Find Your Inner Tech Talk Topic in 60'
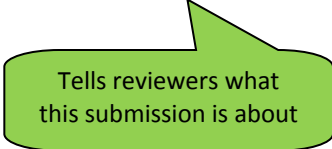
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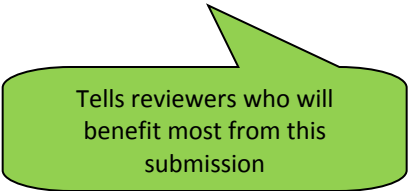
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ABSTRACT

Increase your visibility in a tech community by giving a tech talk! You might want to educate, attract talent to your organization, or give back to the tech community. Join us in this exploratory workshop and discover what could make a great tech talk for you. Leave the room with a title for your tech talk, an abstract and bags of inspiration!

Tells reviewers what this submission is about

AUDIENCE

This workshop is intended for anyone who wants to evolve as a tech speaker, but wants help discovering a topic. It is suitable for students and professionals (especially early career). New speakers who are looking for inspiration for their first tech talk will find this most helpful. More experienced speakers will also get help narrowing down their ideas.

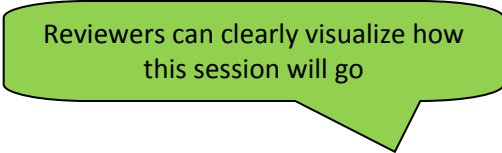Tells reviewers who will benefit most from this submission

INTRODUCTION

The lack of female and minority representation in speakers at technical conferences is well-known (Danziger, 2016). This trickles down into meet-ups and tech events through industry and academia. Conferences, such as Grace Hopper, and different initiatives that can provide female speakers lists, such as the 50/50 Pledge, have made significant progress in balancing the conferences themselves (Maerz, 2015). We hope to approach this from the speakers' side by encouraging more women to deliver technical talks, at each stage of their careers. One of the main hurdles for first time speakers is finding a topic to talk about (Mann, 2014). This can be a challenging decision for seasoned presenters as well (Thompson, 2012). Imposter syndrome adds to this, and perceived lack of expertise, especially for people in early stages of industry and academia, can prevent them from taking the plunge. After identifying a good topic, commitment to deliver it is the next challenge. This is when people need more encouragement to commit to the next steps (Matyi, 2016).

AIMS

We will help attendees delve deeper into all their areas of knowledge and interest. Through peer-coaching and hands on exercises, we will help them find a topic they are confident and passionate about, discover new and unique angles on it, and commit to deliver it in the near future.

Reviewers can clearly visualize how this session will go

FORMAT

After introducing ourselves and the motivation for the workshop, we will delve straight into our five hands-on exercises. We will provide a workbook, to use for the exercises, decks of question cards and reference material.

Stage One: Setting Goals [5 minutes]
Participants will define why they want to do their "first" or "next" tech talk. This is to help focus on just one talk. They will record this in their worksheet.

Stage Two: Explore potential ideas [15 minutes]
Participants will be paired up. We will provide them with a deck of 60 probing questions on palm sized index cards. For example, to discover if participants are developing expertise on a topic, the deck will include questions such as "What was the last tech question a colleague asked you?", "What project or problem did you last mentor someone on?". They will split the deck and take turns reading the questions aloud. Then, they will both write one-word or one-phrase answers in their worksheets and create a mind map of themes and topics (Catlin, 2015). Writing is aimed at involving introverts more (Mcclure, 2014). We will ask participants to spend just 10 seconds per question and skip immediately if questions seem non-applicable. This will remove hesitation and combat imposter syndrome. We will also emphasize time remaining 5 minutes before the end, to help keep the responses rapid.

Stage Three: Create a short list [15 minutes]
Using the mind map created in the previous stage, participant will collaborate and discuss to create a short list of topics. We will provide sample questions to get the conversations going and pointers for what to look for in the mind-maps. For example, any topics repeated or if the partner got very excited about a question or keyword**.** They will also use the goal stated in stage one to inform their decision. Additionally, they will extract unique angles, combine and contrast topics and discover common themes. We will suggest using 5 minutes for each person as a mentee, and inform them to switch the "mentee" halfway through. They will record the shortlisted topics on the worksheet.

Stage Four: Plan and outline [15 minutes]
Participants will come up with their ideal audience, potential venue [meet-up, GHC2018, their university or organization etc.] and format [brown bag, panel, workshop, keynote, lecture etc.] for their talk. With these three in mind, they will create a title and draft abstract, using their workbook. We will present methodologies for generating titles (Mitchell, 2010) and share samples, such as a title that promises benefits, like *"Find your inner tech talk topic in 60 minutes"*. The participants will work on their abstracts in a tweet format, based on templates that will be provided, for example, *"Are you a <target audience>? Join us for <presentation format> to learn about <title>.*

Stage 5: Commitment [5 minutes]
We will encourage participants to commit to a timeframe for their talk. They may record that on the workbook. If they wish, they can also send it to us in a GitHub pull request and share with the rest of the community. Then, we will encourage the sharing of contacts between the partners and the table, and suggest staying in touch as they prepare and deliver the talk.

The participants can take their worksheet home to have as reference as they prepare their talks. They will also have access to our brainstorming cards,

and all the resources through our Github repository if they wish to use them again or share.

OUTCOMES/CONCLUSION

By the end of the workshop we expect that the participants will:

- Have a tech talk topic (title and abstract) that they feel passionate about.
- Have identified target audience and a venue to present their tech talk.
- Commit to a timeline for delivering the talk.
- Discover areas of expertise and interest that they might not otherwise consider.

We want the people in the room to feel empowered to shift the balance for diverse speakers at technical events.

PARTICIPATION STATEMENT

All facilitators will gladly attend the conference and served on the workshop if accepted.

REFERENCES/BIBLIOGRAPGHY

Catlin, K. 2015. How to Find a Topic to Talk About Using the Inventory Method 50/50 Pledge. [Online]. https://tinyurl.com/zrx3gh6

Danziger, S. 2016. Speaking Up For More Female Speakers At Tech Conferences. Forbes. [Online]. https://tinyurl.com/zu8m9ma

Maerz, J. 2015. The 50/50 Pledge to Get More Women Speakers at Tech Conferences. [Online]. https://tinyurl.com/hx7p6kc

Mcclure, L. 2014. How to run a brainstorm for introverts (and extroverts too) Ted Blog. [Online]. https://tinyurl.com/jlq3y58

Thompson, K. 2012. How to Choose Your Rockin Talk Topic. Speak, Serve, Grow. [Online]. https://tinyurl.com/zqo8nnt

Content was previously limited to 3 pages but has been expanded to 4

Mitchell, O. 2010. How to write a presentation title that gets people flocking to your session. Speaking about Presenting. [Online]. https://tinyurl.com/2unegc7

Bios

Facilitator 1 Bio
Facilitator 2 Bio

Bios should not be generic but must pertain to the session.