case, it also makes me smile just to see companies paying up to directly help support the community of my favorite programming language, and their ads are what makes this visibility possible. So, yeah, I wouldn't advise worrying too much about that!
• 1. Announce exact dates of conference much earlier. There are regular attendees who could not come because either they or their spouses need to lock in vacation days months in advance. 2. Secure contract for space in college dorms much earlier. I have attended 14 YAPCs where dormitory space was available. This was the only one where I did not stay in

dorms -- because dorm arrangements were not announced until mid-May, after the point where I had to make my travel plans.

- Providing lunch, even something "low cost", would be good for people to stay around and chat a bit.
- A list of taxi options would have been helpful.
- - More pre-conference communication. Not the blog-per-day of Madison, but error on the side of more information. - At this conference, and somewhat at Madison, for lunch and dinner many days, people just got together and wandered off. This is fine for long-time-attendees, or people who are at the conference with friends or co-workers, but it sucks for introverts who are don't know anyone. I can't think of a catchy name, and "consolation location" isn't right :), but perhaps pick a location and say "we've chosen XYZ as a decent place that Perl people are welcome to come and hang out, and if you join us, please talk to people!". Everyone is free to get together in their group and go their own way. But for those who are lost in a strange city and have nobody to talk to, we could go to XYZ. I skipped lunch at Austin most days and ate dinner by myself twice because I didn't know anyone. - Similar to the above, I thought Madison's idea of "lunch with a Perl Person" or whatever it's called was neat. It does put a burden on the luminary, but I thought it was a neat idea. That I could sign up to go hang out with Randall, Ricardo, etc. for an hour (and solves the "wtf do I do for lunch?" issue). - Hallway++ ++ - Make sure mst attends and gets some time with a microphone. He's a riot. He also conveys very useful information. - A panel session on the Perl state of the art -- that is, someone representing cutting edge Perl 5.20; Moe; p2/potion; Perl 6 current; Perl 6 experimental; whatever else is on the radar. "Perl Futures" This may be difficult, but I think it would be fascinating to hear them discuss what they think is important, discuss some design goals, directions, differences from other approaches, etc. Keep it positive. - Encourage people to think about lightning talks before the conference. Perhaps even take submissions? Give out a shirt or mug for first-time lightning talkers? I'd love to give a lightning talk, but I just need too much preparation to do anything at the conference itself. - Ask JT for ideas. I'm sure he has a million of them, and some of them are even good! :)

Summation

Thank you to all the attendees who completed their surveys. These comments and suggestions have been passed to the organisers, both to the current and next year's hosts. They are also used to help supplement thoughts and suggestions for the book "Perl Jam – how to organise a conference and live to tell the tale" (http://perljam.info).

Thank you too, to all the organisers and their staff for putting on the event. Without their efforts the conference wouldn't have taken place.

While there are always common factors that receive complaints within the surveys, it is worth noting that while the organisers may have taken great pains to negotiate sponsorship or technical support, it is sometimes beyond their resources to provide everything that you expect of a conference.

At its heart the conference is about bring people together to discuss a common interest. In our case this is Perl and all the many projects that it has inspired. It is also about bringing new people into the community and providing a supportive and inspirational event to which they will return and/or encourage others to attend. Anything additional that organisers can provide for attendees is a bonus.

If you are interested in running a YAPC::NA event in the future, read the book to get a feel what is involved, talk to previous organisers or read previous proposals online. See if you can possibly organise a small technical event or even a Perl Workshop to give you some experience. If you do submit a proposal to host a future YAPC, don't feel too disheartened if you don't get the chance to host straight away, you can always submit again the following year.

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