DrupalCon - Track Chair Guide

Introduction

Being a track chair at DrupalCon means you'll be playing a vital role in determining the direction and selection of the programme for the event. This role is at the heart of DrupalCon for it determines the depth and quality of the program itself. Your taking part as track chair is recognized on drupal.org as well as during the opening of DrupalCon. Your name will also be printed in the DrupalCon booklet. Track chairs work in teams and your duties may vary over the course of the run-up to DrupalCon, but below we try to outline what you can expect. Up to 5 hours per week, depending on the phase of preparation is required of you. Will you help take up the task? To see an overview of the milestones, see our planning document.

General

- **Collaborate with your fellow track chairs**
  Each track will usually have three track chairs assigned to it. You will need to work with your fellow track chairs to define the track, review the papers, agree on the scoring criteria, etc.
- **Attend weekly track chair team calls**
  You will be expected to attend the weekly track chair team calls. On these calls you will be expected to provide an update on your track and how things are progressing. If you are unable to attend, you should do your best to ensure that *at least one* of your fellow track chairs for your track is in attendance, who can update you on what was discussed.

Helpful resources

- Regular meeting notes: Google Drive
- Program outline
- Track descriptions
- Time schedule

Program Process

Phase 1 - Call for Papers

- **Defining your track**
  This includes writing a track description that outlines the type of topics attendees should expect to learn about and what you are looking for in terms of session submissions. The description should outline who is the target audience of the track, the type of sessions you want to encourage (e.g. panels, case studies, workshops, etc), and the topics wanted or any theme set for the track.
- **Reach out to speakers**
  Ahead of the closing deadline for the call for papers, you should be reaching out and contacting potential speakers who you think could present something interesting and relevant to your track. When doing this, it is important to be clear with whoever you contact that this does not guarantee that their session will be accepted.
- **Promote your track to get more submissions**
  While the call for papers is still open, you should encourage people to submit sessions to your track. This may include blogging, tweets, and so on.

- **Answer questions from potential speakers**
  Sometimes potential speakers may have questions about your track, whether it's the right fit for their session or to clarify something in the track description. These are usually low volume, but you should try to assist where possible.
- **Decide on the scoring criteria**
  You will need to discuss and agree the metrics or formula by which you will score and rank the session submissions received. It is often good practice to define this early on so you have time to encourage people to submit the type of sessions you are interested in.

Phase 2 - Reviewing Sessions

- **Read and score every session submission**
  Once the call for papers has closed, you will need to read each of the submissions received and apply the scoring criteria to them. Adding some notes about your score may be helpful when selecting the sessions later. It is important that all the track chairs for a track read all of the submissions received for that track - they can not be distributed between the chairs. This takes a considerable amount of time, depending on the number of submissions received, and should not be underestimated. It is possible to read them before the closing deadline and do some preliminary scoring. Reading them early also allows you to understand the type of sessions being received and their quality, and either adjust the track description if they are not what you were expecting or to reach out to the submitter with feedback for improvements or clarification questions.
- **Selecting the sessions**
  When you and your fellow track chairs have read and scored every session submission, you then need to meet and discuss the submissions and the scores you've given them. It is worthy to note that it is not automatic that the top X ranked sessions will be selected. You may find that you have multiple similar sessions that are ranking highly, or that the breath of subject matter or experience level is not diverse enough. This often means that a highly ranked session may not be selected in favour of another, lower-scoring one. It may also mean that you may decide speakers of two separate sessions should co-present or form a panel (if they agree to do so).
- **Select backup sessions**
  For various reasons, selected speakers will be unable to accept their speaking slot. These are usually due to reasons unforeseen at the time of submission. It can also often be the case that a speaker accepts the speaking slot only to withdraw later due to their Visa application being rejected or ill-health or some other reason. As a result, in addition to selecting the sessions you want to include in the program, you will also need to select a number of backup sessions in case of cancellations. Again these should cover a range of topics and experience levels. Ideally for each backup session, you could identify which sessions it is allowed to replace if needed. This allows Kuoni to contact the next speaker rather than needing to revert to you each time.

- **Help prepare the programme**
  After the sessions have all been selected and accepted, the programme detailing which session is in which room at each time needs to be defined. Usually a few people will be assigned to this duty, but they will need help from the entire track chair team in answering their questions and signing off on the final programme.

Phase 3 - Promotion

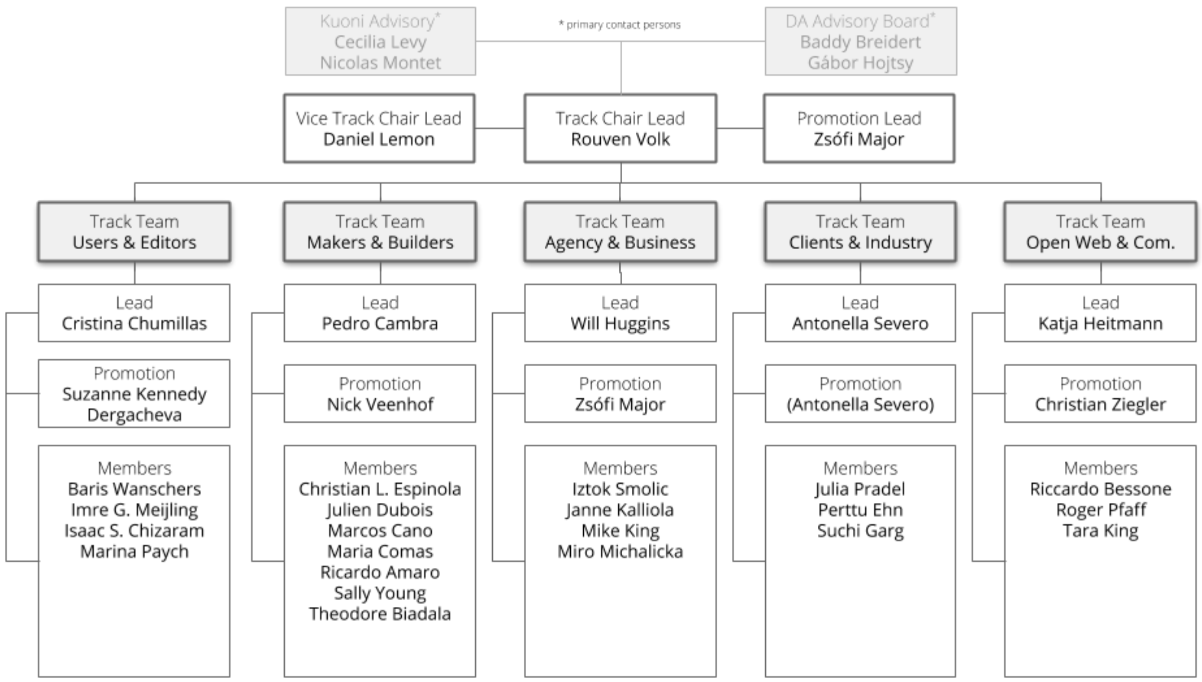
- **Promote your track to improve attendance**
  After the programme has been announced, it is important to keep up the promotion of your track - this time focusing on your target audience and what people can learn about.
- **Check in with your speakers in advance of the event**
  Sometimes it's nice for you, or another track chair from your track, to reach out and check in with the speakers in your track - just to see how things are going and if they have prepared their slides yet or have any queries. Usually most are fine, but it’s a nice touch and reminds speakers that really they should be working on their slides!

Just to add, there is no requirement for you to check-in with your speakers at DrupalCon itself. Some track chairs like to do this, and feel free to do so, but it is a lot of work and not expected.

Phase 4 - Post conference

- **Review ratings** - Discuss with other track chairs how the rating process can be further improved
- **Retrospective** - Share feedback with the team, think about the past to plan for next year’s conference. Which processes outside the review process can be improved, e.g. call for volunteers?
- **Feedback** - Let us know if you would like to stay on the program team for next year. Maybe you would also like to step up the game and take further responsibilities?

Program roles & responsibilities



Program lead

Purpose: Orchestrate the program team to deliver successful DrupalCon program experience

Responsibilities:

- Chair the program team: recruit & maintain team members to fulfill the purpose of the program team
- Steer the direction of the program
- Lead the program team: provide guidance on key decisions of the program team for promotion and selection of the program
- Coordinate with the DrupalCon advisory committee to align the program team with the general vision of DrupalCon
- Coordinate with Kuoni to align on tactical matters of the program execution
- Ensure standards of the program such as high quality of contents as well as diversity & inclusion

Track team member

Purpose: Define and deliver a successful program track as an interconnected part of the overall DrupalCon program experience

Responsibilities:

- Track promotion (see role below)
- Track selection (see below)
- Evaluate track performance and share learnings with the team after DrupalCon to identify key learnings

Track chair lead

Purpose: Coordinate the track with the overall track team and other tracks

Responsibilities

- Represent the track in track team meetings
- Assemble a team for your track with cooperation with the program lead
- Oversee goals and tasks of the track to represent status and bring open questions to the track team
- Take actions from the track team meetings and distribute them with the rest of the track team
- Have another track chair be the stand-in in case of absences so that we always have a representee for the track meetings
- Order sessions in alignment with your team to have primary selected sessions and runner-ups in case speakers will not take the opportunity to speak at the Drupal con.
- Ensure the session selection criteria are met

Optional roles

From our experience, being a track chair can be demanding because it requires focused work over multiple months. This is why DrupalCon has started defining new roles that can be used to distribute track team work better.

Track promotion team

Purpose: Attract the best possible sessions and help speakers get ready for DrupalCon

Responsibilities:

- Maximize quality and quantity for the track
- Track definition to explain vision, target audience and goals for the track
- Publish a blog post and use social media to promote the track
- Reach out to potential speakers and get them excited to submit for DrupalCon
- Session help for speakers to frame their ideas in line with the track goals
- Promote the program so the target audience of the track participates at DrupalCon
- Guide selected speakers in preparing their sessions for DrupalCon

Track selection team

Purpose: Use subject matter expertise to help curate session content for the track

Responsibilities:

- Review session submissions and rate them in the first phase of the program selection
- Review speakers and create a list of selected + backup sessions in the second phase of the program selection
- Estimate attendees per session and help draft the schedule of the program
- Review speaker slides and give feedback to help them deliver quality contents

The Program Committee session team will use their subject matter expertise to help curate session content for their assigned content track. (Worried you don't have enough expertise? You do!) Review team members will focus on session review and aren't responsible for assisting with session and speaker outreach or attending meetings that aren't review-related (though they are welcome to attend all meetings). Through their service, session team members have the opportunity to learn more about conference program planning as well as give back to the Drupal community and contribute to the Drupal project. (Registration to the conference is not provided.)

Important: Session team members must be able to dedicate at least five hours per week during the self-paced review periods from December 9-January 1, January 6-January 19, January 22-February 3.

Session team members will join Program Committee chairs for three hour-long calls during July-February. (Team members are welcome to join additional calls should they choose.) Review the tentative schedule.

Getting help & Further Information

- Whenever you feel stuck, please reach out to us on Slack so others can jump in to give feedback and try to unblock you
- Consult the following roles if in doubt:
    - **Track Chair Leads (Rouven, Daniel)** for anything related to the program that can't be solved within your track team or where you would like us to provide additional inputs
    - **Content Marketing & Social Media Coordinator Role (Surabhi)** when you would like to use the official DrupalCon communication channels i.e. sending out a tweet
- See last year's Google Drive folder for further reference

Slack

Each track team has their individual Slack channel on the drupalassociation.slack.com.

Access can be granted by the lead team, please let us know if your account is not yet set up.

Everyone should have access to #eur-2022-track-team and their individual track.

There are also a few additional channels:

- #eur-2022-track-team - for everyone involved in the track team.

- #eur-promotion - for everyone interested in brainstorming promotion of the conference.

- #kuoni-advisory-da - for Kuoni, the Drupal Association, and track chair leads

- #track_chair_lead - for the track chair leads

Track related Slack Channels

- #eur-agency-business - for everyone involved in the Agency and Business track

- #eur-builders - for everyone involved in the Makers and Builders track

- #eur-clients-industry - for everyone involved in the Clients and Industry track

- #eur-open-web-community - for everyone involved in the Open Web and Community track

- #eur-users-editors - for everyone involved in the Users and Editors track

The reward

- We recognize your contribution as volunteers officially on drupal.org
- You will be listed at the official page which you can use as a reference https://events.drupal.org/prague2022/meet-volunteers
- And your DrupalCon Europe ticket will be sponsored by the Drupal Association as a thanks for contributing, reviewing and selecting the sessions for the program