

Panel Proposal: OOPSLA Jeopardy

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ABSTRACT

OOPSLA has a longstanding tradition of being a forum for discussing the cutting edge of technology in a fun and participatory environment. The type of events sponsored by OOPSLA often border on the unconventional. This submission represents an atypical panel proposal outlining a game show based on “Jeopardy” that is focused on questions/answers related to OOPSLA themes. The goal of the panel is to provide an educational opportunity for OOPSLA attendees to learn about a broad range of topics in a style that encourages audience participation.

1. Overview of OOPSLA Jeopardy

OOPSLA has perhaps the most diverse collection of attendees among all computer science conferences. At OOPSLA, academic researchers working on theoretical areas of language design may share a conversation with a developer from industry who is working with the latest new technology. Moreover, an OOPSLA first-timer will have the opportunity at a workshop or social event to converse with an OOPSLA veteran. This panel submission proposes an event that will be of interest to attendees from all backgrounds and provides a discussion point for sharing knowledge related to the common themes of OOPSLA. The objective of this panel is to educate the audience and provide some technology takeaways in a style that is entertaining. To meet this objective, the proposed panel will capture the concept of a game show (modeled after “Jeopardy”) that is focused on topics related to OOPSLA.

2. OOPSLA Jeopardy Rules

The panel game show will follow the general rules of Jeopardy, with a few variations. The list below summarizes some of the particular rules that will be observed in the panel:

- There will be three teams, each with three players. The teams will represent attendees from industry, academia, and students.
- When a team answers a question incorrectly, one of the team members must leave the game (typically, the member that suggested the incorrect response). A member of the audience from the same group may join the team to keep each team size at three. Thus, the concept of panel member replacement, as typical in a Fish Bowl arrangement, is adopted to improve audience participation.
- Once eliminated, a participant cannot come back into the game.

- All responses must be given in the form of a question. Each team gets one warning when this rule is violated. Subsequent violations will be counted as an incorrect response, even if the content of the response is correct.
- The teams have 30 seconds to provide an answer. Any question that is unanswered will be asked to the audience at large. Thus, a fourth team is represented by the general audience, who also have the opportunity to respond and have their cumulative score recorded.
- There will be three rounds of play with each round having five categories and each category having five questions of increasing difficulty and value. The initial two rounds will be similar, but the final third round represents “Final Jeopardy.”
- In the Final Jeopardy round, a single category will be revealed and the participants must wage a portion of their current score. The answer is then revealed to the contestants and they must provide the correct question within one minute. The score of each team is updated based on the correctness of their answer and the value that they waged.
- After Final Jeopardy, the team with the highest score is declared the winner.
- All decisions relating to the correctness of a team response will be determined by the Judge.
- At the end of the contest, all participants will be asked to join their team on stage for photos that will be used to archive the event. All members of the winning team will receive a token prize (a customized t-shirt commemorating the event).

3. Question Areas

Because OOPSLA has attendees from diverse backgrounds and experience levels, the questions will be defined broadly to cover many topics of interest at different levels of difficulty. Our goal will be to create questions that will educate a general audience in an engaging way. For example, where possible, questions involving multimedia will be offered, such as short video clips, images, and sounds.

A total of two full rounds (25 questions per round) and a Final Jeopardy round will provide 51 questions for consideration in the contest. The following represent a sample of the categories that may be chosen:

- OOPSLA History
Trivia from past OOPSLAs
- OOPSLA 2009 Trivia

Various factoids related to the current conference

- Popular Topics from OOPSLA
Design Patterns, Enterprise Middleware, OO Language Design
- Questions from OOPSLA Spinoffs
UML, AOSD, XP
- Current conference themes
Scaling: Multi-core to Cloud, Mashups of Models, Data and Code, Tools for Reliability and Evolution, Enterprise Agile Management

4. Key Participants

As formal participants, Jeff will serve as the moderator and Doug will play the role of judge, score keeper, and award presenter. The organizers will be responsible for recruiting contestants that are leaders in the OOPSLA community. Also, the organizers will form a committee of “Question Curators” who will be responsible for assisting in the creation and correctness verification of contest questions.

4.1 Organizers

Jeff Gray is an Associate Professor in the Department of Computer and Information Sciences at the University of Alabama at Birmingham (UAB) where he co-directs the research in the Software Composition and Modeling (SoftCom) laboratory. His research interests are in aspect-oriented software development, model-driven engineering, domain-specific languages, and generative programming. He is a NSF CAREER award winner and the current Carnegie Foundation Professor of the Year (Alabama). Jeff is the 2009 Program co-Chair of the conference on Software Language Engineering (SLE) and the 2009 Organizing Chair of the conference on Aspect-Oriented Software Development (AOSD). Jeff has attended every OOPSLA since 1995. Over the past 9 years, he has co-organized the popular OOPSLA workshop on Domain-Specific Modeling (DSM) and organized an OOPSLA 2008 panel on Domain-Specific Languages.

Dr. Douglas C. Schmidt is a Professor of Computer Science and Associate Chair of the Computer Science and Engineering program at Vanderbilt University. He has published 9 books and over 400 technical papers that cover a range of research topics, including patterns, optimization techniques, and empirical analyses of software frameworks and domain-specific modeling environments that facilitate the development of distributed real-time and embedded (DRE) middleware and applications running over high-speed networks and embedded system interconnects. Dr. Schmidt has over fifteen years of experience leading the development of ACE, TAO, CIAO, and CoSMIC, which are widely used, open-source DRE middleware frameworks and model-driven tools that contain a rich set of components and domain-specific languages that implement patterns and product-line architectures for high-performance DRE systems. Doug has organized several workshops at OOPSLA and also served as the Program Chair of OOPSLA 2004.

4.2 Question Curators

The organizers will form a 5-person committee of “Question Curators” who will assist in defining questions for each category

and ensuring the correctness of each answer. This committee will be comprised of members who are well-known in the OOPSLA community from both industry and academia. Of course, confidentiality of the list of questions/answers will be a primary goal.

4.3 Contestants

As mentioned in Section 2, the three teams will represent the primary constituents at OOPSLA: industry, academia, and students. Contestants representing the teams from industry and academia will be leaders in the OOPSLA community and those who had a prominent role in previous OOPSLAs. The importance of seeding the first team with OOPSLA veterans is necessary to start the contest with those who have the best ability to enliven the audience. The student team will be seeded with participants who are OOPSLA student volunteers, or student authors of OOPSLA 2009 papers. Due to the “Fish Bowl” format, when questions are answered incorrectly the contestants will also be dynamically replaced by members of the general audience. As noted in Section 2, there is actually a fourth team that is composed of the entire general audience (i.e., the general audience has the opportunity to provide a response to each answer).

5. Example Game

For an example of the type of game show that is planned, please see the PowerPoint files at the following URL:

<http://www.cis.uab.edu/gray/oopsla-jeopardy/>

This game was held within the context of the CIS department at UAB. The OOPSLA Jeopardy contest would be adapted to the theme of the conference.

6. Additional Organization Issues

This submission was written in the style of a proposal. If accepted, this proposal would be re-written in a form that is typical of a panel summary.

Admittedly, this is an unconventional proposal in terms of the format. A primary goal is to educate the general OOPSLA community on a broad range of topics, but there is also an entertainment aspect of the panel. Because of the anticipated fun nature of the panel, the organizers would be open to scheduling the event at a non-traditional time (e.g., during an evening reception), rather than a regular session.

If accepted, the title of this proposal may need to be revisited due to potential trademark issues with the “Jeopardy” name. If that is the case, the organizers will define a unique acronym that identifies the nature of the panel in the context of a game show.